

# KNOW THE BIBLE, FEAR THE LORD

2017 SEPTEMBER DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET

(PUBLISHED BY CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHINESE CHURCH)

#### Introduction To Quiet Time/Personal Devotion

What Is Quiet Time/Personal Devotion: Quiet Time or Personal Devotion is more than just reading the Bible, it is a time of fellowshipping and dating with God. It is a time to get to know God and His will more as well as to enjoy His presence. Since personal devotion is a process of communication, it involves both "listening" (Reading His Word, Meditating, and Reflecting) and "talking" (Praying, Responding, and Devoting) to Him.

**Time and Place**: Choose a quiet place and a set time. If possible, morning is most ideal. If you must choose another time, choose a time when you can be most serene and alert. Also, make sure that you do your devotion before you spend time on the computer, TV, internet, or games so that your mind will not be filled with distractions that prevent you from meditating on God's words.

**Focus**: Ask God to quiet your heart and to open your eyes so that you can understand God's words. You can also praise God or sing a short hymn to Him.

**Read & Reread**: Read the Scripture carefully and meditate on what God is telling you. Usually, you may not be able to understand the meaning and essence of a passage when you first read it; only through repetition and meditation can one gain meaningful insights.

**Using the Devotional Booklet**: ①Please follow the steps in this booklet to first calm your heart with a short prayer and praise, then read and reread the given passage, and answer the questions accordingly. Then read the contributor's insights and see how you could apply what you have learned in your life. Finally, end your Quiet Time with prayer and ask God to help you live out His words. ②Besides the reflection questions, notes, and applications, this booklet also asks the reader to fill in the date and time of each daily devotion so that the reader can evaluate his/her devotional life more precisely. 3The Scriptures quoted in this booklet are from NIV (1984). We would encourage you not to use the Bible Apps in your cell phone to read the Scriptures lest you will be distracted by the notifications or incoming calls. This Devotion booklet contributed by various staff of the Cumberland Presbyterian Chinese Church and is first written in either Chinese or English, and translated by other brothers and sisters. The contribution of the staff as well as of the translators is deeply appreciated. At times, some devotions are written in both languages by the contributor. ©Memory verses may be quoted for meditation and memorization depending on the context and as needed; thus, it may not be provided daily.

#### Spiritual Return and Rebuild

Pas	ssage: Ezra 3:8-	-13		September 1
Da	te:	Start Time:	End Tim	ne:
	AYER: Ask Go n understand H	od to calm your healis Word.	art, open your ey	es, so that you
	ORATION: Be	e still before God, p nymn.	oraise Him in you	r heart, or sing
	ADING GOD'S d is trying to sa	<b>S WORD:</b> Read Exact Exa	zra 3:8-13 and th	ink about what
		DD'S WORD: Read answer the following	•	ain with careful
1.	Jerusalem; the returned to the spiritual found where was y	p of people who hat ey not only returned e Holy City and redation was laid. It wour spiritual four of to describe what	ed to their count turned to the pla n your spiritual ndation laid? Pla	ry but more so ace where their life, when and ease meditate

2. In verse 12, when the people who returned laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, "the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the Lord, as prescribed by David king of Israel." They did it in a formal and solemn manner. What did

their action show?

3.	In rebuilding your spiritual life, have you had similar experiences? What benefits would these milestones bring to your spiritual life?
4.	Please set some goals for rebuilding your spiritual life. Create a special way for celebration as a mark (milestone) of growth in your life. How would you do it?
	ayer: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to spond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

### In And Out Challenges From Rebuilding

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Pas	ssage: Ezra 4:1	-6		September 2
Da	te:	Start Time:	End	Time:
	AYER: Ask Gonunderstand H	od to calm your he His Word.	art, open youi	eyes, so that you
	OCRATION: Be praise song or	e still before God, p hymn.	oraise Him in	your heart, or sing
	EADING GOD' od is trying to s	<b>S WORD:</b> Read E ay to you.	zra 4:1-6 and	I think about what
		OD'S WORD: Rea		•
1.		erves God, one v hat would be your		
2.		external challengenges do we face?		-

rejected the wicked who pretended to help. How does this serve

as a reminder to you?

3.	Why did God not let the rebuilding to proceed smoothly, but instead allow the enemies to attack them in various ways? What did God want His people to understand?
4.	It is unavoidable to face wave after wave of opposition when serving God. Would this prevent you from serving God? Why or why not? How would you prepare yourself to serve God?
	<b>AYER:</b> Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

## Opportunity When Opposed

Pas	ssage: Ezra 4:1	7-24	Se	ptember 3	
	_		End Time:	•	
	AYER: Ask Gonunderstand H	-	rt, open your eyes, s	so that you	
	ORATION: Be oraise song or h		aise Him in your he	art, or sing	
	ADING GOD'S od is trying to sa		a 4:17-24 and think a	about what	
	RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Ezra 4:17-24 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:				
1.			the temple and know the work, how		
2.	When we have		ut to no avail, is ther	e anything	

3.	There are many "stops" in life. Can you reflect upon some of the "stops" in your life? What new insights could you gain from them?
4.	If you are currently facing "stops," what can you pray for?
PR	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like
	respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

#### Who Is My True LORD?

Passage: Ezra 5:1-5		September 4
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 5:1-5 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 5:1-5 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. King Artaxerxes's order to stop the rebuilding was still in effect, yet God spoke through the prophets to tell the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. If you were one of the Jews, what would you do? What would be some of your struggles?

2.	Zerubbabel and Jeshua were specifically recorded in this passage so that we can learn from these men who made history. Do you know anyone like them? Can you try to express your affirmation and appreciation to them?
3.	Verse 4: "They also asked, 'What are the names of the men constructing this building?' We all know the risk of exposing ourselves to ridicule. Reflect on your own life, have you ever willingly taken any risks for the sake of obeying God's command? Are you willing to have such courage?
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

#### Power Of Repentance And Renewal

Passage: Ezra 5:11-17		September 5
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 5:11-17 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 5:11-17 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. In verse 12, the Israelites confessed their past wrongdoing: "But because our fathers angered the God of heaven, he handed 'us' over to Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, king of Babylon, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon." Their perspective totally coincided with God's perspective. What do you think might have caused the change in them?

2.	What did the confession reflect about this group of Israelites who were captives and returned (what were they like before)? Please meditate on their confession. Can you imagine their demeanor and tone of voice?
3.	Do you covet their relationship with God at that moment? True remorse and repentance is a beautiful thing. Are you willing to let go of yourself, admit your sins before God and ask for forgiveness? Please write down your prayer:
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

#### Repent And Remorse

Passage: Ezra 9:1-15		September 6
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

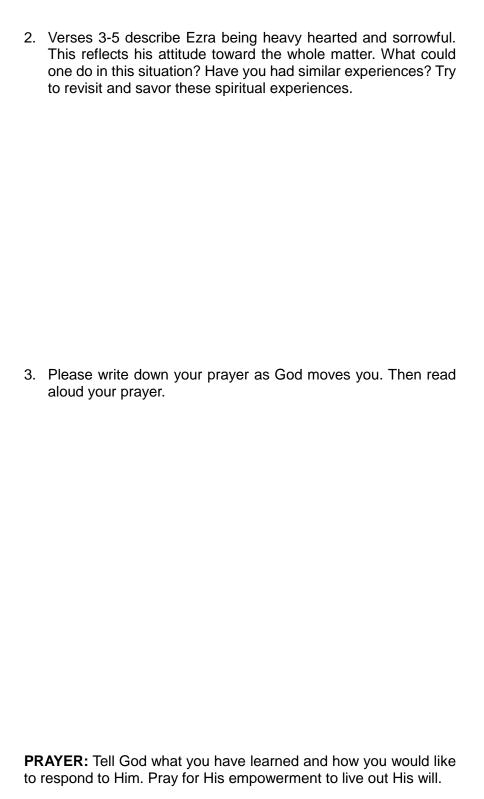
**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 9:1-15 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 9:1-15 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. Verse 2 says: "and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them." This is the gist of the problem. Ever since before the Israelites entered Canaan, God had already commanded them not to do so. However, according to the historical records, they repeatedly committed the same offense. Have you repeatedly done something that displeases God? Please ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate you as you meditate and write down your reflection.



Passage: Ezra 10:1-11		September 7
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

Weeping

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 10:1-11 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Ezra 10:1-11 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

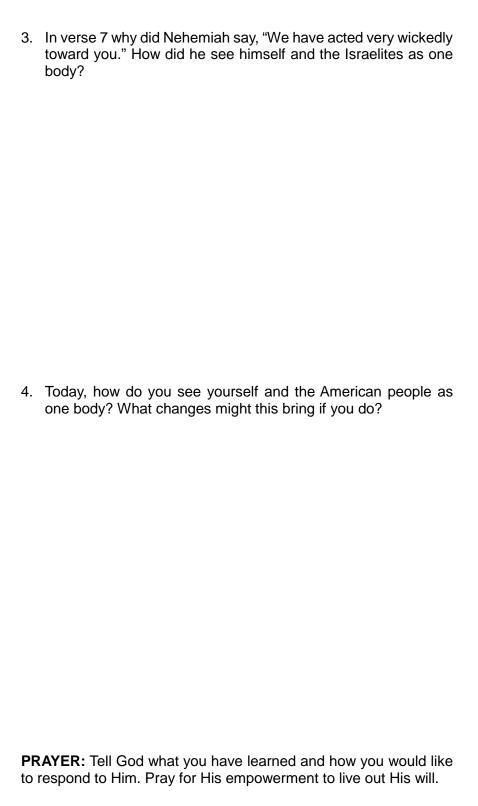
1. Under what circumstances do people weep?

- 2. Have you ever wept for your life? ☐Yes ☐No
- 3. Have you wept for your life recently? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4. If you have wept for your life (whether recently or not), please write down one of those situations, the reason, and your feeling at that moment. If you have not, write down the reasons why you have not wept for your life.

5.	Verse 3: "send away all these women and their children" showed a definitive and determined decision. In order to handle things in such manner, what kind of vision and determination does one need to have?
6.	Are you willing to deal with sin with such determination? Please pray and write down how you will deal with the sins in your life.
	<b>AYER:</b> Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

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HUC	i aliiolisiii	

Passage: Nehemiah 1:1-11		ah 1:1-11	September 8
Da	te:	Start Time:	End Time:
	AYER: Ask Go n understand H	•	rt, open your eyes, so that you
	OORATION: Be oraise song or h	· •	aise Him in your heart, or sing
	ADING GOD'S at God is trying		nemiah 1:1-11 and think about
			d Nehemiah 1:1-11 again with following questions:
1.		r wept for some viction? Why or why n	ims? Is it easy for you to show ot?
2.	Why did Nehe	emiah fast and pray	?



Love Acts
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Pas	ssage: Nehemi	ah 2:1-8		September 9
Da	te:	Start Time:		End Time:
	AYER: Ask Gon understand H	_	eart, open	your eyes, so that you
	OORATION: Be oraise song or l		praise Hir	m in your heart, or sing
	<b>READING GOD'S WORD:</b> Read Nehemiah 2:1-8 and think about what God is trying to say to you.			
	<b>RE-READING GOD'S WORD:</b> Read Nehemiah 2:1-8 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:			
1.	What causes	you sorrow or gri	ef in your	life?
2.	he "prayed to	the God of heave	n." How w	reply King Artaxerxes, as this commendable? be with life's difficulties?

3.	This passage records what happened after Nehemiah fasted and prayed. Have you ever fasted and prayed for some major challenges in your life? What happened?	
4.	Do you want to practice fasting and praying? Do you want to read some literature on fasting and praying? Please set up a plan for yourself.	
PR	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like	
to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.		

#### Inspection

Passage: Nehemia	September 10	
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

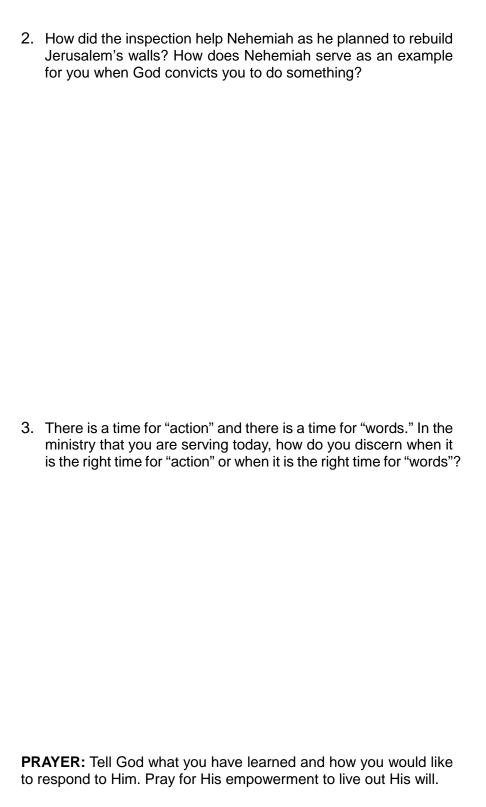
**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Nehemiah 2:9-16 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Nehemiah 2:9-16 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

 Serving God can be lonely at times; it is not easy to share with others and the right person might not be available. To cultivate the heart of solely relying on God takes practice for it to become mature. Have you ever had such experience?



#### Testimony Of Experiencing God

Passage: Nehemi	September 11	
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

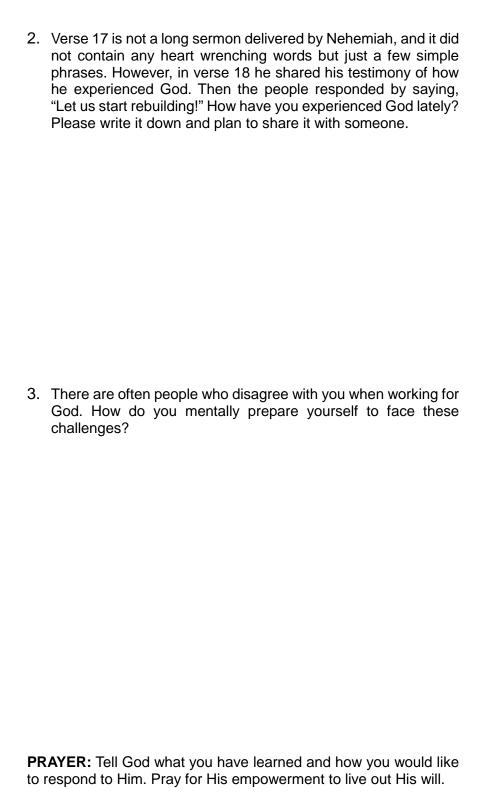
PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Nehemiah 2:17-20 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Nehemiah 2:17-20 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. Verse 17 describes how "Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire" was something that everyone saw everyday, yet no one responded and did anything. God moved Nehemiah to gather everyone to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. This showed the importance of a leader being willing to bear burdens. Are you willing to come forth to be used as God's servant?



#### Victory Over Challenges

Passage: Nehemia	September 12	
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

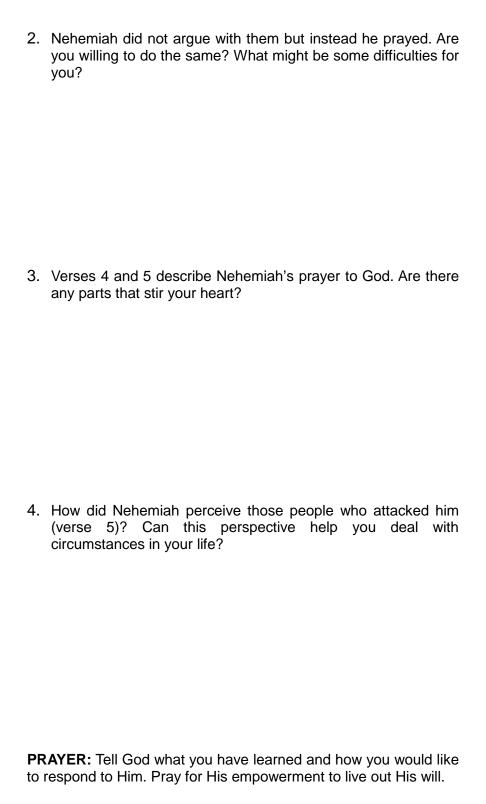
PRAYER: Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

READING GOD'S WORD: Read Nehemiah 4:1-6 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

RE-READING GOD'S WORD: Read Nehemiah 4:1-6 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. The Jerusalem walls were deliberately demolished and burned during the fall of Judah. It symbolized total destruction. Since this brought the Israelites tremendous pain and sorrow, the attack from Sanballat seemed fierce to them. Have you ever encountered attacks of this kind? How did you live through it?



#### Balancing The Tensions

Passage: Nene	emian 4:15-23	September 13
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Nehemiah 4:15-23 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Nehemiah 4:15-23 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. There are many things in life that we need to handle and each has its own importance. We need to learn how to cover all the bases. In comparison with the world, Christians has another realm to consider — the spiritual realm. How are you at handling and planning for different matters? How do you consider the spiritual realm while balancing all the needs?

2.	What prompted all the people to work together with one heart (refer to verse 15)? What can we learn from them?	
3.	To be able to work together with one heart requires everyone to make extra sacrifices. Are you willing to work together with one heart at church? What changes would it bring to you and the church if you could serve God in such a way?	
<b>PRAYER:</b> Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.		

## Opportunity When Facing Complaint

Pas	Passage: Nehemiah 5:1-13 September 14			
Da	te:	Start Time:	End Time:	
	AYER: Ask Gonunderstand F		open your eyes, so that you	
	ORATION: Be	. •	e Him in your heart, or sing	
		<b>S WORD:</b> Read Neherg to say to you.	niah 5:1-13 and think about	
		OD'S WORD: Read Non, and answer the follow	ehemiah 5:1-13 again with owing questions:	
1.	or hear other		find ourselves complaining ound yourself complaining s.	
2.	How did Neh time?	emiah respond to the	complaint he faced at that	

3.	How unique was his way of handling the complaint? What effect did it bring? Is there anything you can learn from it?
4.	If you apply what you learned on the complaints that you listed, how would the outcome be different?
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Tithing

Pas	sage: Nehemi	ah 10:37-39	September 15
Dat	te:	Start Time:	End Time:
	AYER: Ask Go understand h		, open your eyes, so that you
	ORATION: Be	•	ise Him in your heart, or sing
		<b>S WORD:</b> Read Nest trying to say to you	ehemiah 10:37-39 and think
			Nehemiah 10:37-39 again he following questions:
1.	suggestion or		tithing, is it meant to be a is your understanding on the
2.			passage. How many different do they serve as reminders

and/or challenges in your offering.

3.	Is your tithing before tax or after tax? What principle does the passage offer you?
4.	Our offerings are for God. Will you change your attitude after you receive the message from today's passage? How will you actually change the way you tithe?
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Rest	
11031	

Passage: Nehemiah 13:15-27		Se	ptember 16
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:	
DDAVED: Ask Go	nd to calm your hoart	opon vour ovos	so that you

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Nehemiah 13:15-27 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Nehemiah 13:15-27 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

 According to the passage, what types of things are wrong to do on the Sabbath? How does it violate the original intention of rest?

2. Verse 22 says, "Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy." "Keep holy" means to be set apart to offer to God. What does it mean to you to set aside the Sabbath for God? How can it actually be done?

3.	What would be the reason to purify ourselves? What is the importance of purifying? What can you do to purify yourself?
4.	"Guard the gates" is to keep things out. What are the things in your life that needs guarding? What are the things that need to be kept out in order for you to "keep the Sabbath holy"?
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like espond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

#### Queen Dethroned and Enthroned

Passage: Esther 1:1-2:7

Date:	Start Time:	End Time:	

Sentember 17

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 1:1-2:7 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**NOTE:** The Book of Esther is a very intriguing book. Although the words "God" or "the Lord" did not appear throughout all nine chapters of Esther, we have an overwhelming sense of confidence that His prominence, providence and passion are throughout the book. Today's passage tells us about how God deposed Queen Vashti and enthroned Esther to become the queen who would save the Jews from complete annihilation in the future.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 1:1-2:7 again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. Although God remains hidden in the Book of Esther, the plot clearly reveals His hand at work. Where do you see God's hand in the twists and turns of your life's story?

2.	Queen Vashti was a woman of conviction. She stood up to the most powerful man in the land in the expense of her marriage and her throne. How about you? Does any principle mean so much to you that you would be willing to risk your expediency?
3.	King Xerxes made an impulsive decision to depose Queen Vashti because of his anger and irrational thinking, and ended up regretting it (2:1). Have you ever regret making some wrong decision or saying something wrong due to your anger or reckless thinking in the past? What can you do so that next time you will not make the same mistake?
	MORY VERSES: In the Lord's hand the king's heart is a stream vater that He channels toward all who please Him.  Proverb 21:1
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like espond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# **Outer And Inner Beauty**

Passage: Esther 2:8-23

Date:	Start Time:	End Time:
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September 18

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 2:8-23 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**NOTE:** Esther in Persian means "Star". Esther also has a Hebrew name "Hadassah" means "Myrtle". Myrtle is a small shrub, evergreen and beautiful. It has a pleasant fragrance. Esther as her name, not only had a beautiful appearance (v7), but also had an attractive character and solid spirituality. She not only won the eunuch's favor (v9), she also won the favor of everyone who saw her in the palace (v15), and above all, she won King Xerxes' favor (v17) thus becoming the Queen. Having outer beauty is not enough, more important is inner beauty. Outer beauty will fade, but inner beauty can always grow.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read the above passages again with careful observation, and answer the following questions:

1. Our image-obsessed world can make us feel like we're competing in a kind of beauty contest every day. But really, we should be spending our time making ourselves beautiful, not for a king, but for the King of Kings. What sort of "beauty" treatments are you giving yourself every day to prepare for the moment you come into His presence?

2.	pai dai firn	ther is Mordecai's cousin. Since Ether had lost both her rents, Mordecai brought up Esther as if she were his own ughter. It is believed that Esther had a good character and a n belief, which must have been taught and influenced by rdecai.
	a.	Please think about who used to be your "Mordecai" to help you grow in your life and offer thanks for him / her.
	b.	Life impacts life. Please think about how you can become someone else's "Mordecai"? This person may be your friend who is not a believer yet, or your brothers and sisters in Christ.
his not	app loc	<b>PRY VERSE:</b> But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider bearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does ok at the things people look at. People look at the outward rance, but the Lord looks at the heart."  1 Samuel 16:7
		ER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like and to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right

Passage: Esther 3:1-15

6	_	<b>-</b>
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

September 19

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 3:1-15 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**NOTE:** Haman was a man of arrogance and he abused his power. When he became second in command in the empire, he demanded everyone bow down to him. Everyone did, except Mordecai. Haman was so enraged that he that he succeeded in getting the king to issue an edict to destroy all the Jews for revenge. Most scholars believe that Mordecai did not bow down to Haman because Haman was a descendant of King Agag of the Amalekites and Mordecai a Jew. The people of the Amalek had been enemies with the Israelites for centuries, especially the Agagites and the Benjaminites.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 3:1-15 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

 Mordecai and Haman are biased against each other, and prejudice brings gap in relationships. Do you have a tendency to discriminate against a certain class of people (race, color, or class)? Why? Think about what way you can eliminate your prejudice against them?



# Privilege and Responsibility

Passage: Esther 4:1-17		September 20	
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:	

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 4:1-17 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 4:1-17 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

Esther had been queen for a little while, and she had become accustomed to her royal life of comfort. But one day Esther suddenly received a message from Mordecai imploring her to see the king to save the Jews or they would all be killed. She was initially reluctant to help, because if anyone who came before the king without being called, even the queen, they would be subject to death. Also, she had not seen the king for 30 days, which meant she was not in his favor.

Mordecai warned Esther that she should not presume that because of her position, she would be insulated from this crisis. If she did not involve herself, the Jews would be rescued by the hand of another. However, she and her family would not escape death, if she thought she could preserve her life by doing nothing. More importantly, she had the honor of being the queen for that moment of time. God through her position could save His people. Upon hearing Mordecai's, Esther was willing to risk her life by going to the king to save her people. She asked Mordecai to have her people fast for her success.

### APPLICATION:

1. This saying, "Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" is a stress, a responsibility, a calling, or an honor to you?

2. Mordecai reminds Esther, do not regard her identity as her own privilege, or take it for granted, but to think as her own calling. God has placed where you are for a reason, what is He calling you to do? What "for such a time as this" that should you need to pay attention to?
<ol> <li>What is your first reaction when you encounter a crisis? Esther fasted to seek the will of God. Try to practice fasting in this month to better understand God's will for your life.</li> </ol>
<b>MEMORY VERSE:</b> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.  1 Peter 2:9
<b>PRAYER:</b> Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# Waiting

Passage: Esther 5:1-8		September 21	
Date: Start Time:		Fnd Time:	

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 5:1-8 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 5:1-8 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

After fasting for three days, Esther went before the king. The king was pleased with her, and told her she could have whatever she desired, even half of his kingdom. Esther's request was to invite the king and Haman for a private feast. At the end of the feast, the king once again told her that he would grant anything she asked of him. But Esther only requested that the king and Haman join her for a second feast on the following day, and she would then tell the king of her desire.

Some people might be surprised that Esther did not ask for the head of Haman. Some might think that she missed her opportunity, or was a fool not to strike while the iron was hot or ask did she chicken out?

No, Esther, was careful and meticulous in preparation. She sensed that in order to achieve her purpose, waiting for the right timing was very important. She has not seen the king for more than 30 days, and it wouldn't have been appropriate the first time to talk is about Haman's evil plan. She waited because she wanted to see if she was really still in the king's favor; she wanted to see if the king was serious about his promise: if the offer was good for another day or if the he was being impulsive. Esther's wonderful plan did not come out of thin air. It was her three days and three nights of fasting prayer that let her know God's will of doing the right thing at the right time.

# APPLICATION:1. Are you facing an unprecedented event in your life? Are you at a critical juncture when you need to decide or act or speak? Spend time to pray and wait on God before you do.

2. Are you working through an unpleasant situation? Are you having difficult trusting the Lord for patience? Practice fasting and ask God to give you wisdom how to handle the situation.

**MEMORY VERSE:** but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31

**PRAYER:** Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# Planned Coincidence

Passage: Estner 6:1-14		September 22	
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:	

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 6:1-14 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 6:1-14 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

Esther Chapter 6 seems to have a lot of "coincidences" happen, but it is all God's invisible hands deliberately arranging everything which turned out to be a turning point of the Jew's crisis.

At night after Esther's first feast, King Xerxes was unable to sleep. In fact, when the King cannot sleep, he could ask people to sing or dance to entertain him. But this night the king chose to ask people to read the records of his reign to him, probably hoping the boring document can induce sleep! However, out of so many King's records, the story of how five years ago Mordecai uncovered the plot against the king (from Esther 2:19-23) was read to him. Xerxes realized that he had never rewarded Mordecai for that heroic deed. Just as the king was deciding how to best reward Mordecai, Harman just so happened to be in the court. Harman came to the King's house in the middle of the night because he was probably unable to sleep too. He was anxious to ask the king's permission to hang Mordecai the next day. Since Harman was here, the king asked Harman's opinion how to reward a man whom the king wanted to honor. In his pride, Harman thought the king was talking about him. But to his surprise, the reward was not for him but to his enemy. Haman was mortified and furious as he led Mordecai through the streets. His wife and friends warmed him he would fail and chapter 6 came to the last 24 hours of Haman's life.

# **APPLICATION:**

1.	Mordecai's heroic deed seemed to habe been forgotten. But God waited for the most appropriate moment to bring up this matter and become the turning point of the whole story. God's timing is always perfect. Have you ever felt like your sacrifice has not been rewarded? Have you ever felt like your act of kindness was completely overlooked? How does that make you feel? How did the outcome of Mordecai's story give you some enlightenment on your situation?

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." Have you ever seen this happen? Has it ever happened to you? What are some practical steps you can take to humble yourself before the Lord.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,

Romans 8:28

**PRAYER:** Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

## What Goes Around Comes Around

Passage: Estner 7:1-10		September 23
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 7:1-10 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Esther 7:1-10 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

In Chapter 6 Haman was very down, he hoped that by going to the banquet, which was the second feast Queen Esther prepared for him, she and the king would cheer him up. He went, not knowing that this meal was his last one on earth.

At the feast, the king once again asked Queen Esther what she wanted from him. Esther very delicate and skillful exposed the evil pot of Harman. Not only did she confess that she was one of the Jews going to be annihilated, but also reasoned that killing so many Jewish laborers without any legitimate reason would be a great loss to the Persian. Overcome by anger after hearing this, the king went out to the palace garden. He probably needed time to calm himself down and think how to handle his beloved Haman.

Haman knew he was in big trouble. Fearing for his life, Haman approached the queen on the couch to beg for her mercy. (It was typical for Persians to recline on couches when eating.) When the king returned, he not only saw Haman violating the strict codes of protocol in the palace, but also believed Haman was trying to assault the Queen. The king was so angry that Harman's face was covered, which means the king ordered Haman to be hanged. Ironically, all of this started because Haman was angry because a Jew would not bow down before him. Now he found himself bowing before a Jewish woman begging for his life. Even more ironically, Harman planned to hang and kill Mordecai on the pole and now he was impaled the very pole that he had constructed to kill Mordecai on. What goes around comes around.

AP	PLICATION:
1.	We are reminded that God does not allow wickedness to go unpunished. At times, it seems that people get away with lots of evil, but we can be certain justice will finally come. When we as believers encounter to some evil deeds, what should our response be?
2.	"A man reaps what he sows." What are you sowing now: sinful nature? Or the Spirit?
A r	EMORY VERSE: " <sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. man reaps what he sows. <sup>8</sup> Whoever sows to please their flesh, m the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the irit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8

**PRAYER:** Tell God what you have learned and how you would like to respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# Covenant With God

Pas	Passage: Haggai 2:1-9 September 24			
Dat	e:	Start Time:	End T	ime:
	AYER: Ask Go can understa	od to calm your heand His Word.	art and open y	our eyes so that
	ORATION: Be	e still before God, pr nymn.	aise Him in y	our heart, or sing
	ADING GOD'S	<b>S WORD:</b> Read Hag ay to you.	ggai 2:1-9 and	think about what
		OD'S WORD: Re on and answer the form		
1.	came out of E the "Covenan included in (w	s, "This is what I co Egypt." As God's pe t." Do you know whe e are now under th at does that mean t	eople, we are hat "Covenar le New Covel	also included in also included in also included in
2.		ated the matter of C e you received from		e scripture, what

3.	Do you thirst after "my Spirit remains among you?" Have you ever prayed that way in your prayer life? What type of person would pray that way?
4.	Jesus said your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. The temple is a place to display God's glory; is your life a testimony of His glory? List the areas where you can be renewed and transformed.
	RAYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# Turn Around

Pas	ssage: Zechariah 1:1-6	September 25
Da	te: Start Time:	End Time:
	AYER: Ask God to calm your heart a can understand His Word.	and open your eyes so that
	ORATION: Be still before God, prais raise song or hymn.	e Him in your heart, or sing
	ADING GOD'S WORD: Read Zecha at God is trying to say to you.	ariah 1:1-6 and think about
	-READING GOD'S WORD: Read 2 reful observation and answer the follows:	
1.	Please meditate on the areas in you to God. Write down what the Holy S	
2.	Verse 4 refers to "forefathers" and "e what are they? Can you list understanding of the Israelites?	

3.	Are you involved in any of the practices that you just listed?  Does it coincide with what you meditated on in question #1?
	2000 it comolec man mat you meatated on in queetion in the
4.	Please write down your prayer, read it out aloud. Make it your
	prayer for the entire day.
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

Might? Power?

Passage: Zechariah 4:1-10		September 26	
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:	

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Zechariah 4:1-10 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Zechariah 4:1-10 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. Men accomplish by "might" and "power." Can you explain what "might" and "power" mean??

2.	What kind of a person is one who accomplish by Spirit? How is he unique in terms of how he handles himself?
3.	In today's world, God also uses people like Zerubbabel; are you moved by that fact? Please respond according to how God moves you and pray.
	<b>AYER:</b> Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# Faith Without Seeing

Passage: Zechariah 8:1-13		September 27
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Zechariah 8:1-13 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Zechariah 8:1-13 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. From verse 4 and 5, we read: "men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there." How did the scripture describe Jerusalem? How was the description different from how Jerusalem actually was at that time? What did God want to illustrate by showing the differences?

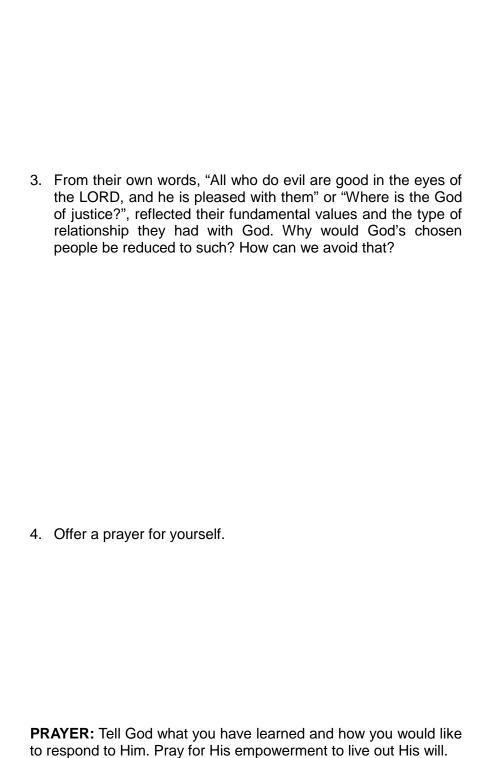
2.	For those Jews who were captives and scattered in a foreign land, (including their next generation), was it easy to believe in the message delivered by God through prophets? Explain why verse 6 pointed out "it may seem marvelous?"
3.	Likewise, we also await the fulfillment of God's prophecy. The Israelites in those days waited for the rebuilding and returning to Jerusalem; whereas today we are waiting for the second coming of the LORD. How is your faith while you are waiting? How do you wait?
	<b>AYER:</b> Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

# Illusion Of Having It Both Ways

Pas	sage: Malachi	2:10-17		September 28
Dat	te:	Start Time:		End Time:
	AYER: Ask Gu can understa	•	heart and	open your eyes so that
	ORATION: Be		l, praise Hi	m in your heart, or sing
		<b>S WORD:</b> Read g to say to you.	Malachi 2	:10-17 and think about
		OD'S WORD: Fon and answer the		chi 2:10-17 again with g questions:
1.		still came to offe		of people refused His ? How would the LORD
2.	In the States	, divorces are c	ommon od	ccurrences. It is also a

common phenomenon within the church. Why do you think that is the case? We read in verse 15, "guard yourself in your spirit"; do you identify that as our fundamental issue? What is your

refection on this?



# Grudge And Sin

Passage: Obadiah 10-16		September 29
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

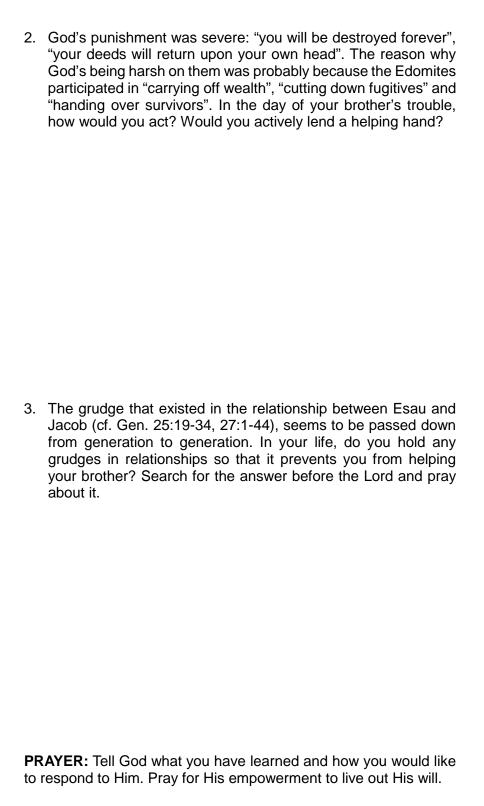
**PRAYER:** Ask God to calm your heart and open your eyes so that you can understand His Word.

**ADORATION:** Be still before God, praise Him in your heart, or sing a praise song or hymn.

**READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Obadiah 10-16 and think about what God is trying to say to you.

**RE-READING GOD'S WORD:** Read Obadiah 10-16 again with careful observation and answer the following questions:

1. Esau was the father of the Edomites; therefore, Edomites and Israelites (offspring of Jacob) belonged to the same clan. In these scriptures, God accused the Edomites being aloof in his brother's affliction. The Edomites not only rejoiced over his brother's misfortune but also participated in robbing and persecuting them. While God lay down His accusation against Edomites, do you think God had any hope in them??



	Rend Your Heart
•	

Passage: Joel 2:12-19 September		September 30	
Da	te:	Start Time:	End Time:
		Ask God to calm your derstand His Word.	heart and open your eyes so that
		ON: Be still before Goo	l, praise Him in your heart, or sing
		GOD'S WORD: Reading to say to you.	Joel 2:12-19 and think about what
		NG GOD'S WORD: servation and answer the	Read Joel 2:12-19 again with ne following questions:
1.	from "		end your heart" is quite different " Can you list the differences
2.	How di	d God describe Himse	If in verses 13 and 14? Is that the

God you are familiar with? Do you have sufficient faith to plead

for forgiveness and mercy from such a God?

3.	Based on verses 16 and 17, what mindset and preparation should one possess in order to plead for forgiveness and mercy?
4.	What areas in your life do you need God's forgiveness and mercy? Meditate on that and then offer your prayer.
	AYER: Tell God what you have learned and how you would like respond to Him. Pray for His empowerment to live out His will.

### Editorial

Praise the Lord! We have completed the Old Testament portion of our church theme, "Know the Bible, Fear the Lord" in just 9 months (from January to September). We started from Genesis and went through the four major events (i.e. creation, fall, flood, and nations). and followed the footprints of the four patriarchs (i.e. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph). We went down to Egypt with Jacob's family, experienced the misery of slavery, witnessed the ten plagues. crossed the Red Sea, received the Ten Commandments, built the Tabernacle, spied on the Land of Canaan, and wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Finally, a glimpse of hope brought us into Canaan as we fought alongside the Israelites and occupied the Promise Land — the land flowing with milk and honey. Yet the rebellion of the Israelites ushered us into the time of the Judges, as we witnessed their downward spiral through the cycles of "sin," "suffering," "supplication," "salvation," and "silence." The time of the judges was concluded with the remark that "everyone did as they saw fit." which led us into the period of the kings.

During the kings' rule, we saw Saul's jealousy, David's failure, and Solomon's foolishness, resulting in the pain of God's nation being divided. After the division, we witnessed the coming of God's prophets, admonishing and exhorting the leaders of the two kingdoms, warning them that the consequence of sin would be the destruction of the kingdoms. The kings' disregard of the warnings led to the Assyrian besiegement of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, in 722 B.C., and the Babylonian captivity of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, in 586 B.C. Yet, throughout the rise and fall of the two kingdoms, we could experience God's abundant grace and mercy. Though God has put Israel under His rod of discipline, He still promised the return of Judah. After 70 years of exile, the people of Judah finally returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zarubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah to rebuild the Temple, to revive the people, and to repair the city wall. The end of exile moved us from the turbulence of the patriotic time into 400 years of silence as the God's people awaited the coming of the promised Messiah.

Dear brothers and sisters, in these past nine months of following the history of the Old Testament, what have you learned? Has your heart been encouraged, disturbed, unsettled, or excited? What response are you moved to give? What commitments are you willing to make to God? Please write down these feelings as a conclusion to your devotional practice for the past nine months.

# Insights as You Journeyed through the Old Testament

Write down the overall spiritual insights that you have learned in your daily devotion this year:

Insights as You Journeyed through the Old Testament

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