

## Prepare Your Heart

Ponder: Where does faithfulness to God begin?

Scripture: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10, NKJV).

Our thoughts, words, and deeds all emanate from the heart. “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things” (Matt. 12:35). Faithful service to God begins by preparing the heart.

Ezra the priest and scribe “had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). Seeking the Law involved careful and prolonged study. But knowledge is not an end in itself. Ezra determined to do (i.e. obey) God’s law. Such would give him credibility as he then taught God’s statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Centuries before Ezra, King David wrote during a time of great trial, “My heart is steadfast (prepared), O God, my heart is steadfast (prepared). I will sing and give praise” (Psa. 57:7). Though far from flawless, David had a heart for God.

David’s grandson, Rehoboam, manifested the opposite spirit and behavior. “And he did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord” (2 Chron. 12:14). What little good he did was under pressure from God’s discipline. His heart wasn’t in it.

The Lord commended King Jehoshaphat despite his missteps: “You have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God” (2 Chron. 19:3). Jehoshaphat is known as one of the better kings of Judah.

Like Jehoshaphat and David, we fall short of perfection. We must not, however, become like Rehoboam, obeying God only when the pressure is on. Let us be like Ezra, preparing our hearts to learn, do, and teach God’s word! To prepare means to establish, make firm, and direct. Let us be like the righteous man described in Psa. 112. “Surely he will never be shaken. The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. He will not be afraid of evil tidings (bad news). His heart is steadfast (prepared), trusting in the Lord” (vv. 6-7).

Faithfulness to God begins with a prepared heart. Have you prepared your heart?

Prayer: Father, help us to prepare our hearts to seek You and Your word. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Hymn: “My Jesus, As Thou Wilt”