



RUINS TO RESTORATION

'Joy Rises'

1. When you are undertaking a big project, or something challenges you to persevere, what "refuels" you? What do you do when you find yourself running out of steam (emotional, mental, physical, spiritual), and how do you "charge back up?"
2. Read Nehemiah 8. Who were those who heard the law read by Ezra and how did they react to his preparing to read the law (Vv.1-8)? What do these verses teach us about the significance of both hearing the word of God AND understanding it? Why does this matter? How has the word of God been instrumental in your journey with God?
3. Describe the response of the people to the reading of the law and the reaction of the Levites (Vv.9-12).
4. To what extent should joy be a more prominent feature in our worship? How can we have a more joyful expression in our worship?
5. How did the people respond on the day after the reading of the law? What was one of the daily activities of the people during the time of the festival (Vv.12-18)?
6. When you think of someone who has been a great Bible teacher to you, who comes to mind? Maybe it is your current pastor, or a mentor, or someone who invested in you. Perhaps it is a Bible teacher with a large platform (such as a radio/TV/Internet ministry). What is it about that person that makes them a great Bible teacher? Is it because they are charismatic or convincing? Or is it because they challenge you with biblical truth and inspire you to apply God's word to your life? How has that person encouraged or inspired you? How has God used that person's teaching to develop your relationship with Jesus? Thank God in prayer for using this person to grow your faith and bring meaning to your walk.
7. While many people returned to their homes, the heads of the families and the spiritual leaders stayed to receive further instruction from Ezra. What is significant about this to you?
8. We are fond of saying that we are not under law but under grace. Is this taken too far? What place, if any, might the law have in our lives today?
9. In reading chapter 8, the phrase "the people" is repeated 13 times. God has brought them from their surrounding communities to be gathered in the square. What do you think is significant about this?