

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Jeremiah by John Calvin and Phillip Ryken, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Jeremiah 31:1-6 I (God) have loved you...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Chapters 30-33, as the HCSB study notes point out, *were written during the final days of the siege of Jerusalem (the last 18 months of that siege; 32:1-2); yet they foretell a bright future.* Bright, because of God's plans. God will bring about a temporary restoration that will foreshadow His permanent restoration of His people.

Why will this restoration come about? Not because of Israel's goodness, but because of God's. Because God has loved His people and that love is an everlasting love. We have seen in Jeremiah that some of those who are His people visibly are not His people in their hearts. But those who are His are His because He has loved them eternally. And we today who are His are His because He has loved us eternally.

And being loved eternally by God brings deep and visible and audible joy. The exiles to be restored, renewed and cleansed, will dance for joy as God re-plants them in their land. How is your joy? Is it deep? Is it visible? Is it audible? Does God's love make you want to gather with His people and worship Him with joy? Get up, let's go up to Zion, to Yahweh our God!

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What is happening in chapters 30-33?
2. Why will the exiles be restored?
3. What will be their response to God restoring them?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 94a², 126a
1. Rejoice with your family in God loving you
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Jeremiah 31:35-40 If the Sun, Moon, and Stars fail...

Notes
(See back page for authors - all the notes today are from Ryken's commentary)

The New Covenant in Christ is as reliable as the fixed laws of nature, if not more so. It is irrevocable... The New Covenant is as likely to fail as the entire universe is to grind to a halt.

Theologians have struggled to explain the eternal duration of the covenant. The Biblical covenants often sound like contracts, as if God does his part and we do our part. But of course we never keep our end of the bargain, and so the covenant ought to be null and void. Yet the mystery of God's grace is that he continues to keep covenant even when we break it.

The only explanation for the permanence of the covenant is that Jesus Christ keeps it on our behalf. His covenant-keeping counts for us. The Westminster Larger Catechism asks, "With whom was the covenant of grace made?" Answer: "The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed" (Q. & A. 30). In other words, the New Covenant is not a bargain between God and us. If that were the case, the New Covenant would be no better than the Old. Rather, the New Covenant is a blood bond between God the Father and God the Son on our behalf. Jesus Christ makes and keeps the covenant for us. We are in the covenant because we are in Christ.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How do the sun, moon, and stars relate to the New Covenant?
2. With whom was the covenant of grace made?
3. How can the New Covenant be kept when we break it?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 94a
1. Pray that you and your family will ..., with God's help
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

Reading

Jeremiah 31:31-35 I will make a new covenant

Notes
(See back page for authors – all the notes today are from the Reformation Study Bible)

Picking up themes first expounded by Moses in Deut. 30:1–10, Jeremiah prophesies that God will make a new covenant with His people. As the making of the old covenant (Ex. 19–24) followed the redemption from Egypt (Ex. 12–15), so the making of the new covenant will follow the redemption from sins (v. 34).

The new covenant will stand in contrast to the old covenant, in that the new cannot be broken as the old was (v. 32; Heb. 8:7, 8). The guarantee that it will not be broken is the grace mediated by Christ through His death and resurrection (Heb. 9:12–15; 10:1–4, 10–18)... The new covenant will make good the deficiencies of the old, which lay in the people’s inability to keep it.

Under the old covenant, the law of God was engraved on tablets of stone and placed in the Most Holy Place; under the new covenant God will write His law on the hearts of His people. The people then are like the temple in that the law of God is within them, but with the difference that they are a living temple, made of living stones (2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:5)

I will be their God, and they ... my people. This declaration is the summary of God’s blessings promised in His covenant.

The continuing cycle of sacrifices under the old covenant provided a constant reminder of sins (Heb. 10:3, 4, 11). The words “I will remember their sin no more” underscore that the satisfaction made for sins in the redemption to come will be perfect, making any further sacrifices unnecessary.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why did God determine to make a new covenant?
2. What are some parts of this new covenant?
3. Who will be the mediator (go-between) of this new covenant?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 94a
1. Rejoice, with your family, in God’s new covenant in Jesus
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading

Jeremiah 31:7-14 Lord, save Your people!

Notes
(See back page for authors)

The good news continues. God continues to show that the return will not be just Judah, but the northern tribes too. This remnant will include all Israel. But an even greater remnant will come – Jews and Gentiles! (But, we’re getting ahead of the story.)

God calls these returning exiles to rejoice. The HCSB notes point out that *five imperatives (sing... shout... proclaim, praise... say) are given to Israel to celebrate the great deliverance of God for the remnant of Israel.* But, remember, as Calvin notes, *that this prophecy was announced, when the utter destruction of the people, of the city, and temple, was not far distant; but it was the Prophet’s object to comfort, so to speak, the dead in their graves, so that they might patiently wait for their promised deliverance.*

As we read it, it is easy for us to sing, shout, proclaim, praise, say. It’s easy for us to imagine the returning exiles doing the same. But is it easy for us to imagine the new captives fresh into Babylon, the memory of their promised land fresh in their minds, the pain of the exile in their faces and in their hearts? Could they... can we... trust God, even when it hurts. Can we believe God’s promises when the future looks bleak or even black. Can we be satisfied with God’s goodness even when things are going badly? These verses call us to, as they called Judah to.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who will be included when the captives return to Israel?
2. When should we sing, shout, proclaim, praise?
3. How can we be satisfied with God’s goodness when things are going badly?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 94a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to trusting God even if things are going badly, with God’s help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Jeremiah 31:15-20 Rachel weeping...no more

Notes
(See back page for authors)

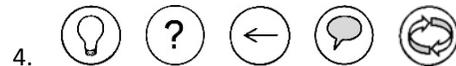
As Jacob, his wives, and children, were moving back to Bethel (Gen 35) – the place where God had appeared to Jacob in a dream (Gen 29) as he was fleeing Esau – Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin. The HCSB notes say that here she is referred to as the mother of all 10 northern tribes of Israel since her descendants Ephraim and Manasseh were heads of the two leading tribes in that region. Rachel is twice told to stop weeping, because her children will return.

These who will be restored are filled with remorse and repentance. They too are weeping and refuse to be comforted. Yet, as Ryken notes, *all this is required to get right with God. Repentance means a change of behavior and a full confession of sin, mixed with sorrow. True repentance is a gift from God. Ephraim never could have repented like this on his own. He prayed, "Restore me, and I will return" (Jeremiah 31:18), because he knew that the initiative for his change of heart had to come from God. Whenever a sinner confesses his sins, God welcomes him back home.*

If you are straying from God, plead with Him in prayer to restore you. Acknowledge your sin and rejoice in His forgiveness. Having been forgiven, you, like Rachel, stop weeping and rejoice in God's compassion.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why was Rachel weeping? Where else are we told about this in the Bible?
2. Why could Rachel stop weeping? Why could Israel?
3. Who initiates our repentance?



Praise Pray

- Psalm 94a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to rejoice in God's compassion, with God's help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Jeremiah 31:21-30 I (God) will build and plant them

Notes
(See back page for authors)

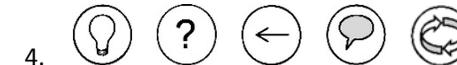
Remember, Jeremiah writes these words as Judah is being taken captive to Babylon. But, as Ryken reminds us, *God booked his people on a round-trip passage to Babylon. They would return from exile exactly the same way they came. And since things often look different on the return voyage, they should mark their trail carefully. Guidance is also promised for the Christian. God gives good directions. His will for life is not found by opening a Christian fortune cookie or turning to a random passage of Scripture. Instead through prayer, circumstances, godly counsel, and obedience to his revealed will, God will be your guide.*

And God would indeed bring them back. Having uprooted, torn down, demolished, and destroyed as He had promised way back in chap 1 and all through Jeremiah's prophecy, God now promises to rebuild and to replant His people. And when they are replanted and rebuilt and restored they will speak of God's blessing in their land.

So it is for us today. Whether our initial rescue from sin and Satan, or rescue along the way from temptation and sin that we have fallen in once again, when God restores us we rejoice and speak of His blessing. May God rebuild us – as individuals, families, and churches, for His glory.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why would the ones going to exile need to mark the road?
2. What does God promise to do to those who are truly His people, even after disciplining them for sin?
3. What is to be our response after God has restored us?



Praise Pray

- Psalm 94a
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God restores you
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member