

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 Ezekiel by John Calvin, Peter Jeffrey, Derek Thomas, and James Smith, 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

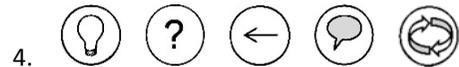
Reading Ezekiel 1:1-3 Visions of God...

Notes (See back page for authors) Ezekiel is an Old Testament book that is usually either ignored, or regarded with fanciful imagination (The Spaceships of Ezekiel?). It is a book filled with end-times language and unusual visions. Yet it is God’s word – useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training...

Jeffrey notes that *Ezekiel—his name means ‘God strengthens’—was a priest who had been taken into exile with the rest of Judah. It was in Babylon that he was set apart by God to be a prophet (Ezek. 2:5). His whole ministry was in Babylon to a people under judgement and his message was of more judgement to come, but also of restoration and blessing from God.*

His prophecy, Thomas notes, *is packed with intricate sketches: ‘I saw visions of God’ (1:1). ‘Coloured pictures’ abound throughout Ezekiel’s prophecy, but as we shall see, the pictures are not Ezekiel’s but God’s. And, more importantly, these God-given pictures need interpreting. It is a message and not a picture that Ezekiel will be called to deliver to God’s people. Pictures, without interpretation, are dangerous vehicles for truth: folk are prone to make of them what they will. That is why we shall have to root everything Ezekiel saw in what he knew of God in the Scriptures ...*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why is Ezekiel hard to understand?
 2. What was Ezekiel’s message?
 3. Should we try to learn about God from dreams? Why/not?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 122a²
1. Commit yourselves in prayer to know God through His word
 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 Ezekiel 3:22-27 Let the one who listens, listen

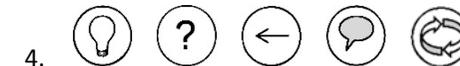
Notes (See back page for authors) Thomas comments that *once more Ezekiel returns to the plain and sees the glory of the Lord that had filled his soul a week earlier (3:22–23). Once again his reaction is to fall down on his face (3:23) and God’s Spirit sets him on his feet (3:24). And once more God has something for Ezekiel to do...Ezekiel is called upon to perform a kind of acted parable... first of many such gestures.*

Three things were required of the prophet. First, he must stay at home (3:24), thereby indicating that whenever he appeared in future it was as God’s messenger. When people saw Ezekiel coming it was the voice of God that would speak. Second, he was to be tied up (3:25), thereby indicating that he was God’s prisoner, or slave. And third, whenever he was not speaking God’s Word he was to be silent (3:26). He is not allowed to reprove the rebels of the exile unless God says so (3:26–27). This muteness was to last for almost seven and a half years, until the fall of Jerusalem (33:21–22).

God’s calling for Ezekiel is one of total obedience. It is no less so for any Christian. We are ‘slaves of Christ’ (Eph. 6:6...

In a final word that closes this section on Ezekiel’s commissioning, the prophet hears something that would become all too familiar in Palestine centuries later: ‘Whoever will listen let him listen, and whoever will refuse let him refuse’ (3:27). This was to be Jesus’ theme too...everyone who hears the gospel will...be held responsible.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. How does Ezekiel respond to seeing God’s glory?
 2. Who is speaking when Ezekiel speaks?
 3. How are we to respond to God’s word?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 122a
1. Pray that you and your family will hear God and obey, 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 Ezekiel 3:16-21 a watchman

Notes (See back page for authors)
Ezekiel receives God’s word after his 7 days of stunned silence. God announces that He has appointed Ezekiel as a watchman over His people, Israel.

Calvin notes that *what Ezekiel heard belongs to all teachers of the Church, namely, that they are Divinely appointed and placed as on watch-towers, that they may keep watch for the common safety of all. It was the duty of those who have been appointed from the beginning ministers of the heavenly doctrine to be watchmen.*

As a watchman, Ezekiel was to use God’s words, not his own. He was to warn the people to turn from wicked ways. If he failed to do so, he was responsible in some way for their sin. If he was faithful, even if the people responded with disobedience, he was innocent. Paul notes, most likely with Ezekiel’s commission in mind, that he was innocent of all men’s blood (Acts 20:26-27)

Thomas notes that *what is in view in these verses is a criterion by which true disciples might be distinguished. They are such as continue in God’s Word and ways. The backslidden have no hope in Scripture set before them apart from repentance. Such as have confessed the name of Christ and have fallen into a lifestyle of sin need to repent—quickly! Ezekiel’s companions, even if they once professed to be believers, if now their lives are characterized by ungodliness and rebellion, cannot rest in the profession they once made.*

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What watchmen has God appointed over His church?
2. What is the watchmen’s role?
3. What is the evidence of being truly righteous?

4.     

Praise Pray Psalm 122a
1. Repent, in prayer, of your sin, and return to God
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Ezekiel 2:1-5 a Prophet among them...

Notes (See back page for authors)
Thomas notes that *several features come to the surface by way of a description of Ezekiel as God’s messenger.*

1. *His title: He is called ‘son of man’ (2:1, 3, 6, and about ninety times elsewhere in Ezekiel)... Though man is fallen and depraved, God has given him a power to rule over the creation. He is a king... ‘In this respect,’ says van Groningen, ‘it can be understood why... Jesus Christ himself was prepared to take the phrase Son of Man as a suitable ascription for himself.’*

2. *His authority: ... Since we have already been told in the opening chapter that “The hand of the Lord was upon him’ (1:3) it is not surprising that we find Ezekiel speaking as God’s mouth-piece, driven by ‘the Spirit’ (2:2) and using the characteristic, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says’ (2:4)... What Ezekiel, and others like him, preached and wrote down was not man’s guess-work, or speculation, or wishful thinking. It was God’s utterance, and therefore inerrant truth.*

3. *His dependence upon God: It appears that without the Spirit’s help, Ezekiel was powerless to obey God’s command to rise to his feet (2:2) ... We are never to approach any work for God from the perspective of our own natural abilities.*

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What is noted about Ezekiel’s task in these verses?
2. Whose message was Ezekiel giving?
3. How do we gain strength for our obedience to God?

4.     

Praise Pray Psalm 122a
1. Commit yourselves in prayer to obeying in dependence on God’s Spirit and God’s strength
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Ezekiel 2:6-3:9 Don't be afraid...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Thomas continues noting the *description of Ezekiel as God's messenger...*

4. *His faithfulness: There are a number of ways in which faithfulness was called for. First, Ezekiel was asked to deliver this message to his own people—those who spoke his own language (3:5...Second, God called for faithfulness to the message itself...Three times in a single verse Ezekiel is urged not to be afraid (2:6, and again at 3:9). Some might even be tempted to dilute it, or even tamper with it...Ezekiel is to be faithful to 'all the words' God speaks to him (3:10). Third, Ezekiel's faithfulness reveals itself in the face of opposition...Words repeated several times bring out emphasis, as do the words 'rebel' or 'rebellious' which occur seven times in chapter 2 (2:3, 5, 6, 7, 8), and twenty-five times in the entire book. Clearly, Ezekiel is intent on getting us to grasp the point that rebellion is afoot!...*

5. *His obedience: Ezekiel, like the apostle John, was asked to eat the scroll on which had been written God's words (3:1-2; Rev. 10:8-10). The scroll itself was a leather parchment of some length rolled and tied in some fashion. God enabled Ezekiel to eat it! To his surprise, 'it tasted as sweet as honey' (3:3). This illustrates the truth that God's Word is to be received with delight by his servants (Ps. 119:103)... Obeying the Lord, in what appeared to be a difficult command, proved to be a pleasurable experience. It invariably does.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why was Ezekiel urged not to be afraid?
2. What was Ezekiel commanded about the scroll?
3. What was surprising to Ezekiel when he ate the scroll?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 122a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to seek the sweetness of God's word, 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 Ezekiel 3:10-15 sat among them stunned...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Thomas continues his description of Ezekiel's faithfulness.

... Ezekiel's faithfulness is apparent in the light of the people's suffering. As the glory-chariot of the first chapter rises into the sky, accompanied as it was by a great noise (3:12), Ezekiel once more finds himself at Tel Abib, near the River Kebar, sitting among his suffering fellow-Israelites. The vision of glory is now over. And Ezekiel is suddenly filled with 'bitterness' and 'anger of ... spirit' (3:14). 'The strong hand of the Lord' had brought him into difficult areas and he resented it—so much so that it took him seven days to get over it! (3:16).

If we are honest we shall have to confess that we, too, have felt this anger that Ezekiel experienced. It wasn't just that Ezekiel had been returned to the humdrum existence of his life in Tel Abib; that was, to be sure, a part of it. But the task of delivering what was in effect a funeral dirge to his own people who were already suffering seemed perhaps unfair and beyond his ability. God's ways did not seem to be right. How often we have felt such emotions! The fact that Ezekiel's response is portrayed for us with such frankness is meant both to comfort and warn: to comfort us in the knowledge that such a great man of God as Ezekiel had feet of clay, and to warn us that we need to watch out for similar responses in our own lives.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why was Ezekiel stunned and angry?
2. Is God's word always easy to obey? Explain
3. How should we respond when it seems too difficult?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 122a
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God's ways are always right
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member