

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](http://frankstonrp.org.au) [bit.ly/WTrpcaf](http://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](http://airdrierpcs.org)

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. [bit.ly/WkBbl](http://bit.ly/WkBbl) or [bit.ly/3yrBbl](http://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, Iain Duguid, 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 18:1-4 The fathers eat sour grapes...

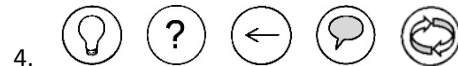
**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
As God is bringing and pronouncing through Ezekiel judgment on Judah for their sin, it appears they are claiming God is unfair. They are quoting a proverb that had apparently become common in their day. The suggestion behind it is, "Our fathers sinned, and now we're getting blamed and punished for it."

Thomas comments that, *citing a proverb which they must have learnt during their days in exile, they blamed their present troubles on the errors of previous generations—not on anything that they themselves had done.*

Thomas continues, *there is nothing new here. Each one of us attempts to wriggle free from personal responsibility for our actions... But blame-shifting is something God will not allow; he holds us personally responsible for our actions. It was true that previous generations had sinned and brought about the judgments of God, including the present exile in Babylon. Nevertheless, the ones who endured the exile were not guiltless. They, too, were sinners and they must face up to it. God therefore forbids them to use this proverb any more (18:3).*

**Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What is the proverb they quoted and what did it mean?
2. Are sins generationally shared?
3. How can we escape the effect of our sin??



**Praise Pray** Psalm 126b<sup>2</sup>

1. Pray for God's help to take responsibility for your own sin
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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 18:30-32 Repent and Live!

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
"Repent. Turn from your sin. Throw off your transgressions. Repent and live!" So, God appeals to His people as this chapter concludes. Repent! Live!

What grace! How merciful is our God. Yet even here we see that this is not merely a work of sinners in themselves. They need a new heart and a new spirit.

Thomas comments that *it must be made clear that in all these examples, Ezekiel is not suggesting that the 'righteous' man obtains the reward of life on the basis of what he has done alone. In order to follow a life of obedience, Ezekiel makes it clear that man needs a 'a new heart and a new spirit' (18:31). Before Jesus ever told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again, or 'from above', in order to obtain the life that the kingdom of heaven offered, the Old Testament prophets had spoken of the very same necessity. The fact is that those who demonstrate a life of obedience, and are therefore assured of the life of glory, are those who have 'turned' from their sin to God (18:21). 'When we discuss the cause [of salvation],' adds Calvin, 'we must look nowhere else but the mercy of God, and there we must stop.'*

This is the declaration of the LORD God, "So repent and live!" Are we making this declaration to unbelievers we know and asking God to give them a new heart and a new spirit?

**Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What is God's call to sinners?
2. How does a sinner get a new heart and new spirit?
3. How might we call to sinners as God does?



**Praise Pray** Psalm 126b

1. Pray that you and your family will call sinners to repent and live, 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 18:25-29 God's ways are fair

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)



Israel claims God's ways are unfair. God counters that His ways are just and fair – but His people's are not.

Thomas comments that *the whole point of this chapter is to underline the fact that each man is accountable for his own actions.* 'Everywhere in Scripture,' writes J. C. Ryle, 'it is a leading principle that man can lose his own soul, that if he is lost at last it will be his own fault, and his blood will be on his own head. The same inspired Bible which reveals this doctrine of election is the Bible which contains the word, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" – "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life" – "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Ezek. 18:31; John 5:40, 3:19). The Bible never says that sinners miss heaven because they are not elect, but because they "neglect the great salvation", and because they will not repent and believe. The last judgement will abundantly prove that it is not the want of God's election, so much as laziness, the love of sin, unbelief, and unwillingness to come to Christ, which ruins the souls that are lost.' ...Who, then, is to blame if a person is not saved? The answer is not God but the sinner!

Yet God, in His mercy, at the risk of being accused of unfairness, offers free grace and forgiveness. Free for the sinner. It cost Christ His life.

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why were the people accusing God of unfairness?
2. Who is to blame if sinners are not saved?
3. Why does a sinner who repents of his sin get life?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 126b
1. Confess, with your family, that you are saved by grace
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Ezekiel 18:5-17 Three generations

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

Ezekiel now illustrates how God holds individuals accountable for their own sin. Three generations are presented – a righteous father who has a wicked son who then has a righteous son.

Duguid notes that Ezekiel presents a case study covering three successive generations, presented in the form of priestly case law. The formula "If a man ..." followed by the judicial verdict is comparable to that found in Leviticus 20:9–21. The three generations described are a righteous man who is succeeded by a wicked son, who is in turn followed by a repentant, righteous son. The behavior of each is assessed against a "checklist" of righteous behaviors, a kind of miniature Ten Commandments. This list covers three basic areas of morality, which may be broadly categorized as piety, chastity, and charity.

Each of the three then have a verdict pronounced. The righteous man – He will certainly live (v9b). His wicked son – He will certainly die. His blood will be on him (v13b). The righteous grandson – He will certainly live. (v17b)

Thomas notes that this parable shows that *unless a way of forgiveness can be found, every sinner is condemned to die, both physically and spiritually.*

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Describe each of the 3 men in this parable?
2. What are the wages of sin? Why?
3. What is the way of forgiveness?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 126b
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that there is a way of forgiveness 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** Ezekiel 18:18-19 Matters of life and death

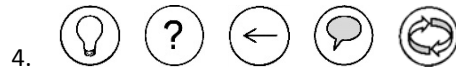
**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
Ezekiel now summarises what God has illustrated with these three generations. He makes clear that this is a matter of life and death! Obey and live. Disobey and die. Calvin comments that *the Prophet often exclaims that no one was punished except he deserved it for his crimes.*

Yet Judah seemed to have the idea that not only did it happen, but it is just and right for the innocent son to be punished for the sin of a wicked father. Even Jesus' disciples seem to have this idea when they ask if the man born blind had sinned – or if his parents had.

For Judah, as already noted, this appears to have been a way to claim their present, difficult circumstances were not their fault, but their fathers'. Smith notes that their *basic question, then, was this: "Why should the son not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity?" Simply because God is impeccably fair. The son who was just, righteous and obedient to the law of God would live. "The soul that sins," however, would die.*

God shows through Ezekiel the great importance of personal responsibility – and also the great seriousness of sin. The one who sins will die. The wages of sin is death. But the gift of God...

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why would one live or die?
  2. Why did Judah think sons would be punished for fathers' sin?
  3. What is the rest of the quote the notes end with?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 126b
1. Confess Your sin to God. Rejoice in His gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Ezekiel 18:20-24 God – no pleasure in the death of the wicked

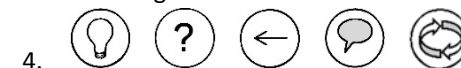
**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
God stresses here that although His judgment is just, it is not due to Him taking a perverse pleasure in punishing sinners. God will punish those who die in their sins and it will be right. But God delights when a person repents unto life!

Thomas notes that *there is a way for man to avoid the condemnation. It is to walk in accordance with God's ways. (v21). Repentance to a life of obedience to God's covenant is something Ezekiel has stressed before (3:19) and will do so again (18:23, 27; 33:12, 14, 19).*

Calvin comments that *God proposes the hope of pardon, and invites and exhorts to penitence all the transgressors of his law. But this doctrine is specially worthy of notice, that God extends his arms, and is prepared to meet and receive all who betake themselves to good fruits: for despair hurls us into madness, and then hardens our hearts by abandoned obstinacy. Hence it is necessary that God should extend his hand towards us, and animate us to penitence.*

Even though we know far more now than Ezekiel did then about God's gracious offer of salvation, we can see God revealing this, in shadows, even through Ezekiel here. Calvin notes that *God desires nothing more earnestly than that those who were perishing and rushing to destruction should return into the way of safety. Do we desire this earnestly? How does it show?*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What does and does not give God pleasure in these verses?
  2. How does a wicked man turn from his sins?
  3. How might it show that we desire the wicked to repent?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 126b
1. Rejoice with your family that God brought you to repent
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member