

# DEEPER

## Daily Bible Study

Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

### Dealing With Bad Decisions

2019, Quarter 4, Lesson 12

#### Sabbath (December 14): Dealing With Bad Decisions

No one has had to deal with worse decisions on the part of others than has God, Who has had to deal with sin. In today's lesson we will look at some general principles that reveal how God responds to sin, and what this means for us.

##### Discussion Questions:

- Read the following passages and discuss what they reveal about how God has dealt with the bad decision of sin:
  - Genesis 3:15. (God wants to create within us a hatred of sin.)
  - Genesis 3:21. (God gives a promise of forgiveness and redemption.)
  - Genesis 3:22-24. (God does not withhold natural consequences of bad decisions.)
  - Isaiah 28:21. (In dealing with sin, God has done, and will do, difficult things.)
  - 2 Peter 3:9. (God gives much time for people to make the right decision.)
  - Revelation 12:7-9. (God did not allow sin to remain in heaven after Satan's rebellion.)

#### Sunday (December 15): Nehemiah's Reaction

One thing is for sure—Nehemiah was not one to sit still and let a bad situation get worse. In today's lesson we will look at his reaction to the crisis in Jerusalem, and then seek to apply lessons learned from his story to our own experience today.

##### Discussion Questions:

- Read Nehemiah 13:23-25. How did Nehemiah react to the mixed marriages taking place? (He was shocked and saddened.) How else would you characterize the nature of his response? (Answers will vary. His reaction was swift and decisive.) How do you think the manner of his reaction impacted the effectiveness of his reaction? (Answers will vary.)
- Read 1 Chronicles 12:32. What were some of the outstanding character traits of the men from the tribe of Issachar? (They understood the times and understood what needed to be done in response. It's not a stretch to assume that they were men of decided action.) How important is it for us as Christians to develop and practice these same character traits, and why? (Answers will vary.)

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- Read Romans 13:11-14. What does this passage say about the importance of recognizing the times in which we live, and acting accordingly? (It's very important!) What advice do you find in this passage for yourself, your family, and your church? (Answers will vary.)
- Read the following passage and discuss its implications for your church in accomplishing the great commission and sharing the Three Angels' Messages:

God wants men connected with His work...whose judgment is at hand, whose minds, when it is necessary, will act like the lightnings. The greatest promptness is positively necessary in the hour of peril and danger. Every plan may be well laid to accomplish certain results, and yet a delay of a very short time may leave things to assume an entirely different shape, and the great objects which might have been gained are lost through lack of quick foresight and prompt dispatch. Much may be done in training the mind to overcome indolence. There are times when caution and great deliberation are necessary; rashness would be folly. But even here, much has been lost by too great hesitancy. Caution, up to a certain point, is required; but hesitancy and policy on particular occasions have been more disastrous than would have been a failure through rashness. {3T 498.1}

### Monday (December 16): Nehemiah's Reproof

Nehemiah didn't leave much doubt in people's minds regarding his opinion of the marriage situation. In today's lesson we look at the importance and role of biblical reproof—something that is rarely enjoyable to receive or give. Nevertheless, its importance is clearly explained by Scripture and in the Spirit of Prophecy. Giving and receiving Spirit-led reproof is something that should not be ignored!

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read Nehemiah 13:26,27. How would you characterize Nehemiah's reproof to the Jews who had married heathen women? (Answers will vary.) For what reasons do you think he came across so strongly on this issue? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Ephesians 5:11. If God's people do not reprove sin, what may we actually be doing? (Having "fellowship," or sympathy, with those sins.)
- Read 2 Timothy 4:2. What important elements of biblical reproof do you see in this verse? (Biblical reproof is timely, is done with love and patience, and is based on biblical doctrine.)
- Read John 16:8. Who alone can ultimately bring reproof home to the heart and effect change? (The Holy Spirit.) Why is this so important to remember? (Answers will vary. Much prayer should always precede reproof.)

Bear in mind that the success of reproof depends greatly upon the spirit in which it is given. Do not neglect earnest prayer that you may possess a lowly mind, and that angels of God may go before you to work upon the hearts you are trying to reach, and so soften them by heavenly impressions that your efforts may avail. If any good is accomplished, take no credit to yourself. God alone should be exalted. God alone has done it all. {2T 52.1}

### Tuesday (December 17): Ezra Reacts

Like Nehemiah, Ezra was shocked and saddened by the intermarriages taking place amongst the Jews. And, like Nehemiah, Ezra determined to do what he could to address and correct the situation. In today's lesson we will look at his reaction to the crisis, and unpack some lessons about the importance of spiritual division for us today.

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### Discussion Questions:

- Read Ezra 9:1,2. What caused the great crisis for the Jews at this time? (They had failed to separate or divide from the heathen nations around them.) What made this failure even worse? (It had been allowed and even initiated by the priests and Levites.)
- Read Leviticus 10:10,11. What responsibility did God give to Israel's priests? (To teach the people to differentiate between right and wrong, holy and unholy, and to follow God's law.)
- Read Genesis 1:4,6,7,14,18. What role did division play in God's work of physical creation? (God divided the physical elements at Creation.)
- Read Revelation 18:4. What role does division play in God's work of spiritual revival and restoration at the end of time? (His people will be called to separate from the world and unite with Him.) What are the most difficult aspects of answering God's call of spiritual division from the world? (Answers will vary.) Do you think God's end-time call of division involves physical or practical aspects in addition to the spiritual aspects? If so, how? (Answers will vary.)

### **Wednesday (December 18): Ezra Acts**

Under Ezra's leadership, the Jews decided to put away, or send back home, all the foreign wives that had been taken. While we today probably view this decision as drastic and harsh, it does teach important lessons about the rigor with which we should deal with sin in our lives.

### Discussion Questions:

- Read the following passage and summarize its basic message regarding the importance of dealing with, and separating from, sin:  

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you. (TMB 62)
- Read the following passages and discuss what they say or reveal about how sin should be dealt with in our lives:
  - Psalm 32:5,6. (Sin can not be ignored, but must be confessed.)
  - Matthew 5:23,24. (Sin negatively affects our relationships with others and with God.)
  - Ephesians 4:26. (Sin should be dealt with today, not tomorrow.)
  - Hebrews 3:15. (The Holy Spirit works on our hearts to convict us of sin, but this conviction should not be ignored or it will eventually lessen and then go away.)

### **Thursday (December 19): Marriage Today**

Nehemiah and Ezra bravely addressed the mixed marriages that had taken place in Jerusalem. While this reform undoubtedly caused much grief for many people (including Nehemiah and Ezra), it was also a necessary step.

### Discussion Questions:

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- Read the passage below. Why was Nehemiah so concerned about these mixed marriages? Should his concerns still be valid concerns for God's people today? (Answers will vary.)

These unlawful alliances were causing great confusion in Israel; for some who entered into them were men in high position, rulers to whom the people had a right to look for counsel and a safe example. Foreseeing the ruin before the nation if this evil were allowed to continue, Nehemiah reasoned earnestly with the wrongdoers. Pointing to the case of Solomon, he reminded them that among all the nations there had risen no king like this man, to whom God had given great wisdom; yet idolatrous women had turned his heart from God, and his example had corrupted Israel. "Shall we then hearken unto you," Nehemiah sternly demanded, "to do all this great evil?" "Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves." {PK 673.2}

- Read the passage below. What warning can we take today from the sad history of those Jews who chose to leave Jerusalem and stay with their foreign wives? (Answers will vary.)

Many who had married idolaters chose to go with them into exile, and these, with those who had been expelled from the congregation, joined the Samaritans. Hither some who had occupied high positions in the work of God found their way and after a time cast in their lot fully with them. Desiring to strengthen this alliance, the Samaritans promised to adopt more fully the Jewish faith and customs, and the apostates, determined to outdo their former brethren, erected a temple on Mount Gerizim in opposition to the house of God at Jerusalem. Their religion continued to be a mixture of Judaism and heathenism, and their claim to be the people of God was the source of schism, emulation, and enmity between the two nations, from generation to generation. {PK 674.3}

- Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-16. Why does God warn so strongly against marrying an unbeliever? (Just as light and dark cannot coexist, neither can someone who loves God and wants to keep His law live peacefully with someone who does not.) Remembering that a woman in Bible prophecy often represents a church, what spiritual warnings as a church should we take from this passage? (While we should be friendly to those of other faiths, uniting with them in ways that will lead to, or even require, compromise should be avoided.)

### Friday (December 20): Spiritual Division at the End of Time

God has always called His people to divide from the world and unite with Him. This has been true throughout history, and it is true today at the end of time. We can learn much about what it means to answer God's call today, by looking at what it meant for people in times past.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read the following verses and discuss what it meant for each of these Bible characters to answer God's call to divide from the people, and the world, around them:
  - Noah. Hebrews 11:7.
  - Abraham. Hebrews 11:8.
  - Moses. Hebrews 11:24-27.
  - The Israelites. Hebrews 11:29.
  - Rahab. Hebrews 11:30,31.
- Read Revelation 18:1-4. What call does God give to His people at the end of time? (To divide from Babylon and unite with Him.) What sacrifice do you think this will require of God's people? (Answers will vary.)

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*For a fascinating comparison of God's call for spiritual division at the end of time, with His work of physical division at creation week, get your copy of Divided We Stand by Tim Rumsey at [www.PathwayToParadise.org](http://www.PathwayToParadise.org). This short book is available in print and as an ebook.*