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# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church  
Grand Prairie, Texas

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## THE WORK THAT GOD BLESSES

Ezra 8:1-36

### KEY THEME:

God blesses the work that seeks to honor Him by humble faith, scrupulous integrity, and Christ-centered worship.

### COMMENTARY:

Honoring God is the major thrust of the chapter. Ezra refused to accept an armed escort from the king because he had told the king how God would protect His people (8:22). Ezra wanted to honor God by a strict accounting of the silver, gold, and other resources that they were transporting to Jerusalem. **Ezra's humble faith in the Lord shines through** in two ways: in the roster of people who were willing to commit themselves to this difficult enterprise; and, in making the journey without armed protection.

It is one thing to go and ask the king's permission to lead a delegation of exiles back to Jerusalem. But it is another thing actually to get volunteers to commit to the difficult task. As Ezra took stock of things, he discovered that there were no Levites present. So Ezra selected nine leaders, along with two men called teachers (8:16) and sent them to Iddo, the leading man at what was apparently a conclave of Levites. He briefed this delegation on what they should say (8:17). "And according to the good hand of our God upon us they brought" back "a man of insight" along with some other Levites, totaling 38 men (8:18-19). Workers are just as vital to the Lord's work as leaders. All the parts of the body of Christ are necessary for the proper functioning of the whole. If you are a believer in Christ, you're a part of His body, the church, and you have a ministry where He wants you to serve.

Ezra knew the structure of his society well enough to direct his appeal to the heads of families (7:28; 8:1), knowing that in most cases if they came they would bring their groups with them. Ezra was thankful (8:18) that the Lord raised up godly, qualified men to serve in leadership positions along with him. Ezra reports that they must humble themselves before God to seek from Him a safe journey for them, their little ones, and all their possessions (8:21). He then explains that this was necessary because "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him" (8:22) and that God delivered them from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes along the way (8:31). Thus the group safely arrived in Jerusalem. Ezra was concerned enough to give a report back to the king that the entire amount was delivered to Jerusalem without any of it being skimmed off through greed and corruption. **We need to be scrupulous in matters of financial integrity, even on small matters.**

**Worshiping God at His house was so important to these exiles that they were willing to suffer hardship, danger, and great inconvenience** to move back to Israel. As soon as they got back to Jerusalem, rested, and accounted for the items for the temple, they offered sacrifices to the Lord.

*(Adapted from "Sermons on Ezra" by Steven Cole)*

### Restoration & Reformation A Study of Ezra

Date	Lesson	Text
04/10	Introduction	
04/17	God's Way Of Renewal	1:1-11
04/24	Evidences of the Resurrection	
05/01	Lessons From A List	2:1-70
05/08	New Beginning With God	3:1-13
05/15	Spiritual Setbacks	4:1-24
05/22	Discouragement	5:1-17
05/29	God - Cause of our Joy	6:1-22
06/05	Life that God Blesses	7:1-28
<b>06/12</b>	<b>Work that God Blesses</b>	<b>8:1-36</b>
06/19	Godly Reaction to Sin	9:1-15
06/26	Genuine Repentance	10:1-44
07/03	Summary and Review	

### Food for Thought

#### Let Honor Meet Honor

The more we serve Christ, the less we will serve self. Grant me the strength this day, O Lord, to persevere, to return honor to Your name where I am serving. My desire is to give myself in selfless devotion because of Your love for me. .

*Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*  
**(Matt 6:1 NKJV)**

*(From "Our Daily Bread", May 30, 2011)*

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **God blesses the work that seeks to honor Him by humble faith**

*Faith and actions working together makes faith complete (James 2:22-24)*

*The work of faith is to believe in Jesus (John 6:28-29)*

*The work of faith should be done with all our strength and abilities (1 Cor 15:58)*

*The work of faith expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6)*

*The work of faith results in being credited as righteousness (Rom 4:4-5)*

*The work of faith is work that endures and is approved of God (John 6:27)*

*The work of faith is prompted by love (1 Thess 1:3)*

*The work of faith should be done with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12)*

*The goal of the work of faith is salvation (1 Peter 1:9)*

### **God blesses the work that seeks to honor Him by scrupulous integrity**

*God upholds those with integrity (Ps 41:11-12)*

*Blamelessness through integrity (Titus 2:7-8)*

*Pure in heart means to have integrity (1 Chron 29:17)*

*Integrity guides the Just (Prov 11:3)*

*We can have integrity during trials because of hope in God (Ps 25:21)*

*Leaders must be committed to integrity (1 Sam 12:1-5)*

*Our conscience, which is controlled by the Holy Spirit, convicts us to have integrity (2 Cor 1:12)*

### **God blesses the work that seeks to honor Him by Christ-centered worship**

*Christ centered worship with an attitude of thanksgiving, reverence and awe (Heb 12:28)*

*Christ centered worship that comes before God in humility and ready to hear and accept His Words (Ps 95:6-8)*

*Christ centered worship that facilitates bringing an offering (Ps 96:8)*

*Christ centered worship that comes before God with gladness and joy (Ps 100:2)*

*Christ centered worship that refreshes (Ps 132:7-8)*

*Christ centered worship that offers our life and bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1)*

*Christ centered worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)*

*Christ centered worship that finds help, through the mercy and grace of God, in the time of need (Heb 4:16)*

*Christ centered worship by bringing glory to God's Name (Ps 86:9)*