

The Monthly Ministry Focus: October 2017

A Moment of Scripture Focus for Every Ministry in First Baptist Church



To Ministry Leader: Please read or have this scripture read at your monthly meeting /activity/rehearsal.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS FOR THIS MONTH:

DO WE LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES?

Nehemiah 9: 32^a-34; 37-38; 10:29 (NIV)

9 ³² Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love ... ³³ In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly. ³⁴ Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our ancestors did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the statutes you warned them to keep...³⁷ Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress. ³⁸ "In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it.

10:29 ...all these [leaders] now join their fellow Israelites the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our Lord.

Commentary/Background: The First Baptist Sunday School lessons for this quarter focus on the major covenants God made with people on behalf of the earth and all human kind. In this "covenant story" Nehemiah tells us that after all God had done for his people in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, the people of Israel had forgotten what they had been taught; faith had been forgotten and discipline was bad. In Chapter 9 the people finally admit they have made a terrible mistake: God, in his great faithfulness, kept his covenant with them, but they did not keep their promises to God. The good news is they learned from their mistakes and made an agreement to turn back to God and follow his commandments. **Do we learn from our mistakes?** Are we like the foolish child who, after burning his hand one time on a flame, goes back to the flame a few days later – either having forgotten the heat and pain or believing it won't be as hot this time – and burns himself yet again? Or are we "grown up" believers making sure we stay away from that fire? We *know* how hot it is and what it can do, and being burned once was enough to teach us to keep our hands away from the fire. Shall we vow this month to learn from our mistakes and keep our agreement with God in all that we do? Because this, we know, is true: He has kept his covenant with us through Jesus Christ.

Covenant scriptures for later reading: (Promise of the New Covenant)

Jeremiah 31:33-34

1 Corinthians 11:25