

Values Matter Discovery Starters

We Are Visionary

12. DO FIRST, THEN TEACH

YWAM is committed to doing first, then teaching. We believe that firsthand experience gives authority to our words. Godly character and a call from God are more important than an individual's gifts, abilities and expertise.

[Deu 4:5-8](#); [Ezr 7:10](#); [Psa 51:12-13](#); [Psa 119:17-18](#); [Pro 1:1-4](#);
[Mat 7:28-29](#); [Act 1:1-2](#); [Col 3:12-17](#); [2Ti 4:1-5](#); [2Pe 1:5-10](#)

Value #12 – Do First, Then Teach: A Three Step Approach

Biblical Foundation:

This was because Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the LORD and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel (Ezr 7:10).

Discovery Starter:

When Ezra enters the story (Ezr 7:1-10), it twice states that "the gracious hand of his God was on him" (7:6,9). Why? It was not accidental. It was because (as various translations say ...) "Ezra had determined to ... had prepared his heart to ... had devoted himself to ... had set his heart to ... had committed himself to ... had resolved to ... had directed his heart to ... had devoted his life to ..." do three things:

- Study
- Obey
- Teach

The focused passion and intentional commitment displayed by Ezra is inspirational. Ezra modeled something that is worthy of imitation. His intense hunger for God shaped his priorities, and calls us to do likewise.

Luke says that the Gospel he wrote was “about everything Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). Do and teach. Jesus’ actions fully embodied his teaching. He walked the talk and that is why his words rang so true! We should model ourselves after his example. When our words are a confirming echo to our deeds, then our teaching has a deep and lasting, transformative impact. But lofty words fall lifeless from the lips of those who do not practice what they preach. We are told that Jesus “was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (Luk 24:19 ESV) and he’s at work to establish in us “every good work and word” (2Th 2:16-17 ESV). Our doing and our teaching are to go hand in hand.

Back to Ezra. He obeyed and taught, but those actions were preceded by study. The same Hebrew word, *darash*, is also used in these passages:

1. David said to Asaph, “Search for the LORD and for his strength; continually seek him” (1Ch 16:11).
2. Josiah instructed Shaphan, “Inquire about the words written in the scroll that has been found” (2Ch 34:21).
3. Isaiah exhorts his readers, “Search the book of the LORD, and see what he will do” (Isa 34:16), and “Seek the LORD while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near” (Isa 55:6).

Study, search, inquire, seek. This is just a sampling of *darash*. It’s a call to set your heart to the thoughtful and passionate pursuit of God.

Keep Going:

Ezra’s intense pursuit of God led him to a place of intimacy with God. What he knew about God was not second-hand knowledge, but resulted from a rich relational encounter with the living God. The record of his devotional life reflects this intimacy. For him God was not a distant divinity but – in his words – “my God.” He tells us, “I fell to my knees and lifted my hands to the LORD my God. I prayed, ‘O my God ...’” (Ezr 9:5-6). When God becomes “my God” through pursuing passion and relational obedience, we like Ezra will have transformative teaching to share with those around us.

The Hebrew phrase translated “my God” is used not only by Ezra, but by other Biblical notables like: Asaph, Caleb, Daniel, David, Elijah, Ethan the Ezrahite, Habakkuk, Hosea, Isaiah, Jacob, Jonah, Joshua, Micah, Moses, Nehemiah, Ruth, Solomon, and Zechariah. But of all of them, David is the one who utters “my God” more frequently than anyone else. Take time to read through these passages in which David speaks of “my God” –

- 2Sa 22:7,22,30; 24:24;
- 1Ch 11:19; 17:25; 21:17; 22:7; 28:20; 29:2,3a,3b,17;

- Psa 3:7; 5:2; 7:1,3; 13:3; 18:2,6,21,28,29; 22:1a,1b,2,10; 25:2; 30:2,12; 31:14; 35:23,24; 38:15,21; 40:5,8,17; 59:1; 63:1; 68:24; 69:3; 86:2,12; 109:26; 140:6; 143:10; 145:1.

As you reflect on these passages, I encourage you to pray and set your heart to seek God, so you too can join the list of those who know him as "my God." May you keep discovering more and more about this amazing God in deeply personal ways. And may your hunger for him lead you continuously to study, obey and teach about your God.

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