

Not Alone: God's Relentless Pursuit

Group Discussion Guide | July 12

Introduction

As our church completes a walkthrough the Old Testament together, we noticed how God did not leave His people alone then—and does not leave us alone, now. Each week during this series we provided Old Testament passages that connected the focus of the past Sunday's message and allowed you to explore the people, places, and events further.

As you read these passages, you will be guided to reflect on four aspects of the text, using the acronym L.I.F.E.

- L: Literal** – What is actually happening in the text? Who are the people? Where are the places? Who is doing what to whom and why?
- I: Incarnational** – How does this text point to Jesus? Where do we see our need for Him, a promise of His coming, or a symbol (“type”) of His role or function?
- F: Formational** – What does this text call us to do? Is there a command to obey? A principle to apply? A way of responding to God?
- E: Eternal** – How does these passages point us to our ultimate future reality? How does this text gain significance and meaning in light of “the end of the story” that was unknown to the readers at the time, but that we’ve been given a glimpse of?

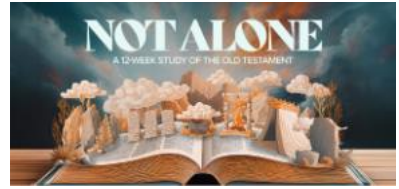
Reading: God Rebuilds His People

Here's the reading for this week. If you read five days this week, you will need to average just under 1 ½ chapters a day. Or experience them during three “sessions” and read all the chapters listed next to each section at once. They are designed to be grouped together as listed.

Ezra 1–3: The rebuilding of the temple begins

Nehemiah 1–2: The rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls begins

Nehemiah 8–9: The rebuilding of the hearts of the people begins



As you read, look for examples of answer to any of the L.I.F.E questions and make note of them in this guide or in your Bible.

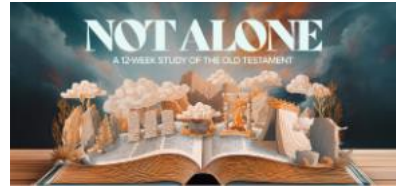
L.I.F.E Notes on Ezra 1–3:

L.I.F.E Notes on Nehemiah 1–2:

L.I.F.E Notes on Nehemiah 8–9:

As you complete your reading for this week, look back on the reading as a whole and reflect on the following questions.

- **Literal:** What did you notice about how God arranged the circumstances for the return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple, the walls, and the people?



- **Incarnational:** In Ezra 3, Zerubbabel begins the rebuilding of the temple. It takes approximately 20 years to complete. In John 2:19, Jesus says that if the temple is destroyed, He will rebuild it again in three days—referring to His own death and resurrection. In what ways is Jesus the new and better temple?
- **Formational:** How can you emulate the faith, gratitude, and repentance demonstrated by the Jews who return from exile?
- **Eternal:** Read Revelation 22:1-5. How does the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple anticipate the restoration of Eden to come?

L.I.F.E. Insight

Prayerfully consider one thing that has stood out to you from this week's reading. Why might God be calling your attention to it? How is He inviting you to respond? Consider praying what you've noticed in the space below.