

THE FAITH-IN-ACTION PREACHER  
DEVOTIONAL READING: Ezekiel 18:25–32  
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Ezra 9–10

**EZRA 10:1–12**

**1** Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.

**2** And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

**3** Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

**4** Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.

**5** Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they swore.

**6** Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.

**7** And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem;

**8** And that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

**9** Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

**10** And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

**11** Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

**12** Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

## KEY VERSE

*Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.—Ezra 10:6*

## PROPHETS FAITHFUL TO GOD'S COVENANT

### Unit 2: Prophets of Restoration

#### LESSONS 5–8

#### LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Summarize Ezra's reaction to the people's sin.
2. Explain why intermarriage with foreigners caused Ezra grief.
3. Write a confession to God for a specific sin and a corresponding course of repentant action.

#### LESSON OUTLINE

##### Introduction

- A. The Way of Escape
- B. Lesson Context
- I. Conviction of Sin (Ezra 10:1–4)
  - A. Confession and Weeping (v. 1) *The Power of Confession*
  - B. Covenant and Courage (vv. 2–4)
- II. Call to Appear (Ezra 10:5–8)
  - A. Everyone Promises (v. 5)
  - B. Ezra Mourns (v. 6)
  - C. Proclamation Issued (vv. 7–8)
- III. Call to Action (Ezra 10:9–12)
  - A. Fearful People (v. 9)
  - B. Fearless Preacher (vv. 10–11)
  - C. Faithful Practice (v. 12)
    - “Good Sermon Today, Preacher!”

##### Conclusion

- A. Content with Mere Conviction?

## B. Prayer

## C. Thought to Remember

### HOW TO SAY IT

Assyrian	Uh- <i>sear</i> -ee-un.
Babylonian	Bab-ih- <i>low</i> -nee-un.
Cyrus	<i>Sigh</i> -russ.
Eliashib	E- <i>lye</i> -uh-shib.
Hezekiah	Hez-ih- <i>kye</i> -uh.
Jehiel	Jay- <i>hi-eel</i> .
Johanan	Jo- <i>hay</i> -nan.
Josiah	Jo- <i>sigh</i> -uh.
Nebuchadnezzar	<i>Neb</i> -yuh-kud- <i>nez</i> -er.
Nehemiah	<i>Nee</i> -huh- <i>my</i> -uh.
Shechaniah	She- <i>kawn</i> -yay.

## Introduction

### A. The Way of Escape

Escape rooms are becoming a fun-time phenomenon for a variety of ages. The premise is simple. A group of people pay to be locked in a room and left with a series of clues and hints to utilize in solving a creative puzzle in order to escape. This is all done with a given time limit that is certain to get the blood pumping as the clock ticks down and pressure mounts.

Now, imagine that a lone figure in the corner actually has the answers to provide the way out. In fact, the group was told upon entering that someone had the answers they needed. Who in their right mind would hear that kind of information and not use it to ensure the success of the group? Victory is on the line!

There are times in relationship with God when people essentially lock themselves up and put their lives on the line. Yet, when solutions are offered for real problems, people have a choice: to listen to their guide or to go it alone. Will the solution be applied or not?

### B. Lesson Context

Under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian Empire overtook Jerusalem and exiled the people of Israel in 586 BC (see lesson [8 Lesson Context](#)). Eventually, the Persian King Cyrus defeated Babylon. He released Jewish exiles to return home to Jerusalem in 538 BC for the express purpose of rebuilding the temple (see [Ezra 10:1a](#), below). Following that first wave of returning exiles in 538 BC was a second led by Ezra in 458 BC ([7:7](#), [13](#)). He desired to restore the people to a state of faithful adherence to God's law ([7:25–27](#)). The third and final wave of exiles returned to Jerusalem in 444 BC, led by Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 2:1–9](#); see lesson [7](#)).

Ezra was a scribe of the Law of Moses, commissioned by God ([Ezra 7:6](#)). Ezra was made aware that the people of Israel had committed grave sins (chapter 9). The most glaring infraction was that they had intermarried with people groups outside of Israel ([Deuteronomy 7:3](#)). This prohibition was not based on any racial or ethnic enmity. Rather, God warned in [Deuteronomy 7:4](#) that foreign faiths “will turn away thy son from following me” (compare [2 Corinthians 6:14–18](#)). Yet even as they returned from exile for sin, men of Judah were marrying pagan women! If these men were divorcing Jewish wives as well, the result was abuse of divorce laws and resulting hardship for the former wives (compare [Malachi 2:13–16](#); [Matthew 19:1–9](#)). Ezra’s reaction to the people’s disobedience serves as the subject of today’s lesson.

## I. Conviction of Sin ([EZRA 10:1–4](#))

### A. Confession and Weeping (v. 1)

**1a. Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God.**

After the initial shock of the report *Ezra* received (see [Lesson Context](#)), he immediately took it to heart. Ezra led by example. The sincerity of his distress over Judah’s sins is emphasized by the intensifying verbs used to describe his actions (compare [Nehemiah 1:3–6](#)). Ezra’s physical posture matched his spiritual posture before the Lord. Both body and spirit were marked by brokenness and sorrow.

*The house of God* refers to the temple that had been rebuilt after Solomon’s temple was destroyed in the Babylonian conquest ([2 Chronicles 36:19](#); [Ezra 3:7–13](#); [6:13–18](#)). Construction was completed in 515 BC, and this second temple stood until the Romans destroyed it in AD 70.

**1b. There assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.**

People of all ages need good leaders. This is as true in the area of repentance as anything else. When charting revivals in the Old Testament, movements toward God often started with one leader feeling a burden (examples: [1 Samuel 7](#); [2 Kings 22:1–23:30](#); [2 Chronicles 29–31](#)). Though the circumstances varied, the initiating factor for revival was someone acting on behalf of the people. The leaders may have had a private revelation or realization, followed by the gathering of an assembly, as here in verse 1. Here, Ezra’s own conviction and contrition became an example for others to gather before the Lord and weep over their sins.

#### *What Do You Think?*

What factors must be present for you to truly regret your sins and repent of them?

#### *Digging Deeper*

Are those factors the same for all Christians? Why, or why not?

### ***THE POWER OF CONFESSION***

When Jim and Cammy (names changed) got married, neither was a Christian. During Cammy’s second pregnancy, Jim left. They divorced. After Cammy’s second daughter was born, a friend led Cammy to the Lord. She remarried, this time to a Christian who loves her daughters as his own.

Jim spiraled into alcoholism, destroying two more marriages. One day, gun in hand, he cried out to God, “If you’re real, help me!” Through a friend’s witness, Jim found Christ. He wrote to his daughters and to Cammy, expressing repentance and asking for forgiveness. Later he spoke face-to-face with them all, reaffirming his repentance and how Christ had changed him.

Twenty-five years later, Jim, Cammy and her husband, and their daughters are all friends, having found forgiveness in Christ. As Ezra led Israel in confessing their sins, he was bringing the nation to a restored relationship with God. How can your own confession of sin repair your relationship with God and those you hurt?

—C. R. B.

### B. Covenant and Courage (vv. 2–4)

**2a. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land.**

In the Old Testament, there are at least nine men named *Shechaniah*, nine named *Jehiel*, and eight named *Elam*. Sorting them out is difficult! The Shechaniah who speaks here is a descendant of David according to [1 Chronicles 3:1, 21–22](#). His father, Jehiel, was likely also the father of Obadiah, one of the returning exiles ([Ezra 8:9](#)). Jehiel is included in a grouping of those guilty of intermarriage ([Ezra 10:17–18, 26](#), not in our printed text). It is plausible that Shechaniah overcame personal and familial shame to speak up and not attempt to cover up his family’s sin.



Visual for Lessons 6 & 13. While discussing verse 11, point to this visual as you ask what situations need to be turned from to experience forgiveness.

The Hebrew word translated *trespassed* regularly denotes the violation of a covenant relationship or other expected behavior in the Old Testament (example: [1 Chronicles 5:25](#)). Marital unfaithfulness is a frequent analogy regarding Israel's relationship with God, with Israel being the adulterous wife (see [Isaiah 62:5](#); [Jeremiah 3:8](#); [Ezekiel 16:22–38](#)).

The *strange wives* were women not part of the covenant people. Israel had been repeatedly warned that *the people of the land* of Canaan would lead them into apostasy ([Deuteronomy 7:1–4](#); [Joshua 23:12–13](#)). Whether these particular wives were guilty of such a thing is unknown. However, the sad example of Solomon—the wise king whose foreign wives “turned away his heart after other gods” ([1 Kings 11:4](#))—should have stood as a grave warning in the time after the exile. Ezra's contemporary Nehemiah reminded the people of Solomon's failure, exhorting them not to suffer the same fate ([Nehemiah 13:26–27](#)).

### **2b. Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.**

A repentant heart is what makes *hope* possible for right relations with God to be restored. God's patience with His people is demonstrated time and again throughout the Old Testament. The prophets often invoked past episodes of God's gracious deliverance in order to motivate the people toward obedience. Ezra reminded the remnant in Jerusalem that “God has punished us less than our iniquities deserve” ([Ezra 9:13](#)).

Hope is always grounded in the possibility of God's mercy. After a moral failure or personal tragedy, hope exists because, as King David learned firsthand, God is “good, and does good” ([Psalm 119:68](#)). Hope grounded in God's goodness led others to write of God's being gracious, slow to anger, and full of mercy (see [Psalms 103:8](#); [145:8](#); [Joel 2:13](#); [Jonah 4:2](#)).

**3a. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God.**

*Now therefore* signals a step forward from the sins of the past and present, as defined in [Ezra 10:2](#). This suggestion from Shechaniah is drastic and may appear cruel to modern readers. Some might wonder if God really wanted the men to send *away* their *wives* and children, considering [Deuteronomy 21:10–14](#). But in the days following the return from Babylon, the people were very aware of how unfaithfulness had led to their removal from the promised land. Foreign women could very well lead their husbands back into idolatry, as had happened to King Solomon. Thus the threat the foreign wives posed was too great to ignore. The people had to be intent on being holy in order to please God.

We should note that God's covenant people were not to mistreat non-Israelites who lived among them—quite the opposite (see [Leviticus 19:33–34](#); [23:22](#))! But treating non-Israelites with kindness isn't in the same category as intermarriage. The extraordinary circumstances the people faced called for extraordinary action.

Shechaniah referred to Ezra deferentially as *my lord*. This acknowledged Ezra's authority to decide and lead the people based on what he believed was right. Ezra, after all, was both student and teacher of the Law of Moses. His conclusions on this matter were well-informed.

Reverence and awe were given to God's words as if God himself were present. God helps those “poor and of a contrite spirit, [who] trembleth at [God's] word” ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).

### **3b. And let it be done according to the law.**

In view is *the law* that forbade certain marital unions (see [Lesson Context](#)). Notable law-breakers in this regard included Salmon (who married Rahab, a Canaanite) and Boaz (who married Ruth, a Moabite). These two women are honored as ancestors of Jesus himself ([Joshua 2:1](#); [Ruth 4:10](#); [Matthew 1:5](#)). But the captivity from which the Jews had returned was a vivid reminder of the dangers of idolatry. Maybe some

nonJewish wives were exceptions to the rule, like Rahab and Ruth. But the law existed because such cases *were* exceptions, not the rule. And we also note that Rahab and Ruth professed allegiance to God in both word and action ([Joshua 2:11](#); [Ruth 1:16](#)).

*What Do You Think?*

When considering [Ezra 10:3](#) alongside [Exodus 34:16](#); [1 Kings 11:4](#); [Matthew 5:32](#); [Romans 7:1–3](#); [1 Corinthians 7:12–14, 39](#); [2 Corinthians 6:14](#); and [1 Timothy 5:8](#), how should Christians react to similar situations today?

*Digging Deeper*

What other texts and contexts are relevant?

**4. Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.**

We can only imagine the overwhelmingly emotional toll of separating from one’s wife and children. The difficulty of the demand is what brought forth the strong imperative *Arise!* This marks the beginning of the shift from conviction to action on the part of the leaders.

**II. Call to Appear**

**(EZRA 10:5–8)**

**A. Everyone Promises (v. 5)**

**5. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they swear.**

*Ezra* made sure that *the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel* were on the same page. Opposition to the task ahead had to be absolutely minimized (see [Ezra 10:15](#))! So the leaders and lay people made a covenant with God to “put away all the wives, and such as are born of them” ([10:3](#)).

*What Do You Think?*

In what ways can you better support a fellow Christian in taking action to repent of sins?

*Digging Deeper*

How would that action differ, if at all, when dealing with sin of a group?

**B. Ezra Mourns (v. 6)**

**6. Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.**

During this emotional day, *Ezra* withdrew to be alone in the dwelling of

*Johanan*. That man and his father, *Eliashib*, were Levites ([Nehemiah 12:23](#)). We recall that all priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.

While the people were grieved and motivated to action, Ezra was overcome with his own grief regarding *the transgression*. His fast from *bread* and *drink* seems to have been spontaneous, a result of the pain in his spirit. When we think of mourning, it is usually in relation to death—the loss of a loved one or someone special. Ezra carried a sense of loss as he reflected on years his people wasted as they chased false gods and denied the Lord.

### C. Proclamation Issued (vv. 7–8)

**7–8. And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem; and that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.**

The word *they* likely refers to the chief priests and Levites to whom Ezra gave special charge to spread news of the covenant. But it could mean that each person bore the responsibility to herald the agreed upon terms of their resolution.

*Three days* was a quick turnaround for a message to be proclaimed and journeys to be undertaken through all *Judah* and back to *Jerusalem*. But the speed with which repentance and action would happen throughout would indicate the importance the people put on rectifying their wrongs.

The severe consequences for not coming to Jerusalem also reveals the seriousness of the people's resolution. Forfeiting one's land and possessions and being cut off from *the congregation* would be the same treatment the foreign wives experienced. Those so penalized would have to find their homes elsewhere, away from God's people.

## III. Call to Action

### (EZRA 10:9–12)

#### A. Fearful People (v. 9)

**9. Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.**

Ten of the 12 tribes of Israel had been removed to Assyrian exile more than 180 years previous ([2 Kings 17:6](#)). So only the two tribes of *Judah and Benjamin*, having returned from Babylonian exile, remained to answer the call to come to *Jerusalem*.

*The twentieth day of the [ninth] month* corresponds to early December. *Rain* is normal at that point in the year. So in addition to the spiritual *trembling*, there was also physical shivering in the cold, heavy rain. How often the spiritual and physical overlap! Distress to one's body, whether in the form of illness, injury, or mere discomfort, often goes hand in hand with spiritual distress. Sometimes one results in the other; at other times they seem to have independent causes, but the presence of both multiplies the misery. In such conditions *all the people sat* outside and waited.

#### B. Fearless Preacher (vv. 10–11)

**10. And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.**

Sometimes *Ezra* is referred to as *the priest* (here and in [Ezra 10:16](#)), sometimes he is referred to as “the scribe” ([Nehemiah 8:1, 4, 13; 12:36](#)), and sometimes by both of those terms together ([Ezra 7:11, 21; Nehemiah 8:9; 12:26](#)). His statement *increase the trespass of Israel* implies that the people hadn’t learned the lesson of the exile. Instead of working to decrease sin, they were working for the opposite (compare [2 Chronicles 28:13](#)). So Ezra restated the charge (compare [Ezra 10:2a](#), above).

*What Do You Think?*

What leadership role are you gifted to exercise when dealing with communal, collective sin?

*Digging Deeper*

What leadership actions in this regard should be personal and private rather than public?

**11. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.**

*Confession* is the first response to conviction and a necessary step toward reconciliation with God (compare [1 John 1:9](#)). The next step is to follow through *and do [God’s] pleasure*, that is, what He commanded in the first place, what He has desired all along.

To be required to separate *from the strange wives* was not necessarily a judgment on any specific conduct on the wives’ part since no such conduct is listed. Instead, those wives were assumed to retain the priorities and religious practices of *the people of the land* among whom they had grown up. Only by severing their influence could the men of Judah and Benjamin be certain that the wives wouldn’t tempt them to idolatry.

### C. Faithful Practice (v. 12)

**12. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.**

Concluding this part of the text is the *loud voice* of a unified people who experienced conviction of sin. Ezra’s leadership helped foster that commitment. Any spiritual leader worth following will always direct people to God and His glory only.

*What Do You Think?*

In what kinds of situations would collective, communal reactions be more appropriate than private, individual reactions?

*Digging Deeper*

How do [1 Corinthians 5:1–2, 9–13](#) and [2 Corinthians 2:5–11](#) help frame your answer?

**'GOOD SERMON TODAY, PREACHER!'**

I suspect it's the same in most homes: parents frequently tell their children to clean up their rooms, but the kids keep dragging their feet. The parents' approach may vary from gentle reminders to exasperated verbal assault such as "Your room looks like a pigpen!" Parents have been known to bribe with an increase in monetary allowance and/or punish by withholding privileges or imposing time-outs and groundings.

Without thinking about it, Dad and Mom might be guilty of the same behavior they dislike in their offspring. The parents hear the minister speaking of God's standards and think, *Yes, that's something I should pay attention to someday.* They may compliment the minister, saying, "Good sermon today, preacher!" That's like their child responding to "Clean up your room" with, "Good idea, Mom. I'll get around to it."

Even after Judah's "time-out" in Babylon, it took a while for God to get the people to "clean their room." Finally, under Ezra's dedicated leadership, they responded with a positive yes to God's instructions. In what situation are you putting off doing what God wants?

—C. R. B.

## Conclusion

### A. Content with Mere Conviction?

One of the great gifts for Christian instruction in the Old Testament is seeing episode after episode of Israel's rebellion against God and God's subsequent restoration of His covenant people. In today's text, we have been party to yet another instance of this. The people of God were again in danger of sliding back into idolatry because of their disobedience to God's law. This is a reminder that God's laws are put in place for our good and His glory. Like the ancient Jews, we too are tempted by the culture that surrounds us—including the temptation to marry unbelievers (see [2 Corinthians 6:14–18](#)).

God's mercy provided hope for Israel to be restored to a right relationship with Him. But that required someone who would take the lead! Not everyone is gifted in the same way in this regard, and different leaders may respond differently to the same problem. (It's rather humorous to contrast Ezra's leadership style in [Ezra 9:3](#) with that of Nehemiah in [Nehemiah 13:25](#).) But it all begins with having a burden of the heart and soul.

God's forgiving grace is available to us because of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The church is His bride ([2 Corinthians 11:2](#); [Revelation 19:7–9](#); [21:2, 9](#); [22:17](#)). May we be faithful to our bridegroom!

### B. Prayer

Dear Father, guard our hearts against rationalizing our sins! Convict us so that repentant action may follow! May Your Word ever guide us to be faithful. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

Action is the hallmark of true conviction.

## INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

Enhance your lesson with KJV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the KJV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

## Into the Lesson

Put class members into pairs to complete this sentence:

*The toughest decision I ever made was \_\_\_\_\_.*

After a few minutes, ask volunteers to share results of their discussions with the whole class. Make a transition by saying, “As we explore the thoughts and actions of a man in today’s lesson, think about whether his decisions were harder than any you’ve ever had to make.”

## Into the Word

Create the setting by summarizing the Lesson Context as well as key elements of Ezra’s mourning and prayer that is recorded in [Ezra 9](#).

Distribute handouts (you prepare) with the following, or simply write them on the board:

**What Ezra felt:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advice Ezra received:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What Ezra demanded:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How people responded:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ask a volunteer to read today’s text while class members listen for entries for these four. Then summarize the facts of the story by commenting on each as appropriate.

Have class members regroup with partners they chose earlier. Give some pairs the following on handouts (you prepare) to complete:

*How does today’s passage illustrate the following?*

- Sin cannot be excused.
- God will restore those who repent.
- Sin results in suffering.
- Recognizing sin for what it is is vital for restoring relationship with God.
- Sin among God’s people must be addressed, even by those not personally guilty of the sin at issue.
- One person who mourns sin can lead a whole nation to repent.
- God does not take sin lightly.

Give the other study pairs the following set of questions on handouts (you prepare):

*What might have happened ...*

- if Ezra had condemned the people without naming himself among the nation that had failed?
- if Shechaniah had tried to minimize the seriousness of the people’s sin?
- if Ezra had chosen a less severe remedy for the sinful intermarriages?
- if the leading priests and Levites had failed to take the oath Ezra demanded?

- if Ezra had experienced only disappointment or disgust instead of agony at the unfaithfulness?

Reconvene for whole-class discussion of discoveries, insights, and conclusions.

*Option.* After the discussion, distribute copies of the “What Would You Say?” exercise from the activity page, which you can download for learners to complete in pairs as indicated. Be prepared to offer your own conclusions.

### **Into Life**

Distribute slips of paper and ask participants to write down (in code, if they wish) one personal sin they have avoided confronting, adding a course of action to correct this problem and remove the sin. Stress that you will not collect the slips; rather, learners are to put them where they will serve as a reminder to bring their sin and their repentance before God in prayers this week.

*Option.* Distribute to study pairs copies of one or two sentences of the “Stinkin’ Thinkin’ ” exercise from the activity page along with instructions. Allow three minutes for discussion before having the whole class consider the entire list.

Close with a time of guided prayer as you challenge learners to pray silently in response to this prompt: “God, help me know that my sin matters. Thank You for forgiveness through the sacrifice of Your Son! As I remember that sacrifice, I will take the following actions to reject this sin.”

### ACTIVITY PAGE

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