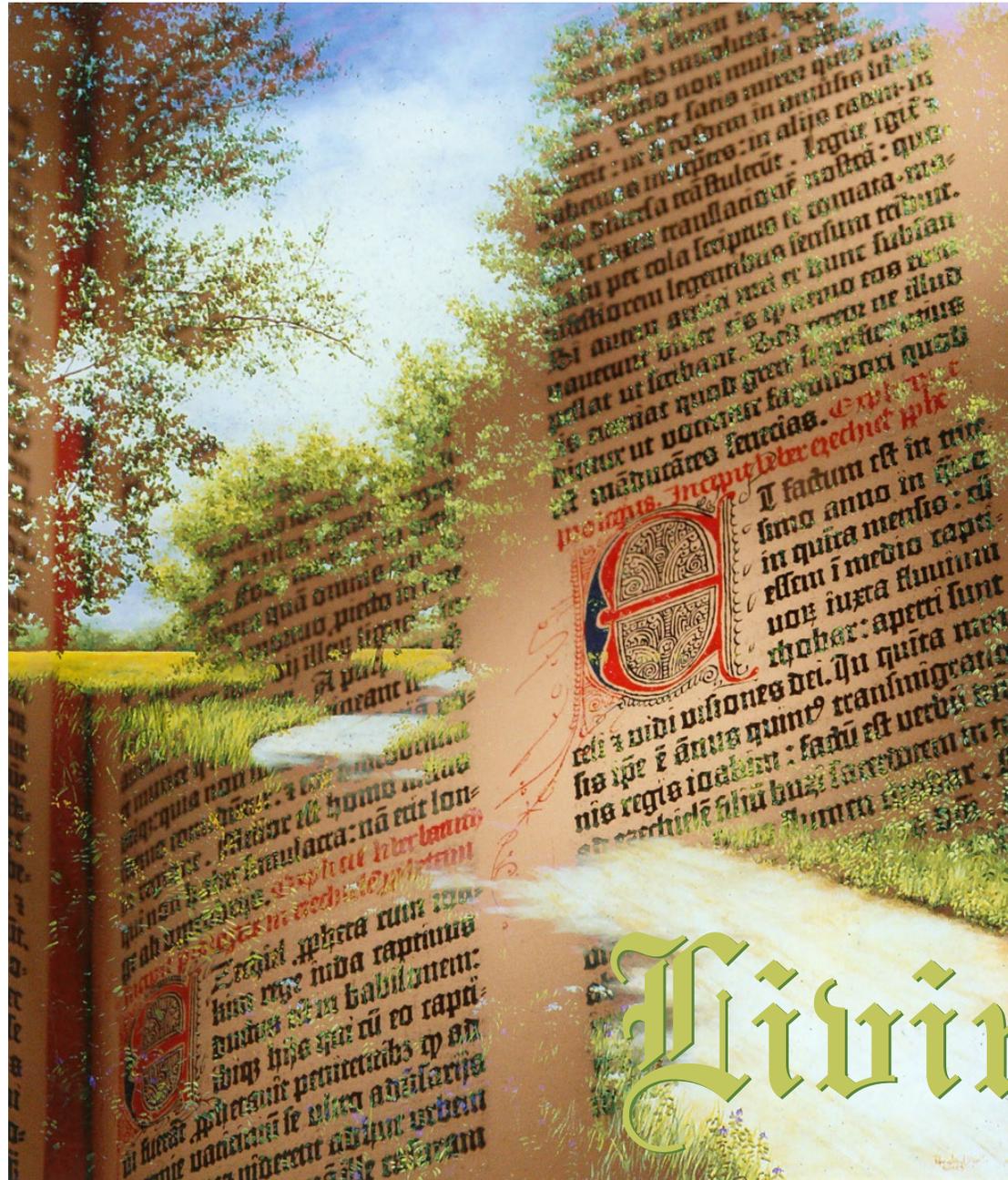


On the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God *was* upon him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Ezra 7:9b-10



Living It

FAR TOO MANY IN THE KINGDOM do not realize that life in Christ is a full-contact sport. Too many believers think that once they “believe,” well, that’s the end of it.



The priest/scribe Ezra, who led a second group of exiles from Babylon back to Jerusalem in 458 BC, was a deeply spiritual man. And his brief biography, recorded in his eponymous book and the companion book of Nehemiah, gives us a picture of someone living far beyond mere belief.

Ezra was “a scribe skilled in the law of Moses”—the Bible of his day. This tells us that he didn’t just believe it to be true, or that he was merely familiar with its content. Ezra diligently *studied* his Bible; he knew it inside and out. This intimate knowledge of Scripture made two things possible in his life. Knowing what God said in His word meant that Ezra could *live* by it. The words God handed down to Moses were not just theory, not just philosophy; they were words for *life*, and whatever God said to do, Ezra did.

His in-depth understanding of Scripture also equipped Ezra to *teach it to others*. That which was the template for his own life became the curriculum with which Ezra instructed others. From the pulpit, in the classroom, as well as by the very integrity and righteousness of his own life, Ezra taught the eternal truths of God.



“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.”

John 17:17-19

Believers do not grow in Christ-likeness by just believing that the Bible is truly God's word; they grow in Christ-likeness by *studying* the Bible, understanding what it says, immersing themselves in the truth of what God has written for them personally in its pages. The Christian's goal should be to please God, to glorify Him through personal obedience to Him. But how can we do that if we do not know what He says?

Only when we faithfully attend to His holy and eternal curriculum are we then able to *live by it*. Living is an ongoing process; for the believer it literally never ends. Just so, coming to learn and understand the life we are to live in Christ is an ongoing process that will only end once we are standing in His physical presence. The Christian's temporal life is the testament bearing witness to his level of obedience, and to what he understands about his God.

We cannot live by what we do not know.



Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Colossians 1:28-29 ESV

It is irretrievably logical, as well as biblically commanded, that those who have immersed themselves in the truth of Scripture should then generously *teach* that truth to others. When we have acquired something good and glorious, it is only natural that we share it with those without.

Knowledge of God through His word produces a love for His kingdom; those who love Christ Jesus also love those who call upon His name, and desire that they, too, attain to the same life in Him.