

The questions below are designed to be used by Saylorville Church Community Groups as they meet during the week following the Sunday morning message at Saylorville. The intent is not for groups to answer every question, but for leaders to use the questions as a guide as they tailor the discussion to the unique needs of their group. The Sunday message and these questions can be found each week at [www.saylorvillechurch.com/sermons](http://www.saylorvillechurch.com/sermons).

**WANT MORE CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY?**

- Check out **Thomas Constable's Expository Notes**, available free online [here](http://www.StudyLight.org). ([www.StudyLight.org](http://www.StudyLight.org))

**CONNECT WITH YOUR GROUP (10-15 MINUTES)**

- Pastor Curt opened by mentioning one famous metaphor, "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get." What does that metaphor actually mean?
- Explain the meanings of these metaphors by well-known authors:
  - "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." William Shakespeare
  - "A good conscience is a continual Christmas." Benjamin Franklin
  - "Chaos is a friend of mine." Bob Dylan

**APPLY THE BIBLE (45-60 MINUTES)**

- **Remember** what you talked about last time. Is there anything you need to **follow up** on this week?
- **Review** your Sermon Notes together. What is **one thing** that sticks out to you about what you learned?
- **Read** this week's passage together. In his message, **Pastor Curt showed us three insights on perseverance from Ezra chapters 5 and 6.**

**Three Insights On Perseverance:****1. Perseverance begins with hope (Ezra 5:5)**

- "Hope itself is like a star - not to be seen in the sunshine of prosperity, but only to be discovered in the night of adversity." (Charles Spurgeon) Have you ever been in a situation where there seemed to be no hope? Tell your group about what that was like?
- What can you do every morning to remind yourself of the hope that you have as a Christian? Brainstorm as a group.

**2. Perseverance continues with humble holiness (Ezra 5:16)**

- Pastor Curt said, "You will not persevere in the Christian life or in Christian ministry if you have to be the person who gets the credit." Do you find it difficult to allow others (even those with whom you disagree) to get the credit for success at home, at work, or even at church? Share examples.
- The Temple, mentioned 28 times in Ezra 5-6, was the the dwelling place of God on earth. Turn to the New Testament and look up 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. How are you taking care of God's temple - your body and lifestyle? (What you do, listen to, say, think about, where you go and what you do.)

**3. Perseverance concludes with a holiday (Ezra 6:16 and 20b-22)**

- Look again at Ezra 6:16 and 20b-22 and note the emphasis on joy and celebration. Would you say you are a joyful Christian? How do you express the joy you have in Jesus? Do people see it?
- What would it look like if you personally, your Community Group, and Saylorville Church lived out the "abundant life" that Jesus came to give us (John 10:10)?
- What are you going through right now in which you are struggling to persevere?

**PRAY TOGETHER (5-15 MINUTES)**

- Pray that your group would persevere until we are all made perfect in the Promised Land.

