

A NEW HEART

CENTRAL TRUTH

In this week's passage, the prophet Ezekiel prophesies that God's people will receive something new: a new heart and a new spirit. The Lord will gather His people and transform them in such a way that they will be empowered to delight in Him and obey His instructions. Together, we'll discover that **God promises to restore His people** and that new life is found in Him alone.

KEY QUESTION

- ← Why did the Lord promise His people would receive a new heart and new spirit? What does this mean?

The Lord's promise of a new heart and a new spirit is a promise of transformation! The hard, stony hearts of God's people would be replaced with soft hearts of flesh. In other words, God's people would no longer be characterized by their rebellion and unresponsiveness to the Lord and His ways; instead, they would be tender and responsive to the Lord.

KEEP IN MIND

- There may be students in your small group who've yet to experience new birth in Christ. As you prepare to lead this week, make a point to pray for these students to respond to God's grace through faith and to begin following Jesus. When you see these students, thank them for coming to small group and participating, and invite them to come back!
- In this week's passage, Ezekiel prophesies that the Israelites' obedience to the Lord will result in covenant blessings—specifically, the flourishing and productivity of their land. Students may wrongfully assume that obeying the Lord will always result in “blessings” and that difficulties are “curses” as a result of disobedience. Use this week's **Culture Note** to help you unpack the importance of understanding these verses in context.

APPLICATION

- ↻ How can we be praying for the people in our lives who have yet to receive new life from the Lord?

THE WIN

FOR THE STUDENT: Students win by understanding that the Lord restores His people and brings new life to those who respond to Him in faith. His Spirit empowers us to live a life of obedience to Him.

FOR THE LEADER: Remind students that we aren't called to follow the Lord in our own strength; rather, it's only with the Spirit's help that we're able to worship and serve Him.

7 ARROWS

- ↻ What does this passage say?
- ↑ What does this passage tell us about God?
- ← What did this passage mean to its original audience?
- ↔ How does this passage change the way I relate to people?
- ↓ What does this passage tell us about the human heart?
- ↻ How does this passage prompt me to pray?
- What does this passage demand of me?