

Taking God Seriously

Zechariah 7:1-12 On December 7 of the fourth year of King Darius's reign, another message came to Zechariah from the LORD.

²The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech, along with their men, to seek the LORD's favor. ³They were to ask this question of the prophets and of the priests at the Temple of the LORD Almighty: "Should we continue to mourn and fast each summer on the anniversary of the Temple's destruction, as we have done for so many years?"

⁴The LORD Almighty sent me this message: ⁵"Say to all your people and your priests, 'During those seventy years of exile, when you fasted and mourned in the summer [commemorating the destruction of the temple] and at the festival in early autumn [memorializing the assignation of governor Gedaliah], was it really for me that you were fasting? ⁶And even now in your holy festivals, you don't think about me but only of pleasing yourselves.

⁷Isn't this the same message the LORD proclaimed through the prophets years ago when Jerusalem and the towns of Judah were bustling with people, and the Negev and the foothills of Judah were populated areas?"

⁸Then this message came to Zechariah from the LORD: ⁹"This is what the LORD Almighty says: Judge fairly and honestly, and show mercy and kindness to one another. ¹⁰Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, and poor people. And do not make evil plans to harm each other.

¹¹"Your ancestors would not listen to this message. They turned stubbornly away and put their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing. ¹²They made their hearts as hard as stone, so they could not hear the law or the messages that the LORD Almighty had sent them by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. That is why the LORD Almighty was so angry with them. NLT

What was God's answer?

God doesn't care much about our _____

_____.

Matthew 6:1-18 "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

- So when you give to the needy...
- And when you pray...
- When you fast...

...your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." NIV84

God actually cares about something that

_____: _____.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. NIV84

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. NIV84

When you get _____ about changing your life and following God, what do you

_____?

Further study: Isaiah 1:10-20; 58:3-9, Hosea 6:1-6