

Read Ezekiel 4:1-3. God called Ezekiel to act out a number of odd parables during his ministry that would catch the attention of onlookers and later reveal that the exile, destruction, and restoration to come were all part of God's plan to punish, discipline, and refine His people. There was a false belief in the minds of many that Jerusalem and the Temple were indestructible. The people thought they could sin as much as they wanted and life would continue on as normal. This was a grave mistake. The reason for the protection of the city was God's patience and mercy. And that patience was about to run out.

Ezekiel was to draw the layout of Jerusalem on a clay tile. It would then harden in the sun. To "lay siege" against the city perhaps he made models of the weapons. The iron plate (*a common cooking griddle*) symbolized the unyielding strength of Babylon. And as spokesman for God, Ezekiel's fixed gaze against the city revealed that the coming siege was not random politics but divine discipline. The Lord was not losing control. He was carrying out justice. Exile, destruction, and even eventual restoration would all unfold within His sovereign plan to punish, correct, and refine His people.

What can we learn? First, our sin grieves and pains God. Our rebellion brings grief to the heart of the One who loves us most because of the grief and pain it brings to our lives when we live outside His will and design (*Ephesians 4:30*). Second, one of the most loving things God does is to remove our false sources of comfort. When we trust other things more than Him, we are leaning on what cannot ultimately save. God allows those lesser securities to crumble so that we might rediscover the only unshakable refuge - God Himself. His discipline is not abandonment, but an invitation back to life-giving dependence on Him. Third, God's grace is powerful, amazing, and covers the multitude of our sins. But that grace is not to be abused so that we continue in sin (*Romans 6:1-14*). Rather, it frees us to live in obedience out of love!

Ezekiel's clay tablet is a visible reminder that consequences, too, can harden when hearts refuse to soften. But even in judgment, God's larger aim is restoration. He disciplines in order to redeem. He tears down false hopes to build lasting faith. And today God's grace calls us into loving obedience rather than complacency.

Prayerfully consider the following this week: Has God's discipline ever stripped something away in order to draw you closer to Him? In what areas might grace be calling you out of comfort and into change? How can you respond this week with a softened heart, choosing obedience born out of love rather than presumption?

Weekly Memory Verse:

"But when the wicked turns from his wickedness
and practices justice and righteousness,
he will live by them."
Ezekiel 33:19

Weekly Affirmation:

**I WILL BE CONTENT WITH
THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD**

MARCH 2026 GROWTH GOALS

- Read the Book of Ezekiel
- Watch the Bible Project video on Ezekiel (*available on the website*).
- Memorize one of the weekly memory verses.
- Listen to or sign a hymn or praise song as part of your daily devotion time this week.