

The Book of Ezekiel

New slate

- ▶ This is an example of misleading secular wisdom, because although the decisions made by people can have lasting ramifications, God deals with each individual person
- ▶ Therefore, whether the father and mother were righteous or unrighteous, their children must believe for themselves in order to be saved
- ▶ What is reassuring about God dealing with us as individuals? What are some insecurities that can result from this?



This, not that

- ▶ In the first of several examples, God lays out what a righteous person looks like, by naming the things that they can be seen doing or not doing
- ▶ In this example, God makes a distinction between a person who is righteous and a person who does righteous things, because it is God who makes a person righteous and then their actions follow
- ▶ What outward markers of faith most often catch your eye? Have you ever been surprised to learn that someone has faith? Why were you surprised?



Up on the mountain

- ▶ As we go through the list, it begins with an odd phrase about not eating on the mountains or lifting up their eyes to idols, because in the ancient world, mountains were seen as holy places, close to God
- ▶ As a result, idol worshippers built high places and shrines there, where they would make sacrifices or even engage in sexual immorality or other things to be pleasing in the sight of their gods
- ▶ How do people try to please modern-day idols? What might be their offering? Do they want something in return?



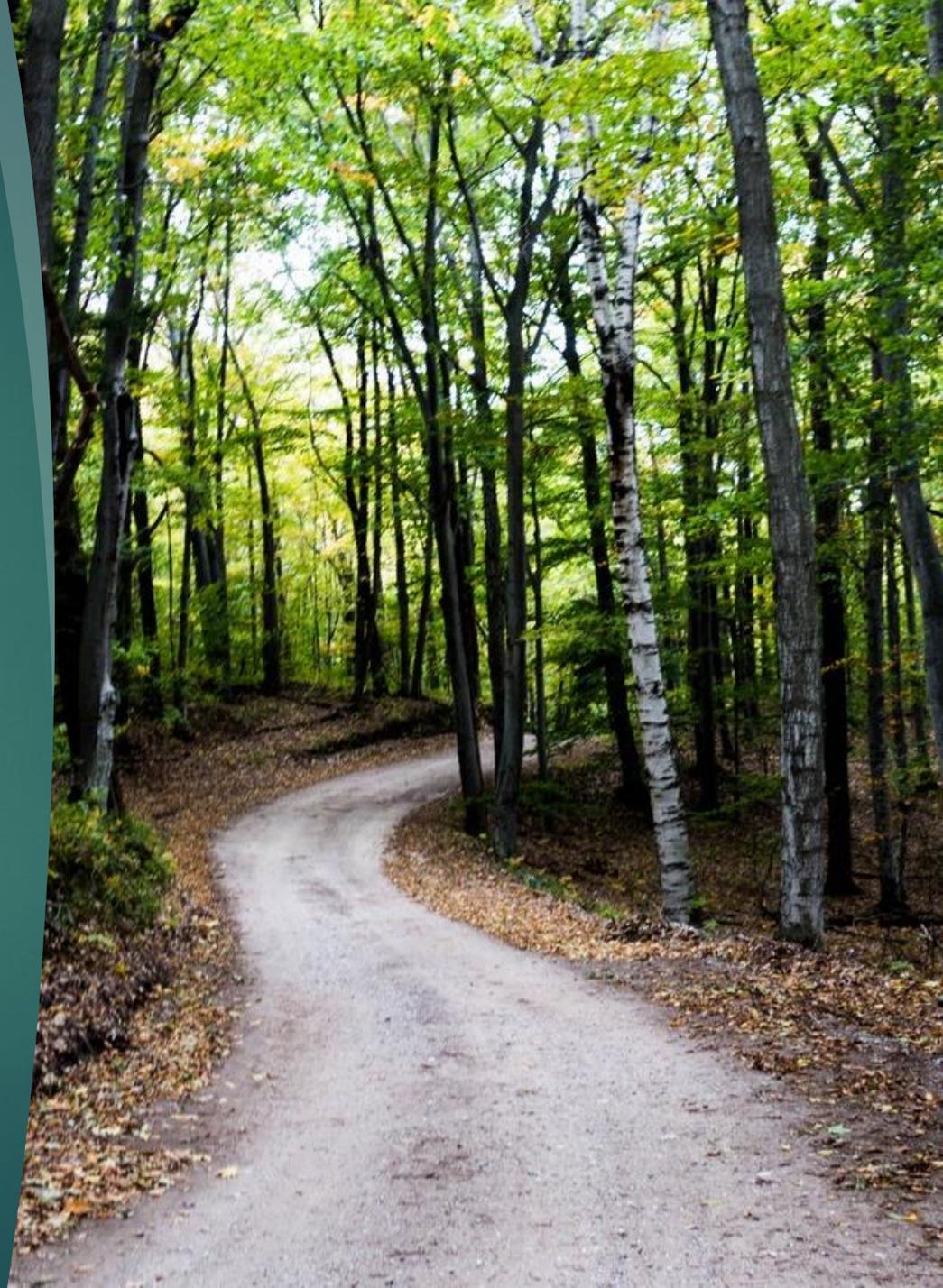
Love your neighbor

- ▶ The second half of the list deals not with idolatry, but how the righteous treat their fellow human beings, the second table of the Ten Commandments
- ▶ Specifically, God speaks of the poor and those who owe debts, because the unrighteous frequently swindled, coerced, and mistreated them financially, but the righteous give them bread and clothing
- ▶ In which situations do you most often encounter people in need? What makes it hard to help? What guidance have we received from the Lord?



On the path

- ▶ After God lays out the actions and characteristics of the righteous person, He does not say if he does these things, but if he walks in them, he will live
- ▶ Walking is often used to communicate a person's whole journey through life, not merely checking off a list on a few occasions, reminding us again that righteousness results from our relationship to God
- ▶ What might be different when we walk in righteousness, rather than simply doing righteous things? What comfort does that bring us?



Mirror image

- ▶ Following our introduction to the righteous father, we meet his son who is the mirror image and opposite of everything that was good about his father
- ▶ Although parents may teach their children about God's Word, sometimes the next generation veers in the other direction, either on purpose or even without noticing, and they are responsible
- ▶ Why might faith not pass from one generation to the next? What goes wrong when it doesn't? What goes right when it does?

