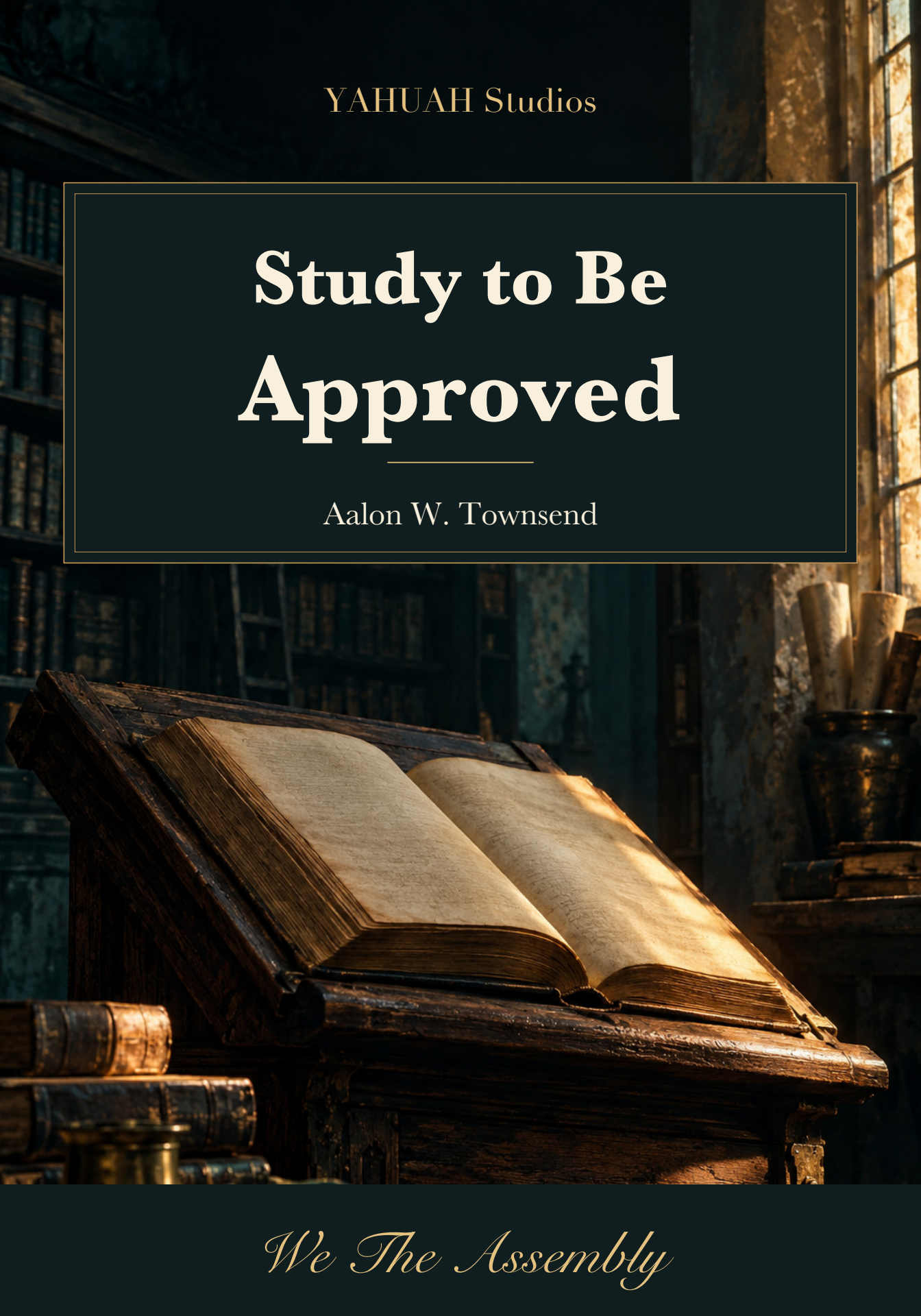




YAHUAH Studios

Study to Be Approved

Aalon W. Townsend

We The Assembly

YAHUAH Studios

Study to Be Approved

By Aalon W. Townsend



We The Assembly

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Before you begin



By Aalon W. Townsend

Keep your Scriptures open beside this book.

Whatever edition you already have, bring it with you. When we reach a chapter or verse, pause here and turn there. Read the chapter through. Look at what comes before the words we're discussing and what follows them. If the account continues into the next chapter, keep going.

Then come back, and we'll continue together.

I want you to have room to see what's being said for yourself. You may notice something you hadn't seen before. You may find a question you want to spend more time with. You may also see something in my explanation that needs to be examined. Keep that same care with this book too.

Read beside it, not around it

This e-book is meant to help you spend more time with Scripture, not take its place.

Imagine reaching a section about a warning. You recognize one verse because you've heard it for years. Before moving on, you open the chapter and discover who was being warned, what they were doing, and what they were told to change. Now you return to the e-book with more of the account in view.

That pause belongs in the reading. You haven't fallen behind.

Read at a pace that lets you pay attention. One section may be enough for the moment. Another may send you back to a chapter you thought you knew well. There's no need to rush past a question just to reach the last page.

You'll see panels marked **In plain words**. Those are summaries, not Scripture quotations. Keep the full account beside them. If your edition uses different wording, make a note of it. A difference may need a closer look, especially if it changes how you read the account. Don't force the words to match an explanation, including mine.

A notebook can help. Write the reference, what you noticed, and what you're still asking. Leave room to return. You don't have to turn every first impression into a settled answer.

Let the mirror reach you first

Throughout this book, you'll find **mirror moments**. These are places to pause and consider your own words, habits, and choices before turning toward someone else.

You might read about hearing a matter before answering and immediately think of a person who never listens. Stay there a little longer. Think about the last time someone questioned something you shared. Did you listen to the whole question? Did you return to Scripture, or start defending yourself before they finished?

That's the kind of reflection I pray these pages make room for.

We'll consider how we learn, who we learn from, and what we do with what we've learned. We'll ask how to examine someone who claims authority to share Scripture without making confidence, a title, or a following the reason we accept their words. We'll also consider how we treat people while asking those questions.

None of that leaves We The Assembly outside the mirror. It doesn't leave me outside it either.

I had to do this too

While reading through these chapters, I had to stop and examine something I had been saying. I couldn't ask you to be open to correction while giving myself room to avoid it.

In the closing chapter, I share what I needed to correct and why. I want that part here because the words in this book need to reach the person whose name is on the cover.

We can care deeply about a belief and still need to examine how we're using Scripture to support it. We can also ask honest questions and reach different conclusions. Agreement with me isn't the measure of whether you've read sincerely.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. Give His words your attention. Let what Scripture actually says challenge the explanation you brought with you, whether you learned it years ago or heard it yesterday.

The first book in a larger series

This is the first of a series I'm excited to share. I pray these books help you in your study life, in the changes you need to make in your own heart, and in your return to covenant faithfulness with YAHUAH.

For this book, let's begin with how we read and how we respond. We don't need to settle every question before taking an honest look at ourselves.

Keep your Scriptures close. Make room for your questions. As we read, let's be willing to learn and willing to change what needs changing.

Come ready to learn



Before we open the Book, we bring something with us.

An answer we heard growing up. A question nobody would let us finish. A teaching that helped us through a hard season. Maybe a new explanation that made so much sense we wanted to tell everybody about it.

We don't leave those things at the door just because we've turned to a chapter.

So let's begin honestly. What am I bringing to this reading? Am I asking to learn, or am I looking for words that will help me keep an answer I've already chosen?

You don't have to forget everything you've learned. You do need to give Scripture room to speak, including when it says something you weren't expecting.

Open Psalm 25, Proverbs 2 and 3, and James 1 as we reach them. Read each chapter through. These aren't one continuous account, but each helps us consider how we come to learn. Don't stop at a familiar verse. Follow the account beyond a chapter boundary whenever it continues there.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. Bring the question you actually have, even if you don't yet know how to put it into words.

The panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations.

Come with a question, not a performance

Psalm 25 begins with David turning to YAHUAH in trust. Enemies and shame are part of his concern. Then he asks to be shown the ways of YAHUAH, taught His paths, and led in His truth. He waits for the One from whom he seeks help. (Psalm 25:1–5)

The request to learn doesn't come from someone presenting himself as a person who needs no help.

David asks for mercy. He brings up the sins of his youth and his transgressions. Later, he asks for pardon and says his wrongdoing is great. Guidance and forgiveness belong in the same prayer. (Psalm 25:6–11)

We can come that honestly too.

Maybe we've repeated something for years without reading its full account. Maybe we've avoided a question because we were afraid of what it might change. We can name that without pretending we've already worked it all out.

In plain words | Psalm 25:4–11

David asks to be shown the way and taught the truth. He also asks for mercy and forgiveness. His request to learn leaves room for his own need to change.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

Mirror moment

Someone asks you to explain a Scripture you shared. You remember the sentence, but you haven't read the chapter in a long time.

Do you feel you have to answer immediately so they won't think you know less than they thought?

You could say, “Let me read that through before I answer.” Then actually return to it.

That gives the question the attention it deserves. Your reputation doesn't need to finish the sentence before you've examined the words.

Learning reaches the way we live

Psalms 25 speaks of YAHUAH teaching sinners and guiding the meek. It connects His paths with mercy, truth, covenant, and the testimonies people are called to keep. It also speaks of reverence, instruction, and covenant knowledge. (Psalm 25:8–14)

Then the prayer continues. David speaks of loneliness, trouble, pain, enemies, and his need for deliverance. He asks for integrity and uprightness to preserve him. The psalm closes with a request for the redemption of YAHSHAR'AL (Israel) from its troubles. (Psalm 25:15–22)

Keep that whole prayer in view. This isn't a request for information that has nothing to do with the person asking. He wants guidance while facing real trouble, and he doesn't leave his own sin outside the conversation.

As we begin this e-book, we can ask more than whether we'll gain an answer to share. What might we need to hear about our own ways?

Mirror moment

Imagine setting aside time to examine how people should speak to one another. Before you begin, someone at home asks you a simple question, and you snap at them for interrupting.

Then you settle down to read about patience.

Does that exchange belong in your reading, or are you treating the Book as something separate from the person sitting in front of it?

You can return to that person. You can also return to the chapter. Neither has to wait for you to become an expert.

Give the search your attention

Proverbs 2 opens with instruction addressed to a son. Receive the words. Keep the commands. Listen for wisdom. Apply the heart. Ask for knowledge and seek it as people search for silver and hidden treasure. (Proverbs 2:1–4)

Notice the attention involved. Hearing a sentence and recognizing it isn't the whole search.

The next verses identify YAHUAH as the giver of wisdom. Knowledge and overstanding come from Him. The chapter joins that gift with upright conduct, judgment, and learning the good path. (Proverbs 2:5–9)

In plain words | Proverbs 2:1–9

Receive instruction, listen carefully, ask, and seek. YAHUAH gives wisdom, and that wisdom concerns the path we walk.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

This isn't a contest over who has the biggest library or the most hours available. It asks us to consider the care we're giving to what we can examine.

One chapter read with attention can leave us with work to do. A long list of references we haven't followed through may leave us repeating someone else's answer without knowing why it fits.

Mirror moment

You save a video because the speaker names several Scriptures quickly. The explanation sounds convincing. Later, you open the first chapter and find something you don't remember hearing in the video.

Do you stay with it, or skip ahead to the verse the speaker used?

Keep reading. Find out what brings the account to that verse and where it goes afterward. The speaker may have made a sound connection. Give yourself a chance to see it rather than borrowing the sound of certainty.

Wisdom has somewhere to lead us

Proverbs 2 doesn't end after saying where wisdom comes from.

It describes protection from people who leave upright paths and delight in crooked ways. It also warns about a woman who uses flattering words, forsakes the companion of her youth, and forgets the covenant. The account names danger, death, and the paths of life. (Proverbs 2:10–19)

Those are specific warnings. We shouldn't reduce them to a general promise that learning will make us feel better.

The ending calls the hearer toward the way of good people and the paths of the righteous. It contrasts the upright remaining in the land with the wicked being cut off. The land and the consequences are part of the chapter too. (Proverbs 2:20–22)

Wisdom is reaching our choices, relationships, and direction.

We may begin with a question about the meaning of a verse. As we read, we may find that the chapter also asks us to face a choice we keep excusing.

Mirror moment

A friend gives advice that makes something dishonest sound harmless. You like the result they're promising. Then your reading brings you back to the conduct involved.

Are you weighing the advice by what it asks you to do, or by how much you want the outcome?

Don't hurry past that question simply because you opened the Book to examine something else.

Trust doesn't require pretending we know

Proverbs 3 continues the instruction to a son. It begins with keeping the law and commands in the heart, together with mercy and truth. Then it calls for trust in YAHUAH rather than leaning on our own overstanding. It warns against being wise in our own eyes and calls for turning from evil. (Proverbs 3:1–8)

That belongs at the beginning of our reading, not only in an answer we give to somebody else.

We don't need to treat every thought we have as wrong. But we shouldn't make our own confidence the final authority over the words we're examining.

The chapter continues through honoring YAHUAH with what we have, receiving His correction, and valuing wisdom more than riches. It speaks of wisdom in creation, careful walking, and confidence in Him. (Proverbs 3:9–26)

Then it reaches the neighbor: give the good you can give, don't put someone off when you can help, don't plan harm, and don't start a fight without cause. It warns against envying an oppressor or choosing that person's ways. The ending contrasts the wicked and the just, the scornful and the lowly, the wise and the foolish. (Proverbs 3:27–35)

The trust we read about near the beginning belongs with that conduct near the end.

Mirror moment

Suppose you've begun questioning a teaching you once accepted. You find a new speaker whose explanation seems to answer everything.

Have you begun examining more carefully, or have you simply found a new person whose words you don't question?

We The Assembly belongs under that same examination. You can receive help from this e-book without making our explanation the final word. If you disagree with us, bring the reason back to the Scripture involved. Disagreement isn't proof that you're unwilling to learn.

Ask for wisdom without hiding the need

James 1 begins with a greeting to the scattered twelve tribes. It speaks about trials, the testing of faith, and patience having its full work. Then it tells the person who lacks wisdom to ask. (James 1:1–5)

We don't have to pretend we're beyond needing that invitation.

The chapter also calls for asking in faith and warns about wavering and double-mindedness. Those warnings are serious. But asking whether a human explanation is right isn't the same as refusing to trust YAHUAH. This e-book can't use those verses to demand confidence in itself. (James 1:6–8)

James goes on to speak of low standing, wealth that fades, endurance, and temptation. It distinguishes the testing of faith from being drawn toward evil by our own desire. We shouldn't blame YAHUAH for that pull toward sin. The chapter then speaks of good gifts from above and the word of truth. (James 1:9–18)

Read those words together. The invitation to ask for wisdom sits within an account of how people endure, what they desire, and how they respond.

Mirror moment

You ask YAHUAH for help with a difficult question. Then you meet someone who sounds certain, and you feel relieved.

Can you receive that relief without treating it as the end of the examination?

Ask them to show the account. Read it through. Keep the words that support the explanation and the words that raise questions. You can pray and examine carefully at the same time.

Leave room to hear

James 1 calls us to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. It says human anger doesn't produce the righteousness YAHUAH requires. Then it calls for putting away wrongdoing, receiving the word with meekness, and doing what it says. (James 1:19–22)

The chapter uses a mirror to describe hearing and walking away without doing. It contrasts that with continuing in the law of liberty. Its closing words concern the tongue, care for the fatherless and widows in their trouble, and keeping oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:23–27)

We will return to that mirror later in the book. For now, let it shape how we begin.

We aren't here merely to collect better answers. We need to hear well enough for the reading to reach our conduct.

Mirror moment

Imagine someone starts explaining why they read a chapter differently. Before they've finished, you're already choosing the verse you'll use to answer them.

Could you let them finish and make sure you've heard their reason correctly?

Listening doesn't require agreement. It gives you something real to examine instead of an answer to a point they never made.

Bring one honest question

You don't have to resolve every belief before turning the next page. Start with one question you can stay with.

In a notebook or document, write what you're examining, what you currently think, and where you learned it, if you remember. Then name what you need to read in full.

Leave room to record what supports your answer and what might change it. If the Scripture supports what you believed, show how. If it challenges your explanation, don't hide the words that caused the difficulty.

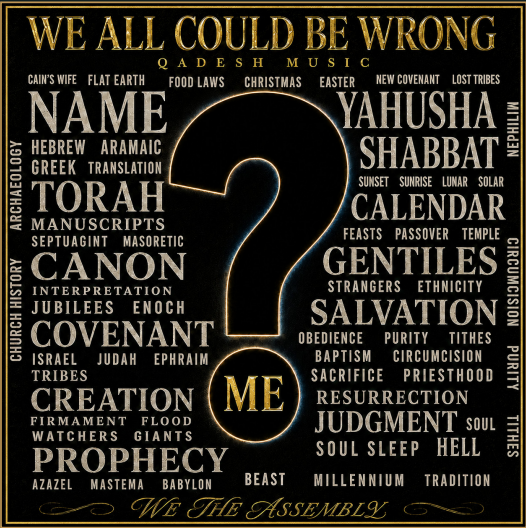
You can take this slowly. Read a full chapter over more than one sitting if you need to. Keep your place and return, rather than letting the last line you reached stand in for the whole account.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. You can bring uncertainty to Him without dressing it up as certainty for other people.

As we begin, the question isn't whether you already have enough answers to belong in this conversation. It's whether you're willing to give the words your attention and respond to what you learn.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

We All Could Be Wrong

We The Assembly

We All Could Be Wrong fits here because it includes We The Assembly in the call to examine ourselves. Nobody needs to stand outside the mirror while everyone else looks in.

Listen with the question you've brought to this chapter. You don't have to settle it before the song ends. Keep the Scripture open, and let the music give you time to stay with what you're considering.

Who gives overstanding?



Someone helps you see something in Scripture that you hadn't noticed before.

They slow down, open the chapter, and show you how the words fit together. You go back and read it yourself. Now a question you've carried for a long time begins to make sense.

It's right to appreciate that help.

But what happens next? Do you keep bringing their explanations back to Scripture, or does that one helpful moment become the reason you accept everything else they say?

The question in this chapter isn't whether another person can help us. Scripture shows people doing that. The question is whether we know the difference between receiving help and giving someone the final say over what we believe.

YAHUAH gives overstanding. We seek Him in prayer, listen to His words, and ask for His Ruach to guide us. We The Assembly shares what we're examining. We aren't the source of that wisdom, and our explanations don't become Scripture because we place them beside it.

We'll follow Sirach 38–39, Nehemiah 8–10, and Psalm 119. We'll also return briefly to Psalm 25 and read YAHUSHA's words in John 14 within the account running through chapters 13–17. Take these readings over more than one sitting if you need to. Read each account through before treating our explanation as settled.

The panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations.

Ask Him to open your eyes

In Psalm 25, David asks YAHUAH for guidance and mercy. He wants to be taught, and he doesn't hide his own need for forgiveness. (Psalm 25:4–11)

Psalm 119 keeps returning to that need for instruction.

It begins with walking in the law, keeping the testimonies, and seeking YAHUAH with the whole heart. Then it brings the word into the heart, the lips, and the way a person lives. (Psalm 119:1–16)

The request in Psalm 119:18 is to have open eyes to see the wonders in the law. It isn't a request for an experience that makes the words unnecessary.

The prayer continues with requests to learn the statutes, receive overstanding, and keep the law with the whole heart. It asks for a heart turned toward the testimonies rather than covetousness, and for eyes turned away from worthless things. (Psalm 119:33–40)

In plain words | Psalm 119:18, 33–40

Open my eyes to what is in Your law. Teach me, give me overstanding, and help me walk in what You have given.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

The request is for help to see and to obey.

Mirror moment

Imagine asking YAHUAH to show you something deeper. As you read, you notice a command that touches the way you've been treating someone.

You already know those words. They don't feel like a new discovery. So you move on, still looking for something you haven't heard before.

Could you be passing over the very thing that needs your attention?

Depth doesn't always arrive as an unfamiliar idea. Sometimes we need to stay with familiar words long enough to face what they're asking of us.

Study and prayer belong together

Sirach 38 begins with physicians, healing, prayer, and care. It then speaks about death and mourning before turning to the time and attention different kinds of work require. (Sirach 38:1–24)

That buildup matters when we reach the person devoted to studying the law.

The chapter describes the farmer, craft workers, the smith, and the potter. Their work takes concentration. It says they are skilled in their work and that the city depends on them. It also draws a sharp distinction between their daily labor and the public counsel and learned discussion described near the end. (Sirach 38:25–34)

We shouldn't hide that distinction. We also shouldn't use it to look down on someone whose labor leaves less time for reading. The same account that describes those limits says their work sustains the world around them.

Chapter 39 continues with the person who gives attention to the law, seeks ancient wisdom, and spends time with prophecies and difficult sayings. This person listens, examines, and learns. (Sirach 39:1–4)

Then the account brings us to prayer. He turns early toward his Maker, asks concerning his sins, and receives overstanding when YAHUAH wills. Thanksgiving, counsel, meditation, and sharing what he has learned follow. (Sirach 39:5–8)

The reading and the prayer aren't competing ways to learn. They belong together in the account.

Mirror moment

You have time to read several chapters and compare notes. Someone else is caring for a family member and reading a chapter in smaller stretches when they can.

Do you assume your longer reading time means you're more sincere?

Use the time you have faithfully. If you can help someone find a reference, explain a difficult sentence, or return to where they stopped, offer that help without making them feel small.

Don't stop when the learner receives praise

Sirach 39 speaks of the wise person's counsel being remembered and praised. But the chapter doesn't leave the attention on that person's reputation. It calls the hearers to praise YAHUAH, honor His Name, and consider His works. (Sirach 39:9–16)

It continues through His commands, His knowledge of what people do, provision, and judgment. The words about wrath and destruction are serious. The account includes forces of judgment, famine, death, and the punishment of the wicked. It closes by calling for praise with the whole heart and mouth, and for blessing His Name. (Sirach 39:17–35)

Notice how the words belong together. Verse 15 calls for magnifying His Name through the songs of the lips. Verse 35 brings His Name, the heart, and the mouth together again. Honoring YAHUAH isn't presented as something happening only inside us. What we say matters too.

Keeping those words together changes what we take from the description of the learner.

This isn't simply a way to become known as wise. The wisdom being shared sits within reverence for YAHUAH, His Name, His commands, and His judgment. The person who learns still has reason to bow, give thanks, and pay attention.

Mirror moment

People begin asking you questions because something you shared helped them. After a while, you're used to being the person with the answer.

What happens when you don't have one?

Can you say that plainly, or does keeping your place in the room begin to matter more than the question itself?

Being useful to others doesn't mean you have to become certain about everything.

People can help without taking His place

Nehemiah 8 gives us a clear account of people receiving help with the words they hear.

The people gather in Jerusalem and ask Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses. He reads before the men, women, and others able to grasp the reading. The people listen. Ezra opens the book where they can see it, and the account describes worship and an attentive gathering. (Nehemiah 8:1–6)

Then named helpers and the Levites help the people grasp the law. The reading is made clear, its sense is given, and the people come to grasp what is being read. (Nehemiah 8:7–8)

The book is still there. The help is serving the reading.

In plain words | Nehemiah 8:1–8

The people gather to hear the law. Ezra reads, and others help make the reading clear. Their work helps the people receive what is written.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

We shouldn't turn a warning against misplaced trust into a claim that no person can ever help us learn. Here, people are helping. That doesn't make their own thoughts equal to the law they're explaining.

The account keeps moving. The people weep, receive direction about the day, rejoice, and share food with those who have none prepared. Further reading brings the command about booths into view. They gather branches, make booths, keep the feast, and continue hearing the law day by day. (Nehemiah 8:9–18)

The explanation reaches their actions.

Mirror moment

Someone you respect explains a difficult Scripture. You ask how they reached one part of their conclusion.

A helpful response might take you back through the words, show the connection, or acknowledge a question that still needs work.

Now turn that around. When someone asks you the same kind of question, do you help them examine it, or remind them how long you've been studying?

Years of work can give someone much to share. They don't make the reader's question disappear.

The Ruach's instruction reaches people who must respond

Don't stop at the feast in Nehemiah 8. Chapter 9 records a later gathering with fasting, separation from foreigners, confession of the people's sins and their fathers' wrongdoing, reading, and worship. That is the setting of the prayer that follows. (Nehemiah 9:1–5)

The prayer recounts creation, Abraham, deliverance from Egypt, the commands given at Sinai, Shabbat, provision, and the people's refusal to obey. It includes the calf and YAHUAH's mercy toward them in the wilderness. (Nehemiah 9:6–19)

Verse 20 says His good Ruach was given to instruct them. Later, verse 30 describes His Ruach warning them through the prophets, yet the people wouldn't listen.

Keep both statements. The account doesn't set the Ruach against every human voice. It describes instruction through prophets, and it also describes people refusing it. (Nehemiah 9:20–30)

The prayer continues through mercy, judgment, and the people's present distress. It acknowledges their wrongdoing rather than making YAHUAH responsible for it. They put a commitment in writing, and chapter 10 follows with its signers and obligations involving the law, marriage, Shabbat, the seventh year, and the service of the house of YAHUAH. (Nehemiah 9:31–38; 10:1–39)

This isn't only a statement about where instruction comes from. It's an account of what people did with it.

Mirror moment

Suppose you agree that a command is in the Book, but you keep dismissing the person who brings it to your attention.

Maybe they haven't been studying as long as you. Maybe you dislike the way they speak.

Have you shown that their explanation is wrong, or have you found a reason not to examine it?

The speaker can be questioned. The words still deserve your attention.

Hear the promise with the people who first heard it

John 14 contains the promise of teaching and remembrance through the Ruach. Before taking hold of that promise, stay with the people in the account.

In chapter 13, YAHUSHA washes His disciples' feet, speaks about betrayal, and gives the command to love one another. Judas Iscariot leaves. Peter speaks confidently about following, and YAHUSHA tells him he will deny Him. The conversation enters chapter 14 with troubled hearts, departure, and questions. (John 13:1–38; 14:1–5)

Thomas asks about the way. Philip asks to be shown the Father. YAHUSHA speaks of coming to the Father through Him, of His relationship with the Father, and of His words and works. He joins love with keeping His commands and promises the Ruach of truth. (John 14:6–21)

Judas (not Iscariot) asks a question, and YAHUSHA again connects love with keeping His words. Then He speaks of the Ruach whom the Father will send in His Name, teaching them and bringing to remembrance what He has said to them. (John 14:22–26)

In plain words | John 14:23–26

YAHUSHA connects love with keeping His words. He promises His disciples teaching through the Ruach and remembrance of what He has told them.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

The promise belongs with His words, not apart from them.

The account continues through peace, His departure, and His obedience to the Father. Chapters 15 and 16 speak of remaining in Him, fruit, love, commands, opposition, the Ruach's witness, and guidance into truth.

There are warnings about persecution, including people who will harm the disciples while thinking they serve the Creator. Their sorrow and coming joy are part of the conversation too. (John 14:27–31; 15:1–27; 16:1–33)

In chapter 17, YAHUSHA prays concerning the words He has given them, their keeping, truth, and unity. He also prays for those who will believe through their word. The account carries concern for later believers without erasing the disciples who first heard Him. (John 17:1–26)

We can seek YAHUAH's guidance while keeping that setting intact. Claiming guidance doesn't give our own explanation permission to leave His words behind.

Mirror moment

Imagine saying that the Ruach has helped you see something. A person asks which Scripture brought you there.

Can you show them and walk through it together?

Their question doesn't have to be an attack on your experience. It may be a chance to share what helped you. If you discover that part of your explanation went further than the words, you can correct that part without pretending the question never mattered to you.

Keep the words and our explanation clear

As we read and share, it helps to know what kind of statement we're making.

There are the words in the Scripture. There is our explanation of how those words fit together. And there may be a personal impression that led us to look more closely.

Those can be part of one conversation without becoming the same thing.

For example, Nehemiah 8:8 describes people helping others grasp the reading. Our conclusion is that receiving human help isn't automatically a rejection of YAHUAH's instruction. That conclusion follows from the account, but the sentence explaining it is ours.

A personal impression might be that you should return to a chapter you haven't read in years. You can follow that invitation to read. When you share what you found, give people the words and the reason for your explanation rather than requiring them to accept the impression as proof.

We The Assembly owes readers that same care. A note beside a Scripture is still a note. A song reflecting on it is still a song. This e-book can help you examine, but it can't take the place of the Book it asks you to open.

Keep asking to be taught

Psalm 119:97–104 connects wisdom beyond enemies, teachers, and elders with love for the law, meditation, keeping the precepts, and turning from evil. The confidence rests in the instruction received and followed.

Yet the requests for help continue. Later verses ask for mercy, instruction, ordered steps, and deliverance. The psalm includes affliction, opposition, praise, longing, and judgment. Its closing verse acknowledges wandering like a lost sheep and asks to be sought. (Psalm 119:105–176)

Confidence in the words and the need to be taught remain together.

Mirror moment

Think of one explanation you've learned recently. Can you return to its Scripture without first replaying the person who shared it?

If you need their help, use it. Then keep working until you can follow the account yourself. If a question remains, write it down rather than covering it with someone else's certainty.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. Give thanks for people who help you see more clearly. And keep bringing what we share back to His words.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Search The Witness, Not The Speaker

We The Assembly

Search The Witness, Not The Speaker belongs beside this chapter. It invites us to examine what is being shared without making a familiar voice the final authority.

As you listen, think about someone whose help you value. Then think about the people who may value yours. Can we help one another return to Scripture without asking for trust that belongs to YAHUAH?

Read the whole account



Many of us know a verse because someone quoted it. We may know the rhythm of the words. We may even know exactly when to bring it into a conversation. But do we know what was happening before those words were spoken?

That's where we're going to slow down.

Open Isaiah 27, 28, and 29. Read them through. We'll spend most of our time in chapter 28, but we don't want to leave behind the words that lead into it or stop listening when the chapter number changes.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. Come with your questions. You don't have to pretend you haven't heard other explanations. Just leave room for the chapter to correct an explanation, including ours.

The short panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations. Keep the actual verses beside you as you read.

Before the familiar words

Isaiah 28 opens with a warning to the proud drunkards of Ephraim. Their beauty is pictured as a fading flower. What looks impressive won't keep standing just because people admire it. The chapter speaks of a force that will bring that pride down. (Isaiah 28:1–4)

Then the picture changes. YAHUAH will be glory and strength for the remnant of His people. Verses 5–6 speak of judgment and strength, not only the collapse described at the beginning.

We need both parts. If we keep only the comfort, we lose the warning. If we keep only the warning, we leave out the help.

Mirror moment

Think about a message you've shared because it encouraged you. Did you read enough to know who the promise was for and what came with it?

Now turn that around. Have you ever shared a warning because it seemed to fit somebody else, then passed over the part that offered them a way to return?

We can leave something out in either direction. The question isn't only whether the words are in the Book. It's whether we're sharing what the Book is saying.

A title doesn't prove discernment

Verses 7–8 name priests and prophets whose drinking has affected their vision and judgment. These are people others would expect to give sound guidance. Yet the chapter shows them stumbling. The tables are described as filthy, with no clean place left.

Before we reach the familiar words about learning, we're already looking at failed discernment among leaders.

In plain words | Isaiah 28:7–8

The people expected to give guidance have gone wrong through drink. Their vision and judgment are failing.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

A position didn't protect them from error. Being recognized as a leader didn't make their judgment sound.

That reaches into our lives too. A person can speak with confidence, know many Scriptures, and have people who trust them. None of those things removes the need to examine what they're saying.

Mirror moment

Imagine someone says they're being led by the Ruach, but when a Scripture challenges their explanation, they won't read it through. They repeat their claim instead. Would the claim of guidance be enough for you?

Now put yourself in that same place. Could I be calling my own certainty discernment? When someone shows me words I left out, do I examine them, or do I reach for a familiar answer before I've heard the whole matter?

Still having questions doesn't mean a person has no discernment. But claiming discernment doesn't make every answer right. We need to stay willing to hear, examine, and change what needs changing.

That includes We The Assembly. You shouldn't have to set aside your questions to read our e-books or listen to our music.

Keep reading after the line you recognize

Verse 9 asks about teaching knowledge. Verse 10 brings us to the familiar words about precept upon precept and line upon line.

Many of us have heard those words used as a simple direction for how to study. But the chapter hasn't finished speaking.

Verse 11 speaks of another tongue. Verse 12 speaks of rest and refreshing that were offered, yet the people wouldn't hear. Then verse 13 repeats the line-and-precept wording and names the outcome: falling backward, being broken, being snared, and being taken.

In plain words | Isaiah 28:12–13

Rest was offered, but they wouldn't listen. The repeated words are followed by an outcome of judgment.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

We can't explain verse 10 as though verses 12–13 aren't there.

We may still have questions about who is speaking in verses 9–10 and whether the words are being spoken in scorn. But one thing is clear: the refusal to listen and the outcome that follows belong in the explanation.

Here's how we read it: Isaiah 28:10 isn't a stand-alone direction to gather small pieces from different places and treat the collection as the whole message. Comparing Scriptures can help us. Leaving behind the account that gives those Scriptures their meaning can mislead us.

Mirror moment

Picture yourself preparing a post. You've found a verse that seems to say exactly what you wanted to say. Then you read farther, and the next part makes your explanation harder to defend.

What happens next?

Do you leave that part off the screenshot? Do you tell yourself it belongs to another conversation? Or do you stop long enough to ask whether your point needs to change?

The part that slows us down may be the part we most need to hear.

Whose words are we repeating?

In verse 14, the call to hear is directed to the scornful rulers in Jerusalem. Verse 15 shows what those rulers were saying. They believed disaster wouldn't reach them. Their shelter is described as lies and falsehood.

Their claim of safety isn't a promise we're being told to claim.

That's an easy mistake to make when we collect lines without keeping track of the speaker. Scripture can show us someone's false claim without asking us to believe it.

Mirror moment

Imagine a group saying, “We’re covered. We know the truth. That warning isn’t for us.” But nobody wants to examine the conduct the warning addresses.

Could we do the same thing? Could knowing a name, belonging to a community, or having left one system make us feel beyond correction?

When we listen to someone else, we need to ask what their confidence rests on. When we’re the ones speaking, we need to ask ourselves the same question.

What if the shelter won't hold?

Verses 16–17 place a sure foundation and righteous judgment against that false shelter. The chapter doesn't leave us with the rulers' version of the story. Their agreement won't stand, and the refuge built on lies will be swept away. (Isaiah 28:16–19)

Verse 20 gives us a picture we can feel: a bed too short to stretch out on and a covering too narrow to wrap ourselves in. What they trusted can't give the protection they expected.

Verses 21–22 bring another warning about YAHUAH's action. The mockers are told to stop. Their confidence doesn't cancel what's coming.

In plain words | Isaiah 28:14–22

The rulers say they're safe. The chapter exposes their false shelter and warns that it won't stand.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

Think about an explanation you've relied on for years. If it only works when certain verses stay out of the conversation, it needs another look.

That doesn't mean throwing everything away the moment someone disagrees. It means opening the Book instead of hiding behind how long you've believed something.

Could I explain what I believe while leaving the difficult verses on the page? If I can't yet, am I willing to keep reading rather than force an answer?

Stay for the field at the end

Verse 23 calls us to listen again. Then the chapter takes us into a field.

A farmer doesn't keep plowing forever. There comes a time to plant. Different crops are handled differently, and they aren't all threshed with the same tool. The chapter connects that care and skill with instruction from YAHUAH. It closes by speaking of His wonderful counsel and excellent work. (Isaiah 28:23–29)

This isn't leftover material after the verse we came to find. We began with pride and failed judgment. We passed through refusal to hear and false confidence. Now we're asked to listen while the chapter shows careful work guided by wise instruction.

There's something here for how we handle what we read. We shouldn't treat every sentence as though it does the same job. A warning isn't a promise. A question isn't an answer. Someone's false claim isn't an instruction to believe them.

Mirror moment

Suppose a friend sends you a message that begins with a mistake they made, then explains what they learned. You take one sentence from the mistake and share it as their advice.

The sentence is really theirs. But you've made it say something they weren't telling you to do.

Could we handle Scripture that way? Before repeating the words, have we followed the account far enough to know what they're doing there?

Don't let a chapter number stop the conversation

Start with the whole chapter. If the account begins earlier or keeps going afterward, follow it there too.

Isaiah 27 includes judgment, the removal of sin, and gathering to worship. Isaiah 29 continues with warnings, people struggling to grasp what they're given, and the picture of a sealed book. It speaks of lips that honor while the heart is far away. It also looks ahead to people hearing, learning, and receiving correction. (Isaiah 27:7–13; 29:9–24)

YAHUSHA quoted Isaiah's words about the lips and the heart. That exchange is recorded in Matthew 15:7–9 and Mark 7:6–7. In both accounts, read how He confronts people setting aside a command to hold on to their tradition.

Mirror moment

It's possible to say the right things about honoring YAHUAH while protecting a habit that His words challenge.

What happens when Scripture presses on something familiar in our own community? Do we make room for correction, or do we only welcome the verses that expose somebody else's tradition?

We can ask that without deciding we already know every person's heart. We can begin with what we ourselves say, share, and do.

Before you share it

Now look back over Isaiah 28. Can you follow it from beginning to end?

- **Verses 1–6:** Pride faces judgment, and YAHUAH is glory and strength for the remnant.
- **Verses 7–8:** Priests and prophets fail in vision and judgment.
- **Verses 9–13:** The words about learning sit beside refusal to hear and an outcome of judgment.
- **Verses 14–19:** The rulers' false confidence is exposed, and their shelter won't stand.
- **Verses 20–22:** A short bed and narrow covering show failed shelter, followed by a warning to stop mocking.
- **Verses 23–29:** The call to listen continues through the farmer's careful work and the wisdom behind it.

That's our summary. Keep the chapter beside it and check what we've said.

Take one Scripture you've shared recently. Read the whole account. Who was speaking? Who were they speaking to? What brought the conversation to that point? What came of it?

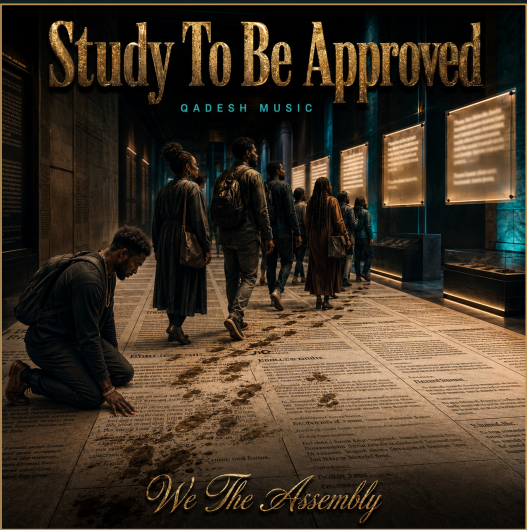
If the fuller reading changes your claim, say what changed. If it supports your claim, show how. If you still have a question, you can say that too.

Disagreeing with our explanation doesn't make you prideful. Bring the Scripture that leads you to another conclusion. We should be willing to hear it through and examine it with you.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding and for a heart willing to receive correction. We don't need to defend an answer simply because we've already said it out loud.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Study To Be Approved

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Read The Part You Skipped

Study To Be Approved brings the refusal and warning in Isaiah 28:12–13 into its lyrics. **Read The Part You Skipped** asks us to keep reading when the next words might challenge a point we wanted to keep.

The songs are part of this package. Let them bring you back to the Book, and examine what we're singing with the same care.

Hear the matter before answering



Have you ever started answering someone while they were still talking?

Maybe they used a word you've heard before. Maybe their first sentence sounded like an argument you've already dealt with. Before they finished, you had your verse ready.

But were you answering what they said, or what you expected them to say?

We can do this with people. We can do it with Scripture too. A familiar phrase appears, and we stop listening because we think we already know where it's going.

In the last chapter, we stayed with Isaiah 28 after reaching the words we recognized. Now we're going to look at what happens when we're too quick to answer, blame, or agree.

Open Sirach 11, Proverbs 18, and Deuteronomy 19. Read each chapter through. They don't all speak in the same way or address the same situation, but each gives us something we need when we're examining a matter.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. As you read, think about one claim you accepted quickly and one you dismissed quickly. Keep both in mind.

The panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations.

Before the person finishes

Sirach 11 doesn't begin by telling us how to win an argument. It begins with wisdom lifting someone from a low place. Then it warns us about judging people by appearance and becoming proud of our own position. Kings can be brought down. Someone nobody expected can wear a crown. (Sirach 11:1–6)

That comes before the words about examining a matter.

We aren't arriving at the conversation without any assumptions. We notice clothing, titles, speech, and reputation. Sometimes we've already decided how much a person's words are worth before we've heard them.

Then verses 7–8 tell us to examine before blaming, hear before answering, and let people finish speaking.

In plain words | Sirach 11:7–8

Examine the truth before you blame someone. Hear the matter before you answer, and don't interrupt while the person is speaking.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

This doesn't remove correction. It puts examination before correction.

Mirror moment

Imagine two people sharing the same Scripture. One speaks smoothly, knows the terms, and has a large following. The other struggles to pronounce a name and has to stop to find the verse.

Whose explanation are you more willing to examine? Have you confused being comfortable on a platform with being careful in the Book?

Now imagine the second person notices a condition the first person left out. Would you hear them, or would their delivery make you dismiss the point?

We can respect someone's experience without letting their reputation answer the question for us.

Listening isn't the same as agreeing

Sometimes we cut a person off because we're afraid that hearing them out will look like agreement.

But you can listen without accepting a claim. You can ask a question without surrendering what you believe. Letting someone finish gives you a clearer picture of what needs to be examined.

Try asking, “When you say that, what do you mean?” Then let them explain it.

Suppose someone says a command has conditions tied to a place. You hear that as, “The commands don't matter anymore,” and begin answering that claim. But those aren't the same statement. You need to hear which command, which conditions, and which Scripture they're talking about before deciding whether their explanation holds up.

The same care works in the other direction. A person might use language you agree with while leaving out a condition the chapter clearly gives. Familiar words shouldn't get a free pass either.

Before disagreeing, see whether you can repeat the person's point fairly. Not a stronger version you've invented for them. Not a weaker version that's easier to defeat. What did they actually say?

Don't stop Sirach at the part about listening

After verses 7–8, Sirach warns against becoming caught up in matters that aren't ours to judge. It goes on to speak about work, need, wealth, changing circumstances, and remaining faithful in our covenant and labor. A person's present comfort doesn't tell us everything about their life or its outcome. (Sirach 11:9–28)

The ending also warns about deceitful people, harmful access to our homes, and someone who can turn good into evil and place blame where praise belongs. (Sirach 11:29–34)

So the chapter doesn't ask us to become careless with trust. It warns against quick blame while also warning us to watch for deceit. We need both.

Mirror moment

Picture a message arriving in a group chat: “You need to hear what this person is really doing.” There's a short clip and a long explanation underneath it.

You don't have to repost it to prove you're alert. You don't have to ignore it to prove you're kind.

You can ask where the clip came from, whether it's complete, and what the person actually said. You can take a concern seriously while refusing to turn an unchecked accusation into an announcement.

Have I ever passed something along because I thought the person deserved to be exposed, before checking whether the accusation was true?

Am I seeking an answer or waiting to give mine?

Proverbs 18 speaks repeatedly about our mouths, our listening, and what our words can do to other people. It also speaks about work, wealth, pride, humility, and relationships. This isn't a chapter about collecting clever replies. Our speech sits inside the way we live.

Verse 2 describes a fool who doesn't delight in gaining insight but wants to express what's in his own heart. Verse 13 names the folly and shame of answering before hearing. Verse 15 describes a wise ear seeking knowledge.

Those are very different ways to enter a conversation.

In plain words | Proverbs 18:13, 15

Answering before hearing brings folly and shame. The wise seek knowledge and listen for it.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

We may say we want to learn while spending the whole conversation preparing our reply. Our mouth is quiet, but we aren't really hearing the person.

Mirror moment

Think about a time someone opened a chapter that challenged your view. While they were reading, were you following the words? Or were you searching for another Scripture to answer them before they reached the end?

Another Scripture may belong in the conversation. But bringing it forward shouldn't make the first Scripture disappear.

Can I explain what both Scriptures say? Have I followed both accounts? If I can't yet see how they fit together, can I leave the question open long enough to keep reading?

We don't need to force a quick answer just because someone is waiting for one.

The first account isn't the finished matter

Proverbs 18:17 shows how convincing the first account can seem, until another person comes and examines it.

That doesn't mean the first person is always wrong or the second person is always right. It means the first hearing isn't the end of the examination.

The chapter also warns about harmful speech, conflict, and how hard it can be to repair an offended relationship. Words don't remain harmless simply because we say them quickly. (Proverbs 18:6–8, 19–21)

Imagine hearing that someone refused to help a family in need. The account sounds clear, and you're upset. Later you learn that help was offered in another way, or that the request you heard described wasn't the request that was made.

The fuller account might clear the person. It might confirm the concern. Either way, the missing facts matter.

We should be just as willing to find facts that challenge an accusation as facts that support it.

And if we've already spread the wrong account, correcting ourselves only in private won't reach the people we misled.

Read the witness rule with the rest of the chapter

Deuteronomy 19 begins with cities of refuge in the land. It describes a person who kills a neighbor without having hated him beforehand. The example is concrete: two people are cutting wood, an axe head comes loose, and someone dies. (Deuteronomy 19:1–7)

The chapter doesn't treat that the same as a person who hates his neighbor, lies in wait, kills him, and then runs to a refuge city. It makes a distinction between the cases. It also gives conditions for adding more refuge cities and warns against moving a neighbor's boundary marker. (Deuteronomy 19:8–14)

We need that setting before we reach verse 15. These are instructions about justice, innocent blood, land, and how accusations are handled. Getting the facts wrong can cost someone far more than an argument.

Verse 15 says one witness isn't enough to establish an accusation against someone. It calls for two or three witnesses. Then the chapter addresses a false witness and tells the judges to investigate carefully. If the testimony is false, the false witness faces the harm he intended for the other person. The chapter ends with a severe warning about the consequences. (Deuteronomy 19:15–21)

In plain words | Deuteronomy 19:15–19

One witness isn't enough to establish the accusation. A disputed charge must be examined carefully, and false testimony carries consequences.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

Keep the investigation with the witness rule. The matter comes before the priests and judges. The witnesses aren't simply counted and accepted without examination.

Repeated doesn't always mean confirmed

Here's something to consider when we hear a claim today.

Suppose three people tell you the same story. You ask how each person knows it. All three point back to the same short video, and none has checked the full recording.

You have three people repeating a source. You haven't yet gained three separate accounts of what happened.

That's a present-day example of why we need to examine what we're calling support. Deuteronomy 19 is addressing witnesses and accusations, not giving us a shortcut where any three repetitions make a claim true.

The same care belongs in our Scripture reading. Two verses can help explain a matter when we follow what each is saying. But finding the same word in two places doesn't settle every connection we might draw between them.

Who's speaking in each Scripture? What question is being answered? Are the people, conditions, and events the same, or have we joined different things together because the wording sounded familiar?

Mirror moment

Could I be calling something confirmed because several people I trust agree with it?

What happens if I trace their reasons and find that everyone relied on the same claim nobody checked?

That question belongs in our own community too. If We The Assembly gives you a reference, you should be able to open the chapter and follow the reason we've given. Our name on the resource doesn't finish the examination.

Give the question enough room

Imagine a friend sends you a teaching you haven't heard before. It challenges something you've believed for years.

Before answering, ask them to state the claim clearly and show the Scripture they're relying on. Read the whole chapter. If the account continues beyond it, keep going. Notice what the Scripture says before deciding whether their explanation follows from it.

Then tell them what you found. You might agree. You might disagree and show why. You might find one part supported and another part still needing work.

You can say, “I see the words you're pointing to. I need more time with the chapter before I can answer the rest.”

That isn't pretending every answer is equally sound. It's being honest about what you've examined so far.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. Pray for the willingness to receive an answer that corrects you, and for care with the words you use to correct someone else.

Before your next reply, pause for a moment. Have I heard the claim fully? Have I checked what supports it? Am I answering what's actually there?

You may still need to speak plainly. You may still need to challenge the claim. But let your answer come after you've heard the matter.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Search The Witness, Not The Speaker

Search The Witness, Not The Speaker brings us back to examining what's being shared instead of resting our trust on a familiar voice.

Read The Part You Skipped reminds us that a missing sentence can change what we thought we heard. Its lyrics also bring Sirach 11:7 into the conversation.

Let the music bring you back to the Scriptures. The songs are part of the package, and what we sing is open to the same examination as what we write.

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Read The Part You Skipped

Let the Book examine you



Sometimes we can see exactly who needs to hear a Scripture.

A name comes to mind before we've finished reading. We think about sending it to them. Maybe we begin planning what we'll say with it.

But have we let it reach us yet?

In the last chapter, we slowed down before answering someone else. Here, we're going to stay with what happens when the answer challenges us. Not the person we disagree with. Not the community we left. Us.

Open Jeremiah 17, Proverbs 3, and James 1. Read each chapter through. We'll also spend time in James 3 and Psalm 139. Keep the whole chapter with the verses we're discussing, and follow the account farther wherever the question calls for it.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. You don't need to come with a speech about how willing you are to be corrected. Come ready to notice what needs your attention.

The panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations.

My heart belongs in this conversation too

Jeremiah 17 begins with Judah's sin pictured as writing cut deeply into the heart and the horns of the altars. The chapter speaks of the loss of heritage and serving enemies in an unfamiliar land. This isn't a general conversation about being in touch with our feelings. It's confronting sin and its consequences. (Jeremiah 17:1–4)

Then we meet two pictures of trust. One person relies on human strength while the heart departs from YAHUAH. Another trusts in YAHUAH and is compared to a tree planted beside water, still bearing fruit when drought comes. (Jeremiah 17:5–8)

The next verses speak about the deceitful heart and YAHUAH searching it. Our ways and the fruit of our actions belong in that examination. (Jeremiah 17:9–10)

In plain words | Jeremiah 17:9–10

The heart can deceive. YAHUAH searches what is within us and judges us according to our ways and what our actions produce.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

We can't read that as though only other people's hearts need searching.

Someone else's confidence doesn't establish that their explanation is true. Neither does our own. We can feel sincere and still need correction. We can believe we're defending Scripture while defending an answer we haven't examined closely enough.

Mirror moment

Imagine someone asks where you found a belief you've shared for years. You know who taught it to you. You remember how much it meant when you first heard it. But when they ask you to walk through the chapter, you realize you haven't done that yourself.

What would you feel tempted to defend first: the belief, the person who shared it, or your own reputation for knowing it?

You don't have to reject it simply because someone questioned it. But can you open the Book without deciding in advance what the answer has to be?

Trust doesn't mean I stop examining

Proverbs 3 opens with keeping the law and commands in the heart. Mercy and truth belong there too. Then it calls us to trust YAHUAH rather than lean on our own grasp of things, and not to be wise in our own eyes. (Proverbs 3:1–7)

That doesn't give us a reason to stop reading carefully. It gives us a reason not to make ourselves the final measure of what's true.

And we shouldn't hand that place to another person either. “I don't trust myself, so I'll believe whatever this speaker says” hasn't solved the problem. We've only moved our dependence from one person's judgment to another's.

The chapter continues through honoring YAHUAH, receiving correction, valuing wisdom, and walking with care. Later, it gets very practical: don't hold back good when you can give it, don't plan harm against a neighbor, and don't pick a fight without cause. (Proverbs 3:9–35)

Trust shows up in the way we live, not only in the way we describe what we believe.

Mirror moment

Suppose you're quick to tell someone not to lean on their own thoughts. But when they ask you to show how your explanation fits the chapter, you tell them they need to trust you.

Would you accept that answer from someone outside your own community?

We The Assembly doesn't get to ask you to examine other voices while making ours an exception. Useful help should lead you back to Scripture, not make you afraid to question our explanation of it.

The chapter doesn't end with the heart

Keep reading Jeremiah 17. It speaks about wealth gained wrongly, turning away from the source of living water, and Jeremiah asking for healing and deliverance while facing those who challenge and persecute him. His prayer includes a serious request for judgment against his persecutors. (Jeremiah 17:11–18)

Then he is sent to the gates of Jerusalem. Kings and people are told to hear. The message concerns Shabbat: carrying burdens, bringing them through the gates, doing work, and setting the day apart. The chapter describes people who wouldn't listen or receive instruction. It gives both the outcome tied to hearing and the warning tied to refusing. (Jeremiah 17:19–27)

We shouldn't leave those words out after quoting the deceitful heart.

The heart isn't being discussed as something detached from obedience. The chapter reaches into what people are doing with their days, their work, and the commands they've been given.

Mirror moment

It's possible to enjoy a conversation about returning to YAHUAH while avoiding the part that touches our routine.

Maybe we're ready to examine someone else's conduct, but when a command presses on our time or comfort, we suddenly need to change the subject.

Is there something I'm willing to discuss as an idea but unwilling to examine in my own life?

This isn't a reason to invent an answer to every question about practice. It's a reason to stay with the question instead of using what we haven't settled to avoid what the words plainly ask us to face.

A feeling can tell me to pause, but it can't settle the meaning

James 1 begins by addressing the scattered twelve tribes. It speaks of trials, patience, asking for wisdom, and the passing nature of wealth. Then it turns to temptation and the way a person can be drawn by their own desire. It doesn't blame YAHUAH for that pull toward evil. (James 1:1–18)

That gives us something to consider when we feel strongly about an answer. A feeling may be real without proving that our explanation is right.

Being uncomfortable doesn't automatically mean the Scripture is being used wrongly. Feeling relieved doesn't automatically mean we've read it correctly. We still need to examine the words.

Mirror moment

Imagine two explanations of the same Scripture. One asks you to reconsider a habit you enjoy. The other tells you there's no reason to change it.

Which one feels easier to accept?

The harder explanation isn't automatically true, and the easier one isn't automatically false. But can you see why your preference needs examining alongside the reasons being offered?

Before calling a feeling confirmation, ask whether you've allowed the whole chapter to speak.

The mirror is already in the Book

James 1 tells us to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. It says human anger doesn't produce the righteousness YAHUAH requires. Then it calls for receiving the word with meekness and doing what it says. (James 1:19–22)

That leads straight into the mirror.

A person who hears but doesn't do is compared to someone looking at their own face, walking away, and forgetting what they saw. The contrast is someone who continues in the law of liberty and acts on it. (James 1:23–25)

In plain words | James 1:22–25

Hearing without doing can deceive us. Don't look, walk away, and forget. Continue in what you've heard and put it into practice.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

So our mirror moments aren't only a way to make the e-book feel personal. James gives us a picture of self-examination that has to lead somewhere.

Mirror moment

Imagine reading about being slow to anger. You pause because it reminds you of how you spoke to someone that morning. Then you share the verse with a group, receive a few agreeing comments, and move on.

Have you dealt with what you saw, or only shown everyone else that you know the verse?

Maybe the next step is returning to that person and saying, “The way I spoke to you was wrong.” No added explanation that makes them responsible for your words. No Scripture attached to make the apology a correction of them.

The reading reached something real. What will you do with it?

The way I correct someone matters too

James 1 ends with control of the tongue, care for the fatherless and widows in their trouble, and keeping oneself unspotted from the world. It doesn't finish by asking how impressive our explanation sounded. (James 1:26–27)

James 3 brings the tongue into focus again. It opens with a warning about the responsibility of those who teach, then uses small things with great influence: a bit guiding a horse, a rudder steering a ship, and a fire spreading. It confronts blessing and cursing coming from the same mouth. (James 3:1–12)

Then it asks that wisdom be shown through conduct and meekness. Bitter envy and strife aren't presented as signs of wisdom from above. The wisdom described in verses 17–18 is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to hear, merciful, and fruitful, without favoritism or hypocrisy.

In plain words | James 3:13–18

Show wisdom in how you live. Envy and strife bring disorder. Wisdom from above is seen in purity, mercy, peace, and good fruit.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

That doesn't mean a correction must be vague or leave the wrong thing untouched. We can be clear without enjoying someone's embarrassment.

Mirror moment

Suppose you've found a real error in something another person shared. You can show the Scripture and explain it. But you're also excited to make them look foolish in front of the people who trust them.

Does having the correct reference excuse what you're hoping to do with it?

We need to examine the claim and our conduct. Being right about one doesn't automatically make the other right.

Let the correction reach the people who heard the claim

What if the error is ours?

Suppose we shared a verse as an unconditional promise. After reading the whole account, we see a condition we left out. Quietly changing a sentence may improve the post, but it won't necessarily correct what people already took from it.

A plain correction might sound like this:

“I shared this as though the promise had no condition. The chapter includes one, and I left it out. Here's the verse and the fuller account. My earlier explanation needs that correction.”

That's different from saying, “Some people misunderstood what I meant,” when the problem was what we actually said.

Correct the part that's wrong. Show what led you to change it. Where possible, put the correction where the same people can see it. If someone was harmed by the claim, consider what you need to address with them directly too.

You don't have to turn the correction into a performance of how humble you are. Just make it clear enough to help the people who trusted your words.

Ask to be searched too

Psalm 139 begins with YAHUAH's knowledge of the person speaking: movements, thoughts, words, and ways. It speaks of His presence, of being formed and known, and of the wonder of His thoughts. (Psalm 139:1–18)

The psalm also contains strong words against the wicked and those who rise against YAHUAH. David speaks of hatred for those enemies. We shouldn't hide that part. But we shouldn't stop there either. (Psalm 139:19–22)

The closing request turns toward his own heart and thoughts. He asks to be searched, to have any wicked way in him exposed, and to be led in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23–24)

After speaking about wrongdoing outside himself, he still asks for examination within himself.

We need that willingness too. Naming something wrong around us doesn't remove the need to ask what may be wrong in us.

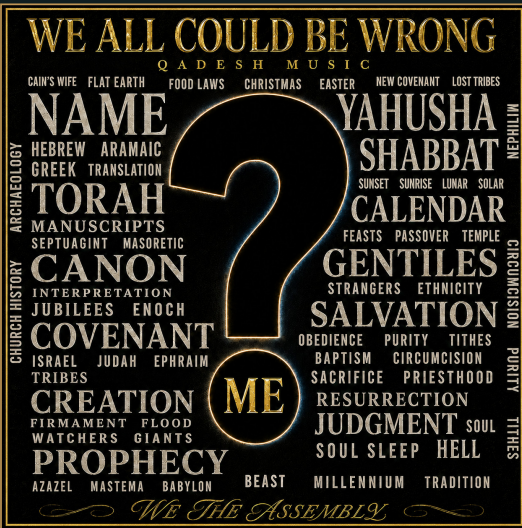
Before you close the Book, stay with one thing you've noticed. Does a claim need correcting? Does someone need an apology? Is there a command you've been avoiding, or a question you've been covering with confidence?

Bring that to YAHUAH. Ask for overstanding, and don't rush past what the reading has shown you.

You don't have to fix everything in one sitting. But don't walk away pretending you didn't see it.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

We All Could Be Wrong

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

I Think, I Believe, I Feel

We All Could Be Wrong puts We The Assembly in the same conversation as the listener. We aren't asking everyone else to accept examination while keeping ourselves outside it.

I Think, I Believe, I Feel gives us room to consider the difference between something we're sure of and something we've actually examined. It also opens questions that we'll spend more time with in the covenant resources.

Let the songs help you stay with what you've read. If a lyric brings someone else to mind, take a moment before sending it. Is there something in it for you too?

Examine what we share and who we learn from



Someone can help us see something in Scripture that we've never noticed before. We may feel grateful for years. Their words may have encouraged us to open the Book again.

That gratitude can be real. It still doesn't mean every explanation they give is right.

What happens when a person who has helped us shares something that doesn't fit the Scripture they're using? Can we examine it without feeling as though we're betraying them?

And when we're the ones sharing, can people ask us a fair question without having to prove their loyalty first?

In the last chapter, we turned the mirror inward. Keep it there as we look at leadership, care, and the voices we learn from. This isn't a search for someone we can blame for everything. It's a chance to examine what we're receiving and what we're passing on.

Open Ezekiel 34 and Mark 7. Read each chapter through. We'll also look at 1 Peter 5 and Matthew 7. Matthew 7 continues YAHUSHA's words from chapters 5 and 6, so begin there when following that account.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. The panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations.

Who is being fed?

Ezekiel 34 opens with a charge against the shepherds of YAHSHAR'AL (Israel). They feed themselves while failing to feed the flock. They take from the sheep, but the weak, sick, injured, scattered, and lost aren't receiving the care they need. The chapter names force and cruelty in the way those shepherds rule. (Ezekiel 34:1–6)

These aren't vague complaints about a leader's personality. Specific needs are being neglected. People are scattered and left exposed.

In plain words | Ezekiel 34:2–6

The shepherds benefit from the flock but don't care for it. They leave the weak without help, fail to seek the lost, and rule with force and cruelty.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

YAHUAH doesn't leave that conduct unchallenged. He calls the shepherds to account and says He will deliver His flock from them. Then He speaks of seeking the scattered, gathering them, feeding them, and tending those who have been hurt. (Ezekiel 34:7–16)

Notice what the chapter brings into view: what happens to the people.

We can learn something from that when considering a community today. A busy platform can show us that much is being said. It doesn't, by itself, show us whether people are being cared for.

Mirror moment

Imagine someone who always makes time to ask people to share a broadcast, support an event, or bring in more listeners. But when a person is struggling or asks for help, the need is repeatedly brushed aside.

What would that pattern tell you to examine?

Now bring it closer. When we share Scripture with someone who is hurting, do we listen long enough to hear what they're facing? Or do we give them a verse and move on because we've said what we wanted to say?

We can't meet every need ourselves. But can we be honest about what we can offer, help where we can, and avoid treating people as useful only when they're supporting our work?

The flock is in the chapter too

It's easy to read the opening of Ezekiel 34 and think only about leaders we've known.

Keep going.

In verses 17–22, the chapter turns toward harm within the flock. Some eat the good pasture and trample what's left. They drink clean water and muddy what others must drink. They push the weak with their sides, shoulders, and horns until those sheep are scattered.

The people causing harm aren't allowed to disappear into the crowd while all the attention stays on the shepherds.

Mirror moment

Picture someone new joining a Scripture conversation. They use a familiar church term because it's the only term they've learned. Before they can finish their question, several people correct their wording, laugh, or speak to them as though they should already know better.

The group may know something worth sharing. But how have they treated the person who came to learn?

Could we be making it harder for someone to approach the Book while congratulating ourselves for knowing more of it?

That question belongs to all of us, not only the person leading the conversation. How do we respond in the comments? What do we encourage by laughing along? Who gets pushed aside when the room is eager to show what it knows?

Stay for the care and the promise

Ezekiel 34 doesn't end with a list of failures. It speaks of one shepherd, YAHUAH's servant David, a covenant of peace, safety, fruitful land, and deliverance from those who exploited the people. It names the house of YAHSHAR'AL (Israel) and speaks of their being His people. (Ezekiel 34:23–31)

Keep those details in view. The chapter includes gathering from the countries and return to their own land. We shouldn't turn it into a few general lines about choosing a good speaker and leave the rest behind.

For the question we're examining here, the contrast is clear. Taking from the flock while neglecting it isn't the care the chapter describes. The answer to failed care isn't more force dressed in different language.

In 1 Peter 5, elders are called to tend the flock willingly, not for dishonest gain or by dominating those in their care. They are to be examples. The chapter also calls the younger to submit to the elders and calls everyone to humility. It continues through casting care on YAHUAH, staying alert, resisting the adversary, enduring suffering, and closing words of encouragement and peace. (1 Peter 5:1–14)

Respect and responsibility belong together. The words addressed to those being led don't erase the words addressed to those leading.

Mirror moment

Imagine a leader who often speaks about respect but won't discuss the commands about their own conduct.

Now imagine a listener who expects patience from everyone else but refuses to receive a clear correction.

Both have words to face. Which part am I quick to quote, and which part would I rather someone else read?

When a tradition gets in the way of a command

Mark 7 begins with a dispute over the disciples eating with unwashed hands. The question raised concerns the tradition of the elders.

YAHUSHA answers by bringing Isaiah's words about honoring with the lips while the heart is far away into the conversation. He confronts setting aside a command to hold on to a tradition. (Mark 7:1–9)

Then He gives an example involving parents.

The command to honor father and mother stands before them. Yet the practice He describes allows someone to call what could help their parents a gift and withhold that help. YAHUSHA says their tradition makes the word of YAHUAH ineffective. (Mark 7:10–13)

Something can sound devoted while helping a person avoid a responsibility.

In plain words | Mark 7:9–13

YAHUSHA confronts a tradition that lets people set aside a command. Calling something a gift doesn't excuse withholding the help owed to their parents.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

Mirror moment

Suppose someone is praised for giving time and resources to a public effort, while a responsibility at home is being knowingly neglected. If someone raises the concern, the response is that the public work is too important to question.

Would the praise settle whether the choice was right?

Now think about something we call service. Is it helping us obey, or have we made it an excuse not to face another command?

This question can reach the person organizing the effort too. Are we so pleased with someone's contribution to our work that we don't want them to consider the responsibility they're leaving behind?

Changing communities doesn't finish the examination

We may recognize the problem when it belongs to a system we've left. It can be harder to recognize when the habit has become normal among people we trust now.

Maybe a familiar response gets repeated until nobody asks where it came from. Maybe a community preference starts being treated as a command. Maybe someone raises a Scripture and gets told, "That's not how we do things here."

How would we tell the difference between a useful practice and a rule we've placed over the words we're supposed to follow?

We'd need to open the Book. Name the practice clearly. Identify the command being discussed. Follow the whole account and show how the explanation fits.

We The Assembly has to accept that examination too. Changing the name on the gathering doesn't make every habit within it sound. Using restored terms doesn't settle whether we're handling Scripture faithfully.

We can be grateful for what we've learned and still examine what we've carried with us.

Don't leave the heart out of Mark 7

After the dispute about tradition, YAHUSHA calls the people to hear. He speaks about what enters a person and what comes out, and later explains the matter to His disciples. The account names evil thoughts, theft, deceit, pride, and other evils that come from within and defile a person. (Mark 7:14–23)

That brings the mirror close again. We can't make the whole conversation about another person's outward practice while ignoring what's coming from our own heart.

The chapter then moves to a woman seeking help for her daughter and to a man who is deaf and has difficulty speaking. Read both accounts rather than stopping at the dispute. They show YAHUSHA responding to people in need, and the chapter closes with the crowd's astonishment at His works. (Mark 7:24–37)

Mirror moment

Suppose you've learned to explain the tradition problem in Mark 7 very well. But your conversations about it keep filling with contempt for the people who haven't reached the same conclusion.

Are you staying with the whole chapter's concern? Have you examined the pride or harmful speech that may be coming from you while you're discussing someone else's error?

A sound point doesn't excuse everything we do while making it.

Look at the fruit, including ours

Matthew 7 begins with a warning about judgment and a picture of someone trying to remove a small speck from another person's eye while ignoring a beam in their own. YAHUSHA says to deal with the beam first, so the person can see clearly to help. (Matthew 7:1–5)

Later in the same chapter, He warns about false prophets and says they can be known by their fruit. Then He distinguishes claims of speaking and doing mighty works in His name from doing the Father's will. The account moves into the two builders: one hears and does, while the other hears and doesn't do. (Matthew 7:15–27)

We shouldn't use the opening warning to avoid every examination of conduct. And we shouldn't use the warning about false prophets to skip examining ourselves.

In plain words | Matthew 7:15–27

Examine the fruit. Claims and impressive works don't replace doing the Father's will. Hearing and doing are compared with building on a firm foundation.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

A large audience isn't the same thing as good fruit. Neither is a small audience proof that someone is faithful. We need to look at what is being shared, what is being done, and whether it agrees with Scripture.

Mirror moment

Imagine a person says, “Look how many people this message reached.” That's information about reach. What would you still need to examine before calling the message sound?

Was the Scripture represented faithfully? Were people being led to obey, or being taught to excuse what the words confront? When an error was shown, was it corrected or hidden?

Ask those questions about a post with ten views as well as a broadcast with thousands. Ask them about something you've shared yourself.

Be specific about what needs examining

If something concerns you, name the actual words or conduct. “I don't like this person” isn't the same as showing that an explanation is wrong.

“They've helped me before” isn't an answer to a specific concern either.

You might ask, “You said this command no longer applies. Can we read the chapter you're using and follow how you reached that conclusion?”

Or, “We keep speaking about caring for one another. What happened when this need was brought to us?”

Give the matter a fair hearing. Check what you can verify. A concern shouldn't become an accusation merely because the person annoyed you, and clear harm shouldn't become acceptable merely because the person is familiar.

You don't need to claim knowledge of someone's hidden motives to examine what they said or did. And asking for overstanding doesn't require handing over your judgment to the strongest voice in the room.

As you close the Book, think about both sides of this chapter. Who am I learning from, and what am I passing on? How am I being treated, and how am I treating the person who is still learning?

Ask YAHUAH to help you see what needs attention. Let the answer reach your own conduct as well as the voices you choose to follow.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Search The Witness, Not The Speaker

Search The Witness, Not The Speaker fits this chapter's call to examine what's being shared without making a familiar voice the final authority.

Cherry Picking brings selective reading into the conversation, including the habits we can carry into our own communities. Let that question turn inward before deciding who else needs the song.

Keep the Book open as you listen. What we sing, what we write, and what we share should all be open to the same examination.

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Cherry Picking

Keep the words that challenge your claim



Sometimes the words we leave out are the words that would change our answer.

An instruction names a place, but we repeat it without the place. A promise comes with a condition, but the condition doesn't make it into the post. A warning speaks to us, so we move quickly to a verse that feels easier to share.

We may keep the verse number and still lose something the Scripture says.

In the last chapter, we examined what we receive and pass on. Now we're going to look closely at what happens when words are added, removed, or reshaped to support a claim.

Open Deuteronomy 4 and 12, Proverbs 30, Jeremiah 36, Enoch 104, and Revelation 22. Read each chapter through as we reach it. There's no need to rush through all of them in one sitting. Keep the account with the words we're discussing, and follow it farther wherever the question requires it.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. As before, the panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations.

The warning belongs with the commands

Deuteronomy 4 begins with a call to hear and do. The people are being prepared to enter and possess the land. Verse 2 tells them not to add to or take away from the word being commanded, so they may keep the commands. (Deuteronomy 4:1–2)

The chapter continues through what they have witnessed, what they must remember, and what they must make known to their children. It recalls hearing at the mountain and warns against making images and turning away from the covenant. (Deuteronomy 4:3–24)

Then it speaks of corruption, scattering, distress, and returning to YAHUAH. It keeps obedience, mercy, and the covenant in the account. The closing sections return to what YAHUAH has done, keeping the commands, refuge cities, and the setting in which the law is given. (Deuteronomy 4:25–49)

So the warning against changing the words isn't floating on its own. It belongs with remembering, doing, and passing on what was given.

In plain words | Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 9

Hear and keep the commands. Don't add to them or take away from them. Don't forget what you've been shown, and make it known to the generations after you.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

If we pass on a shortened command that leaves out something that governs it, what have we taught the next person to keep?

Mirror moment

Imagine explaining a command to someone new. You leave out a detail because you think it will make the conversation too complicated. They trust your explanation and repeat it to somebody else.

After a while, your shorter version is the only version people in that conversation have heard.

Did leaving the detail out make the command easier to follow, or did it change what people think they were told to do?

We can explain one part at a time. We don't need to erase the other parts to do that.

Keep the place and the conditions

Deuteronomy 12 speaks about what the people are to do in the land. It confronts the worship practiced by the nations there and directs attention to the place YAHUAH will choose for His name. Offerings, sacrifices, rejoicing, and care for the Levite are part of the chapter. (Deuteronomy 12:1–19)

It also distinguishes ordinary eating from offerings brought to the chosen place. It addresses distance, the eating of meat, the prohibition on eating blood, and what must be brought for sacrifice. Those distinctions remain in the instruction. (Deuteronomy 12:20–28)

Near the end, it warns against copying the nations' worship. It names even the burning of sons and daughters among the practices YAHUAH hates. Then comes the command not to add or diminish. (Deuteronomy 12:29–32)

We shouldn't use that final warning while removing the details it follows.

Words about where, when, who, and how aren't clutter around the command. They help tell us what the command requires.

Mirror moment

Suppose you want to do something because you've found it in Scripture. Then you notice that the chapter names a place or a responsibility you hadn't considered.

Do you leave that detail out when explaining your plan? Do you decide that a sincere intention gives you permission to choose a substitute?

Or do you stop and ask what those words require you to examine before going farther?

Keeping the conditions doesn't mean deciding the command doesn't matter. It means refusing to rewrite it while saying we're keeping it.

Don't put your conclusion inside the quotation

Proverbs 30 opens with Agur speaking about the limits of his own knowledge. It asks questions about the One who established the earth, then speaks of the purity of His words and warns against adding to them. The consequence named is reproof and being found a liar. (Proverbs 30:1–6)

The person reading that warning should also hear the humility around it.

The chapter continues with a request to be kept from falsehood and given neither poverty nor riches. It confronts pride, mistreatment of the poor, and people who think themselves clean while remaining unwashed. It includes observations of the world and closes by telling the person who has exalted himself or planned evil to stop, rather than keep stirring strife. (Proverbs 30:7–33)

In plain words | Proverbs 30:5–6

His words are pure. Don't add your own words to them as though they are His, and be exposed as a liar when corrected.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

That reaches beyond putting an extra sentence on a page. Think about how we present an explanation.

We can say, “Here's what we conclude, and here's why.” Then we can show our reasons. But if we place our conclusion inside a Scripture quotation, the reader may never see where the Scripture ends and our explanation begins.

Mirror moment

Imagine making a Scripture graphic. You change a few words because you think they make the meaning clearer. You keep the reference underneath and don't tell the reader you've changed the wording.

Would a person copying that graphic know which words came from the text and which came from you?

An explanation can be useful. Calling it an explanation doesn't weaken it. It lets the reader examine it honestly.

A warning about changed words, and hope for faithful work

Enoch 104 begins by encouraging the righteous who have suffered. It tells them not to lose hope when sinners grow strong. It also confronts the idea that sins will remain unseen and unrecorded. (Enoch 104:1–8)

Then it warns against lying and altering the words of uprightness. It says sinners will change and pervert righteous words, practice deceit, and write books concerning their words. This isn't a reason to pretend that everything handed to us must be faithful simply because it's printed. (Enoch 104:9–10)

But don't stop reading there.

The chapter also speaks about the words being written truthfully in different languages, without changing or diminishing them. It speaks of books given to the righteous and wise, bringing joy, uprightness, and wisdom. (Enoch 104:11–13)

In plain words | Enoch 104:9–13

Some will corrupt words and write deceitfully. Faithful writing preserves the words rather than changing or diminishing them, and books can bring wisdom to those who receive them.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

Both belong in the chapter. There's a warning about corruption and a place for faithful work.

When we examine a resource, we need more than its claim to preserve truth. We need to see what it has done with the words. That includes a resource carrying the name We The Assembly.

Mirror moment

Suppose you read something that agrees with several things you've come to believe. Then you find a quotation that doesn't match the Scripture it names.

Are you as willing to examine that mismatch as you would be if it came from a source you already distrusted?

The question isn't whether you like where the writer is going. What words are actually there? What changed? Has the writer shown the reason for the change, or expected you not to notice?

Restoration work has to face those questions too. The word restored on a cover doesn't excuse us from showing what we've done and why.

The king could burn the scroll, but not cancel the warning

Jeremiah 36 begins with an instruction to write the words that have been spoken. The stated hope is that the people will hear the coming judgment, turn from their evil ways, and receive forgiveness. Jeremiah speaks, and Baruch writes. Then Baruch is sent to read the scroll to the people. (Jeremiah 36:1–10)

The words reach the officials. They hear the scroll, ask how it was written, and decide the king must hear about it. They also tell Jeremiah and Baruch to hide. (Jeremiah 36:11–19)

When the scroll reaches the king, he responds very differently.

As the scroll is read, he cuts it and throws it into the fire until it is burned. Some urge him not to burn it, but he won't listen. He orders Jeremiah and Baruch taken, yet YAHUAH hides them. (Jeremiah 36:20–26)

Then another scroll is written. The former words are put back, and more are added. The chapter names judgment against the king, his household and servants, and the people who wouldn't hear. Destroying the scroll hasn't removed what was spoken. (Jeremiah 36:27–32)

The further words come through the instruction given to Jeremiah. This isn't permission for us to add what we prefer. It's the account of a king failing to silence the word he rejected.

Mirror moment

We don't need a fire to keep unwelcome words out of a conversation.

Imagine trimming a video just before the speaker reads a condition that changes your point. Or removing a sentence from a quote because the sentence makes your argument harder to defend.

The words still exist. You've only made it harder for the next person to see them.

Now think about a Scripture you avoid because you haven't worked out how it fits what you believe. Could you leave it on the page and keep examining it, instead of treating it as something that has to disappear?

Don't use the final warning without reading the ending

Revelation 22 begins with the river and tree of life. It speaks of the end of the curse, service, the name, and light. John is corrected when he falls before the angel. The chapter speaks of keeping the prophecy, judgment according to works, and the invitation to take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:1–17)

Then it warns against adding to or taking away from the words of the prophecy of this book. It names severe consequences, and the chapter closes with the promised coming and the response to it. (Revelation 22:18–21)

Keep the wording precise. The warning names this book's prophecy. It doesn't give us permission to turn every explanation we attach to Scripture into something nobody may question.

Together with the commands in Deuteronomy and the warning in Proverbs, it gives us strong reason to handle what we receive with care. And if we're explaining any of those warnings, our explanation should preserve what each actually says.

Mirror moment

Imagine someone asks why your summary leaves out a condition. Instead of answering, you accuse them of questioning Scripture.

Were they questioning the words in the Book, or the way you represented them?

We shouldn't protect our own additions by treating an honest question about them as an attack on YAHUAH's word.

Let the reader see what you've done

In this e-book, the panels marked In plain words tell you they're summaries. They help explain an idea, but they aren't presented as the exact Scripture wording.

That's a distinction we should carry into our own sharing.

If you're quoting, preserve the words of the text you're quoting. If you're summarizing, say so. If you're sharing a restored reading, make clear that it's a restored reading. If you're giving your own explanation, let the reader see the Scripture and follow your reasons.

A short quotation can be faithful. The question is whether shortening it changes what the reader is being led to believe. Have we kept the conditions that matter? Can the reader find the full account? Have we made someone else's words support something they weren't saying?

The same questions belong with music. A lyric may retell an account or draw a present-day comparison. That doesn't make every lyric a word-for-word Scripture quotation. We should be clear about the difference.

Before you send it

Take one post, note, or explanation you've prepared. Put it beside the full chapter it draws from.

Look for what you've added and what you've left out. Some of it may be ordinary explanation that helps the reader. Some may be a detail that changes the claim. Don't treat those as the same thing.

If you find a problem, fix it before passing it on. If it's already been shared, make the correction clear enough for the people who received it to see what changed.

Ask YAHUAH for overstanding. Be willing to keep a verse in the conversation even when it means taking your own claim out of it.

We don't protect Scripture by protecting every explanation we've given of it.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Put The Blade Down

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Read The Part You Skipped

Put The Blade Down fits the call to leave the commands and their conditions intact, even when they press against something we want to keep.

Read The Part You Skipped brings Jeremiah's scroll, honest quotation, and visible correction into the same conversation. Let it remind you to hear the words that don't fit your first answer.

Keep the Scripture beside the song. If the music helps a truth stay with you, return to the whole account and let it deepen what you're hearing.

Put what you learn into practice



You close the Book. You can explain what you read. You even know who you want to send it to.

But before you send it, what does it ask of you?

That's where this chapter meets us. We've spent time checking the words, the speakers, the setting, and the claims. Now we need to ask what happens after we see something clearly.

We can become better at spotting a missing condition and still ignore one in our own plans. We can explain why a rumor is wrong while leaving the rumor we shared untouched. We can speak about care for people and never make time for the person who needs it.

Knowing what the words say matters. So does what we do when they reach us.

Open Ezra 7, Nehemiah 8–9, Joshua 1, and James 1 as we reach them. Read the full chapters. Ask YAHUAH for overstanding and help to respond faithfully. The panels marked **In plain words** are summaries, not Scripture quotations.

Don't leave yourself out of what you share

Ezra 7 begins with Ezra's family line and his journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. It identifies him as a scribe skilled in the law of Moses. The chapter gives the setting before it tells us about the preparation of his heart. (Ezra 7:1–9)

Verse 10 brings seeking, doing, and teaching together. Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law, to do it, and to teach its statutes and judgments in YAHSHAR'AL (Israel).

Don't move so quickly to the teaching that you miss the doing.

In plain words | Ezra 7:10

Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law, put it into practice, and teach its statutes and judgments among the people.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

The rest of the chapter includes the king's letter. It addresses the journey, gifts, temple service, supplies, exemptions, judges, instruction, and penalties. Ezra closes by giving praise for the favor and strength he has received. (Ezra 7:11–28)

This is a real commission with named duties. It isn't a blank appointment for every person who knows how to explain a verse. Ezra's authority to appoint judges and the penalties in the king's letter don't become ours because we share Scripture online.

But we can face the question his preparation puts before us: have we included our own conduct in what we're learning?

Mirror moment

Imagine preparing a post about speaking carefully. You've found the references, checked the chapter, and explained why answering in anger causes harm.

Then someone sends you a message that irritates you. You snap at them, finish the post, and publish it.

The post may contain a useful explanation. But did you let it examine the reply you just sent?

We don't have to pretend we've never failed before we share anything. We do need to stop treating the words as instructions for everyone except us. Sometimes the next step is to go back to that person and take responsibility for what we said.

The reading reached their choices

In Nehemiah 8, the people gather and ask for the book of the law of Moses. Ezra reads before the gathered men, women, and those able to grasp the reading. The people listen, and the Levites help make the meaning clear. (Nehemiah 8:1–8)

The people weep as they hear. But the response given for that day isn't to remain in grief. They're told the day is set apart. They're directed to eat, drink, and send portions to those who have nothing prepared. Their joy is tied to having grasped the words made known to them. (Nehemiah 8:9–12)

Notice the person who has nothing prepared. That person isn't left outside the joy while everybody else celebrates how much they've learned.

The reading continues. On the second day, the family heads, priests, and Levites gather to examine the words further. They find the instruction about dwelling in booths during the feast of the seventh month. The people gather branches, make booths, and dwell in them. The chapter describes great gladness, daily reading, the seven days of the feast, and the assembly on the eighth day. (Nehemiah 8:13–18)

Their response takes shape in what they actually do. The chapter doesn't end with everyone agreeing that the reading was powerful.

Mirror moment

Imagine a gathering where everybody is moved by the Scripture. People share what stood out, and the conversation keeps going after the reading ends.

One person quietly says they don't have enough to eat that evening.

Do we hear that as part of the conversation about care, or as an interruption to it?

We may not each have the same means to help. But do we even ask what's needed? Or do we return to discussing generosity while the person sits there unheard?

In Nehemiah 8, sharing portions belongs inside the response. The words reach beyond the gathering and into someone's meal.

Don't turn one day's instruction into every day's answer

Stay with the account into Nehemiah 9.

The people now gather with fasting, sackcloth, and earth upon them. They read, confess their sins and the wrongs of their fathers, and worship. The chapter names the gathered people and their separation from foreigners before carrying us into the prayer. (Nehemiah 9:1–5)

The prayer remembers creation, the covenant with Abraham, deliverance from Egypt, instruction, provision, and the land. It also names repeated refusal, rebellion, suffering, mercy, and rescue. The people don't tell the story as though only their enemies have done wrong. (Nehemiah 9:6–31)

Near the end, they acknowledge wrongdoing among their kings, leaders, priests, and fathers. They describe their present distress, including their service under kings who take the land's increase and rule over their bodies and cattle. The chapter closes with a written commitment being sealed. (Nehemiah 9:32–38)

That keeps us from using the instruction against mourning in chapter 8 to erase the fasting and confession in chapter 9. We need to know which day we're reading about, what is happening, and what the people are being called to do.

Mirror moment

Suppose someone is finally admitting harm they've caused. They're ready to stop defending it and face what needs to change.

We rush in with a verse about joy because we want the conversation to feel better.

Have we helped them respond to YAHUAH, or hurried them past something they needed to face?

Now turn the mirror the other way. If we've been given reason to rejoice and share with others, do we insist that staying miserable is the only serious response?

The account makes room for joy and for confession. We shouldn't use one to silence the other.

Remembering has a purpose

Joshua 1 begins after Moses' death. Joshua is told to lead the people across the Jordan into the land. The chapter names the promise, the boundaries, the inheritance, and his responsibility. (Joshua 1:1–6)

Within that commission, Joshua is told to be strong and courageous, keep the law commanded through Moses, and not turn from it. The instruction to meditate day and night has a stated purpose: to do what is written. (Joshua 1:7–9)

In plain words | Joshua 1:7–8

Keep the law before you. Think on it continually so that you carry out what it says, without turning away from it.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

The chapter then moves into preparations to cross the Jordan. Joshua reminds the tribes already given land on the eastern side of their duty to help the others. Their reply promises obedience and names death as the penalty for rebellion against his command. (Joshua 1:10–18)

Those are duties and responses within Joshua's commission. We can't take the promise of land, the military responsibility, or that authority over the people and attach them to a project simply because we want it to succeed.

We can still see why remembering matters. Joshua isn't being told to collect words while his choices go another way. The words are to remain before him so he can act according to them.

Mirror moment

Imagine keeping a Scripture about careful speech on your phone. You see it every day. You know it well enough to finish it when somebody starts reading.

Then a rumor reaches you. It's about someone you've already been having trouble with. You forward it before checking.

The problem wasn't that you couldn't remember the Scripture. You didn't let what you remembered govern that choice.

A reminder can help us pause. But knowing where we've saved a verse isn't the same as keeping what it says.

Stay with the mirror after you see yourself

James 1 addresses the twelve scattered tribes. It begins with trials, patience, and asking for wisdom. It speaks about the lowly and rich, enduring temptation, and desire leading into sin. It doesn't allow someone to blame YAHUAH for being drawn toward evil. (James 1:1–18)

Then it brings the matter close to our daily responses: be ready to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Receive the word with meekness and do it. Hearing without doing can become self-deception. (James 1:19–22)

The chapter itself gives us a mirror. A person looks at their face, walks away, and forgets what they saw. The contrast is someone who continues in the law of liberty and does the work rather than becoming a forgetful hearer. (James 1:23–25)

In plain words | James 1:22–25

Don't hear the word and then walk away unchanged, as though you've forgotten the face you just saw. Stay with what you've heard and put it into practice.

Summary, not a Scripture quotation.

The ending makes the conduct concrete. It speaks about restraining the tongue, caring for the fatherless and widows in their distress, and keeping oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:26–27)

That's a different measure from how many references we can name.

Mirror moment

Imagine recognizing yourself in a chapter about anger. You underline the words and admit they've reached you.

Later, the same kind of disagreement comes up. You feel yourself preparing the same sharp answer.

This is a place to remember what you saw. Let the other person finish. Check what they actually said. If you've spoken unfairly, correct it. If you're too angry to answer carefully, don't send the reply just because it's already typed.

You may still need to say something firm. Being slow to anger doesn't require you to pretend a problem isn't there. It calls you to face the problem without letting anger decide how you handle the person.

Don't let an unanswered question stop a clear response

Some things need more examination. A command may name a place, a time, a person, or a responsibility we haven't yet worked through. Faithfulness doesn't mean inventing a substitute so we can say we did something.

But an unanswered question in one area doesn't erase what we've seen clearly in another.

Suppose you're still examining a command tied to a particular place. That question deserves careful reading. While you're working through it, you learn that an accusation you shared was false.

You don't need to settle the place question before correcting the accusation.

These are different matters. Keep studying the one that needs more work. Respond to the one that's become clear.

Mirror moment

Imagine saying you're waiting for more clarity, but never returning to the chapter, writing down the question, or checking the reason you're unsure.

What are you doing while you wait?

Now imagine the opposite. You feel pushed to act before you've checked who a command addresses or what it requires. You choose something that looks close enough and call it obedience.

Neither avoiding the question nor rushing past it helps us hear the instruction. Name what you still need to examine. Keep its conditions in view. Ask YAHUAH for overstanding, and return to the words.

Let the response be real

Before moving to the next chapter, choose something from your reading that has become clear enough to respond to.

Maybe it's a claim you need to correct. Maybe it's someone you need to hear without interrupting. Maybe you've noticed a need you kept walking past.

Write down what the Scripture says and what you'll do in response. Keep the two clear. Your plan for how to make a correction isn't a new command for everybody else.

Then return to it. Did you follow through? Did you discover something else that needs attention? Did the person affected actually receive the correction or the care?

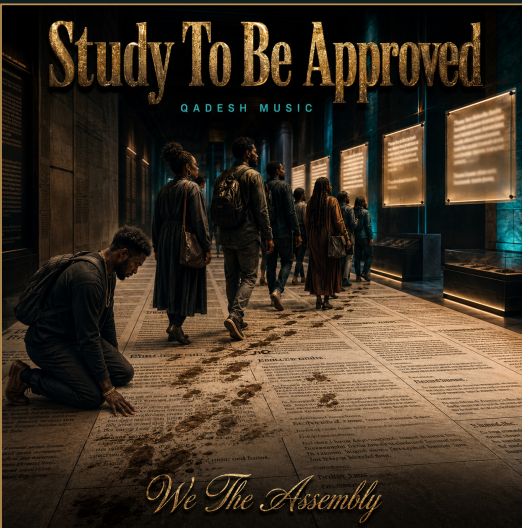
Quiet care doesn't need to become a public announcement. We can make a needed change without turning it into content. If we've spread a false claim, though, the correction needs to reach the people who received it.

The same is true for We The Assembly. A well-written e-book doesn't excuse us from living under the words we share. Our readers should be able to examine our explanation. The people around us should also be able to see whether we respond when it reaches us.

Ask YAHUAH to help you carry what you've learned into the next conversation, the next choice, and the responsibility in front of you.

Music to sit with

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Study To Be Approved

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Let The Fine Print Speak

Study To Be Approved belongs here because it asks whether the reading has reached our walk. It brings Nehemiah's reading and Joshua's meditation into a song about letting the Book examine the person holding it.

Let The Fine Print Speak keeps the conditions beside the promises. Let it bring you back to the details of the command before deciding how to respond. Its covenant themes also open questions we'll examine more fully in later e-books.

Keep the Scripture beside the music. When a line stays with you, return to the chapter it points toward. Then consider the choice waiting for you after the song ends.

Keep a record you can return to



You remember that a Scripture changed your mind. You remember the conversation. You may even remember where you were sitting when it finally made sense.

But can you find the words that changed it?

A few weeks later, somebody asks why you no longer explain it the way you used to. You know there's a reason. You just can't remember which chapter showed you, which part you had missed, or how the pieces fit together.

That's where a simple record helps.

It doesn't need to look impressive. A notebook, a document, or a clear note on your phone can do the job. What matters is whether you can return to the Scripture and follow the reason for your answer.

We're going to bring together what we've practiced through this e-book. Then we'll use Isaiah 28 to show what a record might look like. Keep Isaiah 27–29 beside you and read the chapters through. The example below is our explanation and a sample reader's notes, not a Scripture quotation or a report about a particular person's experience.

Save more than the line that stood out

A screenshot can remind us of a sentence. It may not preserve what brought the account to that point.

The same is true of our notes. If all we write is a verse number beside a conclusion, we may later forget which words support that conclusion. We may even attach an explanation we heard somewhere else and remember it as something the chapter said.

Keep the question with the reference. Name who is speaking, who is being addressed, and what happens before and after the words you're examining. Keep reading through the chapter and beyond it when the account continues.

If you're using a WTA restored text, keep its book title and version with your notes. If you save a quotation, preserve its wording. Don't quietly change the quotation when you change your explanation of it.

That way, when you return, you can tell what you actually read and what you concluded from it.

Mirror moment

Imagine finding an old note that says a certain verse proves your point. You remember feeling certain when you wrote it.

You open the chapter and notice that the words belong to someone whose claim is being challenged.

Do you trust the old note because it's yours, or let the chapter correct it?

A note can preserve our learning. It can also preserve a mistake. Keeping it doesn't place it above examination.

Keep your question honest

There's a difference between asking what a chapter says and asking how to make it defend the answer you've already chosen.

We don't have to pretend we come to Scripture with no prior beliefs. Write down what you currently think and where you learned it, if you know. That can help you notice when familiarity is doing more work than the words on the page.

Then ask a question that leaves room for an answer you didn't expect.

Instead of setting out to prove that a familiar explanation is right, ask whether the full account supports it. If it does, show how. If it doesn't, name the part that changes the answer.

Mirror moment

Suppose you tell yourself you're examining a claim, but every note you've saved agrees with it. You remember a verse that seemed to challenge it, yet you never wrote that verse down.

Was it unrelated, or did you leave it out because you didn't want to deal with it?

Bring it back into the record. Read it in its own chapter. You may find that it doesn't contradict your conclusion after all. You may find that your conclusion needs work. Either way, don't decide by hiding the words.

A worked example: returning to Isaiah 28

This example shows how a reader could record the question we examined earlier. It isn't a second set of instructions replacing the chapter. The Scripture stays open beside the notes.

The question I brought

Does Isaiah 28:10 tell me to gather small pieces from different places and treat those pieces as the whole explanation?

What I thought before reading

I had heard the line-and-precept wording used that way. I knew the familiar line, but I hadn't followed the warning around it or stayed with the chapter's ending.

What I read

Isaiah 27, 28, and 29 in full, with the main question focused on chapter 28. In my own notebook, I'd also record the book or file and version I used so I could return to the same wording.

Chapter 27 includes the vineyard, judgment, removal of sin, and gathering to worship. Chapter 29 includes distress, failed perception, the sealed-book picture, lips honoring while the heart is far away, and the promise of people hearing and learning. Those chapters keep warning, help, and response in view on both sides of chapter 28.

How chapter 28 moves

- **Verses 1–6:** The proud drunkards of Ephraim face judgment. Alongside that warning, the chapter speaks of YAHUAH as glory and strength for the remnant.
- **Verses 7–8:** Priests and prophets err through drink. Their vision and judgment fail.
- **Verses 9–13:** The familiar learning language is followed by another tongue, offered rest, refusal to hear, and an outcome of falling backward, being broken, snared, and taken.

- **Verses 14–22:** The rulers in Jerusalem are told to hear. Their claim of safety is exposed as false shelter. The chapter sets a sure foundation and judgment against it, then warns the mockers.
- **Verses 23–29:** The call to listen continues. The farmer's work shows different crops receiving different treatment, with that skill connected to instruction from YAHUAH.

What the words show

Verse 12 says the people wouldn't hear. Verse 13 repeats the familiar line-and-precept wording and names an outcome of judgment. Those details aren't outside the question. They're part of the words I need to explain.

Verse 15 also shows why I must keep track of the speaker. The rulers' claim that disaster won't reach them isn't a promise for me to claim. The chapter challenges their refuge rather than endorsing it.

The ending matters too. I can't say I've followed the chapter if I stop before the call to listen and the farmer's work.

What I conclude, and why

I shouldn't use verse 10 as permission to detach lines from their accounts and make the collection say whatever I want. That reading leaves the refusal and judgment in verses 12–13 unexplained.

Comparing Scriptures can help me examine a question. Each Scripture still needs to be heard in its own setting. A collection of references doesn't remove that responsibility.

That's the conclusion we're showing in this e-book. The reason is visible: the familiar words sit within a chapter that names failed judgment, refusal to hear, false confidence, and the need to listen.

What still needs a closer look

I want to examine more closely who is speaking in verses 9–10 and whether the wording carries scorn. I shouldn't write a settled answer into my notes if I haven't done the work to support it.

That question doesn't erase what verses 12–13 say. It tells me exactly where more examination could help. If further work changes how I explain those earlier verses, I'll record the reason instead of quietly replacing my old answer.

A related Scripture, with its own setting

Isaiah 29:13 speaks of the lips and the heart. YAHUSHA uses those words in the exchange recorded in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. The dispute concerns tradition and commands, including the care owed to parents. (Matthew 15:1–9; Mark 7:1–13)

That connection helps me examine the difference between words of honor and conduct. It isn't a shortcut for settling every question in Isaiah 28. I'd read Matthew 15 and Mark 7 through too, including the later scenes, rather than treating one shared phrase as permission to merge all the accounts.

What changes in my sharing

I won't present the familiar line as though the rest of the chapter has nothing to say about it. If I've already shared that explanation, I'll show what I left out and why my wording needs to change.

Before sharing another chain of references, I'll check the full account behind each one. I'll ask YAHUAH for overstanding and keep the difficult words beside my conclusion.

When I return to these notes

I'll add the date of my reading, keep the earlier conclusion, and write what changed. If someone raises a specific question I haven't considered, I'll record that question accurately and return to the Scripture it concerns.

Notice what the record did

It didn't ask the reader to accept an answer because WTA said it.

It kept the first belief visible, followed the chapter, named the words that changed the explanation, and showed the reason for the conclusion. It also left a real question open without making the whole account sound unknowable.

We can speak firmly where the words support us. We can also be precise about a detail we're still examining. Those things can sit together.

Mirror moment

Imagine sending this kind of record to somebody who disagrees with you. They point to one part of the account and explain why they read it differently.

Do you answer that point, or take their disagreement as proof they aren't willing to learn?

Now imagine receiving a record from someone else. Do you read their reasoning through, or look only for a sentence you can use against them?

Keeping a clear record gives both people something to examine. It doesn't make either person the final authority.

A page you can use again

Use these questions to help organize your notes in a notebook or document. You can write a few clear lines or take more space where the question needs it. This is a practical help, not a new command or a test you have to pass.

My question: What am I trying to examine?

What I currently think: What answer have I carried into the reading, and where did I learn it?

The Scripture I read: Which full chapters or account did I follow?
Which book or file and version did I use?

Who's involved: Who speaks, who hears, what is happening, and why
has the account reached this point?

How the account moves: What begins the matter? What happens next?
Where does it lead?

Words I must keep: Which conditions, warnings, promises, contrasts,
or changes of speaker affect the answer?

What the Scripture says: What can I point to directly? If I copy words,
have I kept the quotation exact?

My conclusion and reasons: How do the words support what I'm
saying? Have I separated my explanation from the quotation?

Other Scriptures I've connected: Have I read their full accounts too?
Why does each connection help answer this question?

Something I still need to examine: Is there a specific detail or
contradiction that could change my answer? What would I need to check?

My response: What should I correct, put into practice, or bring before
YAHUAH in prayer?

Date and return note: When did I write this? What changed when I
returned? Who needs to receive a correction if I've already shared it?

You don't have to force a problem into the notes when you haven't found one. You also shouldn't leave a real problem out to make the record look finished.

Keep the correction where it can be seen

If your conclusion changes, don't erase the trail and act as though you've always said the new thing.

Keep a short note of the earlier claim, the Scripture that changed it, and the corrected explanation. If you shared the earlier claim publicly, make the correction visible to the people who received it. A private notebook entry won't correct what they still believe you said.

There isn't a need to turn correction into self-punishment. There is a need to be clear.

A simple correction might sound like this:

I shared an explanation of Isaiah 28:10 without keeping the refusal and judgment in verses 12–13 with it. That left out words that affect the meaning. I've corrected my explanation. Please read the whole chapter with the change I'm sharing here.

That's an example of a correction, not Scripture wording and not a claim that every reader has made this mistake.

Mirror moment

Imagine changing an old post but leaving no sign that its meaning changed. Someone repeats the original explanation because they trusted you when they first read it.

Would they know they needed to look again?

The point isn't to keep an audience watching every edit. It's to help the people affected find the correction that matters.

Let the notes send you back to the Book

A good record helps us return. It shouldn't become another thing we trust without checking.

We can build a folder full of careful notes and still resist the next Scripture that challenges us. We can collect references, keep every date, and never respond to what we've seen.

So return to the questions that brought us here. Am I hearing the account through? Am I keeping the words that press against my answer? Am I letting what I learn reach my conduct?

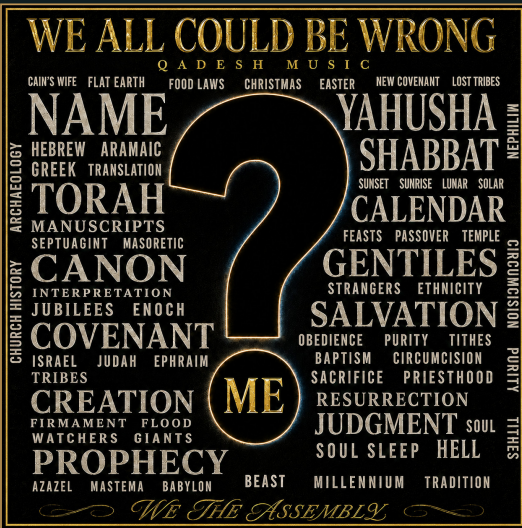
Ask those questions of what We The Assembly shares too. Keep what the Scripture supports. Bring a specific concern to the words it involves. There's no need to surrender your examination in order to receive help.

You don't need a polished notebook to begin. Open the Book, ask YAHUAH for overstanding, and give the account your attention. Keep enough of your work that you can return honestly.

When you come back to the page, let it speak again.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

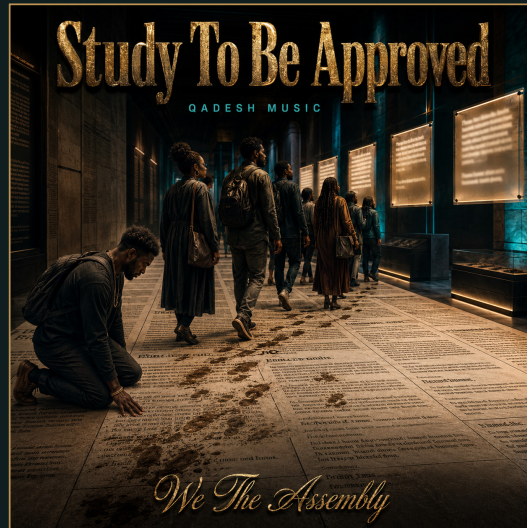
We All Could Be Wrong

We All Could Be Wrong brings the examination back to every chair, including *We The Assembly*. Let it accompany a return to an old conclusion you're ready to check, without deciding in advance that it must stand or fall.

Study To Be Approved asks what the reading has changed in our walk. Keep that question beside the notes you make. A record is useful when it helps you return to the Scripture and respond, not merely remember that you once read it.

The music is here to accompany the reading. Keep the Book open, and examine what we sing with the same care.

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

Study To Be Approved

I had to turn the mirror toward myself



While reading through this e-book, I had to pause.

We were asking people to read the whole account, examine what they'd been taught, and stay open to correction. I agreed with all of that. But something I had been saying kept coming back to mind.

I couldn't ask you to follow that standard while making room for myself to step around it.

So before we close, I want to share what I had to examine. This isn't a story about having every answer now. It's about one correction I needed to make while helping prepare a book that asks other people to be correctable.

The Scripture didn't need to change. The way I was using it did.

What I had been doing

I had used Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 as labels for Jewish people today, including people in modern Israel.

I connected those verses with beliefs I hold about ancestry and history. The comparison felt clear to me. But when I returned to the account, I had to face a question: did these verses identify the people I was attaching them to, or was I supplying that identification?

That distinction matters.

I knew there were specific people and circumstances in those chapters. Yet I was carrying the accusation into another setting as though my comparison settled who the verses were naming.

It didn't.

I'm withdrawing that use of those verses. They don't establish the label I placed on Jewish people today. Calling it a comparison or a nickname doesn't fix the problem if I'm still using Scripture to declare a whole people's identity false.

My questions about our history haven't disappeared. They still deserve careful examination. But those questions don't give me permission to make a verse answer something I haven't shown from its account.

Mirror moment

Think of a Scripture you've used to describe someone else.

If a person asked you to remove your explanation and read the chapter aloud, would the chapter itself identify that person? Or would you need to add the connection?

There may be a behavior worth comparing. Show that behavior clearly. Don't let a comparison quietly become a claim that Scripture has named someone it hasn't named.

Go back to the people in the account

Open Revelation 1–3 and read the chapters together.

John identifies himself, describes being on Patmos, and records the instruction to write to seven assemblies. Those assemblies are named. The messages that follow speak to their works, struggles, faithfulness, and failures. They aren't one accusation aimed at everybody. (Revelation 1:4–20)

Revelation 2:8–11 addresses Smyrna. Its suffering, poverty, opposition, coming imprisonment, and call to remain faithful belong with verse 9. The message includes a promise concerning the second death.

Revelation 3:7–13 addresses Philadelphia. It speaks of an open door, little strength, keeping YAHUSHA's word, and not denying His Name. Verse 9 includes a promise that the opponents will bow before the assembly's feet and know that it is loved. The message continues with endurance, a coming trial, holding fast, and a promise for the one who overcomes.

These are two different messages, to Smyrna and Philadelphia. Their accusations are severe. Keeping them in context doesn't mean pretending those accusations aren't there. It means leaving the accused people within the account instead of choosing a present-day population and assigning the words to them.

Keep reading the other messages too.

Ephesus is praised for testing false claims, yet is also called to repent after leaving its first love. Pergamos faces correction over corrupt teaching. Thyatira receives both recognition of its works and a severe warning about tolerated wrongdoing and judgment. (Revelation 2:1–7, 12–29)

Sardis has a reputation for life but is told it is dead, with an exception made for those who haven't defiled their garments. Laodicea speaks confidently about its wealth and need for nothing, yet receives a very different account of its condition. Correction and the call to repent remain within the messages to the assemblies themselves. (Revelation 3:1–6, 14–22)

That turns the mirror back toward us.

We can notice false claims outside our circle and still need correction inside it. We can have a strong reputation and still need to listen. We can be sure we lack nothing and be missing something we need to face.

I can't use the warnings to examine everybody else while leaving myself outside their reach.

Being sincere doesn't make every connection right

I wasn't trying to encourage people to treat Jewish people as enemies. But I still have to take responsibility for what my words could lead someone to believe.

Intent doesn't make a label harmless. And adding that I don't hate anyone doesn't establish the claim behind it.

If I want people to hear the difference, I need to say what I'm correcting plainly. I used those verses beyond what their setting supports. That's the part I need to change.

I don't have to settle every question about ancestry before making that correction. And someone doesn't have to agree with my beliefs about history for the correction to be owed.

This matters within We The Assembly too. If we say we welcome examination, someone should be able to ask how we reached a conclusion without being treated as though they have rejected YAHUAH.

Mirror moment

Imagine correcting a statement, then spending the rest of the conversation explaining why the people you accused still deserved it.

Would the listener know you had withdrawn the statement? Or would they hear the same accusation with a softer introduction?

Let the correction stand long enough to be heard. Another person's conduct doesn't remove our responsibility for our own words.

Confession brings the conversation home

The direction I want to give my attention to is covenant return. That means I need to stay with what Scripture says about the conduct of the people being called to return.

Read Leviticus 26 from its beginning.

It opens with commands against idols, with Shabbat, and with reverence for the sanctuary. Then it describes the blessings tied to walking in the statutes and doing the commands: provision, peace, victory, and YAHUAH dwelling among His people. Deliverance from Egypt is part of that reminder. (Leviticus 26:1–13)

The warnings that follow are severe. Refusal to listen and continued opposition bring disease, failed harvests, defeat, hunger, death, desolation, and scattering. The chapter even describes hunger reaching the horror of eating one's own children. The land receives the rest it was denied. These aren't light consequences, and they aren't detached from the broken covenant. (Leviticus 26:14–39)

Then verses 40–42 speak of confessing their own wrongdoing and their fathers' wrongdoing, acknowledging that they have walked against YAHUAH, and a humbled heart. YAHUAH speaks of remembering His covenant with Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, and remembering the land.

The chapter continues with the reason for the punishment and His refusal to utterly destroy the people or break His covenant, even in their enemies' land. It ends by naming the setting: the laws given through Moses at Sinai. (Leviticus 26:43–46)

Notice what the confession contains. It doesn't stop at what the fathers did. The people have their own conduct to acknowledge.

When I read that while thinking about return, I have to ask what I'm doing now. What have I repeated? What have I defended? What needs to change in my own speech and choices?

Our history matters. The wrongs done to our families matter. Examining them doesn't require me to avoid the wrong I may be doing myself.

Mirror moment

Suppose you can explain how a harmful habit was passed down through your family. You know who learned it from whom and why it became normal.

That may help explain how you picked it up. But now you've noticed it in the way you treat someone.

What can you change before you pass it on again?

Remembering has to reach the way we live

Read Deuteronomy 29–30 together. Moses is speaking to YAHSHAR'AL (Israel) about the covenant in Moab. The gathering includes leaders, families, children, and the stranger in the camp. The account recalls what the people have seen and warns against turning toward other deities. (Deuteronomy 29:1–18)

It also confronts someone who hears the warning but assures himself of peace while continuing in his own way. Later generations and other nations ask about the ruined land. The answer names forsaking the covenant and serving other deities. The chapter closes by distinguishing what belongs to YAHUAH in secret from what has been revealed for the people and their children to do. (Deuteronomy 29:19–29)

Chapter 30 continues from there.

The people call the blessing and curse to mind among the nations where they've been scattered. They return to YAHUAH and obey His voice with the whole heart and soul. The account speaks of His compassion, gathering, return to the land, and circumcision of the heart to love Him. It also speaks of judgment upon their persecutors and renewed obedience. (Deuteronomy 30:1–10)

Those are promises and responsibilities within a covenant account. I shouldn't turn them into a claim that one feeling, one conversation, or one discovery proves every part of my view of history.

The chapter keeps bringing attention to doing the words. Moses says the command isn't beyond reach. He brings the word close, into the mouth and heart, so it can be done. He sets out life and death, warns against a heart turning toward other deities, and calls the people to love YAHUAH, obey His voice, and hold fast to Him. (Deuteronomy 30:11–20)

The heart and the mouth belong with action.

For me, that means remembrance can't stay at the level of saying who I believe we are. I need to ask how I'm living before YAHUAH. Honoring His Name belongs with honoring His words and ways, not with excusing myself from them.

I can keep learning about our ancestors without making the denial of another people's identity the center of my walk.

Leaving judgment to YAHUAH doesn't mean ignoring wrongdoing

This correction doesn't mean that history is beyond question or that harmful conduct should go unnamed. We can examine a specific claim, identify a false statement, and explain what shows it is false. We can protect someone being harmed and speak clearly about wrongdoing.

What I can't do is treat my certainty as knowledge of every person's ancestry, heart, or standing before YAHUAH.

People inherit teachings they didn't choose. They also differ in what they can read, whom they can safely question, and what help they can find. I don't know every person's circumstances. I shouldn't speak as though I do.

Leaving judgment to YAHUAH doesn't require me to stop examining. It requires me to stop pretending my examination gives me His place.

And it gives me room to return to what needs my attention: my conduct, the words I share, and the way I respond when Scripture challenges me.



Mirror moment

You've spent an evening arguing about who someone else is. Before the argument began, you knew there was a claim of your own that needed checking, or a person you needed to speak to honestly.

Is that still waiting?

An unresolved question about someone else's life doesn't have to delay the step you already know you need to take in yours.

What I want to carry forward

I don't want this e-book to ask more of you than I'm willing to practice.

That doesn't mean I'll never get something wrong again. It means my name on a resource can't become a reason to protect it from correction. If We The Assembly shares an explanation that goes beyond the words, we need to return to the words and address it.

You can keep a record of that work too. Use the questions from the last chapter. Write down the claim you made, the Scripture you returned to, what changed, and what still needs examination. If others heard the original claim, consider how to make the correction clear to them.

My correction here is specific: I shouldn't use Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 to label Jewish people today. My conviction about another question doesn't give those verses a different audience.

As you finish this book, you don't need to find someone else to correct. Stay for a moment with something you've seen in yourself.

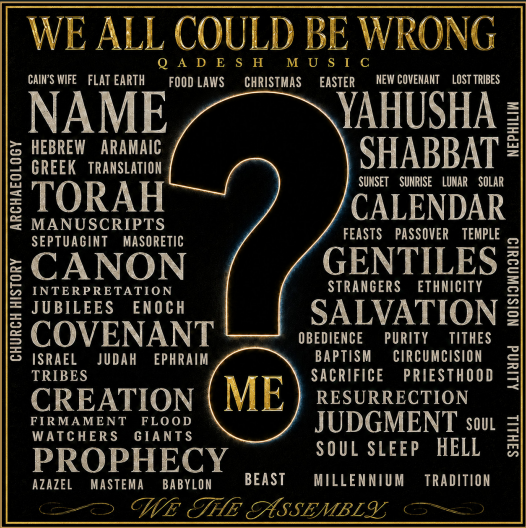
What needs your attention after you close these pages?

Bring it to YAHUAH in prayer. Return to the Scripture. Take the step the reading has brought before you, and leave room to keep learning.

That's what I need to do too.

Music to sit with

Listen on YouTube



Tap or click the cover to listen on YouTube.

We All Could Be Wrong

We The Assembly

We All Could Be Wrong belongs here at the close, with *We The Assembly* still inside the question.

This time, listen with your own notes beside you. Let the song give you room to sit with the correction, question, or next step you've written down. The music doesn't settle it for you. Keep the Scripture open, and don't leave your own name out of the examination.