

Studies in Nehemiah

Introduction

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely, they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.” Isaiah 49:15-16

The walls of God’s people were continuously before Him. Nehemiah probably was familiar with these words of Isaiah and felt them burn anew deep within his heart as he received the report that the walls of Jerusalem and the city itself were destroyed, and the people completely demoralized. Nehemiah was the one that God would use to fulfill His promises to Israel, just as He wants to use us today to affect the world around us. These lessons are designed to help us learn from Nehemiah’s example, as well as how to build our own walk with the Lord, work together as a body of believers, and live in a way that pleases Him. Nehemiah was no different than we are; he was just a common man, an employee faithfully carrying out his job. Yet he was the one that God chose to use because in Nehemiah He found a heart that was completely His. We too can impact our world as we learn from his example.

Background

God had allowed judgment and captivity to fall upon the nation of Israel, some seventy years prior to Nehemiah, when the Babylonian Empire conquered the land (II Chronicles 36:18-19). God had raised up prophet after prophet, chance after chance, for the people to repent from their ways, but they rejected His mercy toward them. Yet even in His judgment, God remembered mercy toward His people and promised through Jeremiah that “after seventy years are accomplished...I will visit you...causing you to return even unto this place” (Jeremiah 29:10). Before they would repent, however, God had to allow drastic steps to be taken to bring them back to Himself. The result was that Jerusalem was destroyed, and on July 18, 586 B.C., the temple, the focus of worship and symbol of God’s presence and blessings, was burned.

A major turn of events occurred in 539 B.C. when the Medes and the Persians, under Cyrus the Great, overthrew Babylon. Then God began to work again to fulfill His promise to the People. He worked through the agency of four people from varied backgrounds as He accomplished the step-by-step deliverance: Zerubbabel, a common man; Ezra, a priest; Esther, a beauty queen; and Nehemiah, a government employee. Exhorting the people during this time period were the prophets Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi.

Satan opposed fiercely every step of the way, but through God’s intervention and the faithfulness of those He raise up, the work was accomplished. Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem is the focus of our study. His name means “Yahweh has comforted” and is most fitting because God is again at work in comforting His people. Nehemiah received his “call” to the work in December 446 B.C. His faithfulness to this calling is an example to us not only of total reliance upon God’s power to rebuild the nation, but also diligent leadership,

practical planning, and balanced living. As will be pointed out in Lesson 1, Nehemiah was a cupbearer (wine and food taster) for King Artaxerxes I. During his faithful service, Nehemiah grew in favor with Artaxerxes to the point that, despite risking death, he sought permission to go and rebuild Jerusalem. Artaxerxes granted this permission, and the work began in 445 B.C.

The Book of Nehemiah is Nehemiah's record or journal of how this task was accomplished. It serves as an excellent guide for us in our Christian service and obedience. The work was accomplished in amazing time and in unity almost unparalleled in the rest of Scripture. Opposition was great, but they put their faith in a God that is greater still and saw Him work through their faithful and willing hearts.

Structure of the Lessons

The theme of Nehemiah is summed up in Nehemiah 4:17: *“Those who build on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other handheld a weapon.”* Building and guarding both were equal priorities, just as they must be in our lives to see victory over sin and maximize our ability to serve the Lord. Thus, the theme of these lessons will be how to build our lives, to guard what God has entrusted to us, and to live godly lives, being pleasing to Him. The emphasis is not only on study of the passage and getting a clearer understanding of the principles it sets before us, but also on how to practically apply these principles in our lives today. Thus, it is important to complete the entire lesson each week to gain the most from them.

The lessons are broken down into five days' worth of study, each requiring you to set aside about 20-30 minutes per day. These lessons will then be discussed in a small group that you will be assigned. We would love for you to participate in sharing your answers, but you will not be required to do so. Ultimately, our prayer for you is that you would grow in the knowledge and understanding of God's Word as well as in your relationship with Him.

An important feature of these lessons is Scripture memory. It is very important to hide God's Word in our hearts through memory and a very simple system is included in these lessons to memorize one verse per week. There are also some optional challenge questions designed for you to more practically apply a particular principle learned that week.

Finally, we ask that you don't rely on any resource books, commentaries, etc. for your answers. The lessons are designed for you to spend time alone with the Lord each day, learning from Him and not the opinions of others. Daily ask the Lord to speak to you and teach you through His Word, and then go about doing the lessons. If you wish to pursue further study of these passages on your own, that is fine; just don't depend on outside sources for doing these lessons.

Our prayer is that these lessons will be a blessing to you, and that they will stimulate you to further growth as you build, guard, and live for the Lord. His Word is our foundation. All others will fade away! Invest your life in those things that will count for eternity, not in those things that will pass away.

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 1 – Nehemiah 1

Nehemiah's Burden

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resources books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 1:1-3 and answer the following questions.

1. What facts do you learn about the circumstances of the book of Nehemiah from verses 1-2?
2. What two circumstances concerned Nehemiah the most? (v.2)
3. What was the condition of the people who still occupied the land? What condition was Jerusalem in? (v.3)
4. This group or remnant was under great stress, affliction, reproach, and abuse by those around them. God's Word gives us specific comfort and guidance in dealing with these kinds of problems in our own lives. What things do you learn about this from the following passages?

Psalm 119:67

Luke 6:22-23

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

Hebrews 10:32-36

Hebrews 12:9-11

5. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is James 5:16b. Repeat it several times each day and by the end of the week, you'll be surprised how well you have it memorized.

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16b

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 1:4-5 and answer the following questions.

1. How did Nehemiah respond to the news he received? (v.4)
2. Nehemiah prayed to the God of heaven. "God" is the Hebrew name "Elohim". What can we learn about Elohim from the following passages?

Deuteronomy 6:4; 7:9

Isaiah 45:18

3. Nehemiah's prayer in verses 5-11 can teach us several important ingredients of prayer. What is the first one? (v.5)
4. Verse 5 speaks in part of fearing God in prayer. What does the concept of fearing God mean to you?
5. How should fearing God affect our lives? (Exodus 1:17, 21; 20:20)

6. What are some things you learn about God's greatness in the following passages?

Deuteronomy 3:24

Jeremiah 32:17-19

Philippians 2:9-10

7. Scripture Memory Verse: Insert the missing words/phrases (by memory) below. Review the verse several times today.

“The _____, fervent prayer of a _____ man avails _____.” James 5:16b

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 1:6-9

1. Verses 6-7 illustrate another important element of prayer. What is it?
2. What does confession of sin mean to you?
3. Why is confessing our sins so important? (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 John 1:9)
4. Nehemiah’s confession that they had acted corruptly or wickedly literally means to bring forth under pain or to spoil and offend. With this in mind, what are some things you learn about sin and its consequences?

Nehemiah 1:6-7

Isaiah 53:6

Romans 3:10-12, 23

5. What important element of prayer is illustrated in verses 8-9?

6. Compare the contents of Nehemiah's prayer with the passages below. What do they mean for you today?

Leviticus 26:27-42

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

2 Chronicles 7:14

Hosea 6:1-3; 10:12

7. How does the example of Abraham standing by faith in God's promises encourage you?
(Romans 4:16-22)

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Insert the missing words/phrases below.

*"The _____, fervent _____ of a _____ _____ avails
_____."
James _____*

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 1:10-11

1. Verses 10-11 complete Nehemiah's illustration of prayer. How would you summarize this principle of prayer?

2. We all need to lay the burdens we feel at the Lord's feet requesting Him to work in the situation at hand. How does Philippians 4:4-9 encourage you to do the same?

3. Nehemiah prayed that it would be God's strong power that accomplished the work. What do the following passages tell us about His power to work through us?

Isaiah 41:10

Acts 1:8

Philippians 4:13

4. What else does the scripture teach us about God's hand at work in us?

Psalms 37:23-24

John 10:28-29

1 Peter 5:7

5. How would you define the word "redeemed" as used in verse 10?

Romans 3:21-24

1 Peter 1:18-19

6. What characterized Nehemiah's prayer, as well as those with him in it? (v.11)

7. What did Nehemiah specifically requests at the end of his prayer?

a. What do the following passages encourage us to do to be successful in the sight of God and man?

Joshua 1:8-9

Proverbs 3:3-4

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Review your verse from memory today.

“ _____
_____.”
James _____

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Nehemiah

1. Review Nehemiah 1:1-11. List some of the qualities you have been learning about Nehemiah's character regarding:

Nehemiah's position in the kingdom:

Nehemiah's handling of the burdening news:

Nehemiah's walk with God and understanding of the scriptures:

Nehemiah's prayer life:

2. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. A cupbearer tasted the drink and food offered to the king, but it served a much greater role than that. A cupbearer was chosen because of his wisdom, great discretion, total honesty, and trustworthiness. He would offer advice and counsel to the king, and he lived in relative comfort. Do you think that Nehemiah was in this position at this time by mere coincidence? Compare this with Esther 4:13-14.

3. Nehemiah was chosen for this position because his walk with God and spiritual growth built the above-mentioned qualities in his life. Compare this with the following people that were placed into positions unclear at the time, but that God later used mightily:

Joseph (Genesis 39:2-5, 21-23)

Daniel and his companions (Daniel 1:3-9)

Stephen, Philip, and the early church deacons (Acts 6:1-6)

4. Your position in life may seem frustrating or even unimportant at this point but if you let Him, God can use this to mold and shape you for His best purposes and future use. How does Ecclesiastes 3:11 and Philippians 1:6 encourage you in this?

B. Application

1. Think about your own “sphere of influence”, the place you are in and the relationships you have. What qualities did you learn about Nehemiah that are lacking or need more growth in your own life to impact the lives of those around you more effectively?

2. Satan is attacking the walls of our lives, home, family, and church trying to cause us to be victims of his influence rather than being victorious and making an impact on our world.

a. What “weaponry” is Satan effective in using to try to tear down these walls in your life?

b. What are some practical things you can do daily to build up the wall of your life, your family, etc.?

3. What cross reference scripture(s) mentioned in this lesson meant the most to you? List at least one specific way you are going to try to apply it in your life.

The steps of successful prayer we've studied:

Recognize God's greatness and power to work.

Review specific promises of the Bible in prayer.

Admit and confess your own sin and failure.

Be specific in your prayer over this need.

4. Starting now, begin to implement the prayer lessons we have been learning. Select some area to focus on, maybe one you listed above. Write a prayer below and commit to lifting it up on a daily basis.

5. **Scripture Memory Verse:** By now you should know this week's verse by heart! Write it below.

“

”

James 5:16b

“What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men who the Holy Ghost can use – men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but men. He does not anoint plans, but men – men of prayer.” E.M. Bounds

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 2 – Nehemiah 2

Beginnings

Remember to pray for God’s guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don’t merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 2:1-3 and answer the following questions.

1. Four months of praying and seeking God may have been taking its toll on Nehemiah. What was his countenance before the King?

2. To be anything but joyful in the King’s presence would often result in the death penalty, thus Nehemiah’s fearfulness was understandable. Despite his feelings, he was confident. As we learned last time, what assurances did he (and we) have?

Proverbs 21:1

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Isaiah 41:9-10

3. Artaxerxes labeled Nehemiah’s problem as “sorrow of the heart”. The concept of the heart is crucial in the Bible and refers to the totality of a person’s inner nature, or our “real stuff”.

a. What do the following verses tell us about man’s heart?

Jeremiah 17:9-10

Matthew 5:28

Romans 1:21

b. What is expected of our hearts as believers?

Proverbs 3:5; 4:23

Matthew 22:37-40

Ephesians 6:6

4. What past actions made the situation even more difficult for Nehemiah to present to Artaxerxes? (Ezra 4:11-22)

5. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's memory verse is Nehemiah 2:20b. Repeat it several times each day and you should know it by memory by the end of the week. Don't forget to review last week's verse!

"The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore, we His servants will arise and build."
Nehemiah 2:20b

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 2:4-8 and answer the following questions.

1. Nehemiah was probably quite relieved by the king's concerned response. (v.4) Yet before answering, what did Nehemiah do?

2. The secret of success in any endeavor is our bathing it in prayer. What can you learn from the examples of these prayer warriors?

David: Psalm 5:3; 119:147

Anna: Luke 2:36-38

Cornelius: Acts 10:1-2

3. What did Nehemiah request? (v.5) What all did he propose? (v.6-8)

4. The king was very responsive to his requests. What was the primary reason for this? (v.8)

5. What else can we learn about God's hand at work in the circumstances of our lives from these passages?

2 Chronicles 30:12

Psalm 37:23-26

John 10:28-29

6. Not only was the king responsive because of divine intervention, but we also see that Nehemiah balanced human responsibility and planning with reliance on God. How do the following passages emphasize human and divine responsibility, diligent prayer and planning?

Proverbs 16:9

Romans 12:1-2

Ephesians 4:1-3

James 4:13-16

6. Scripture Memory Verse: Insert the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review the verse several times today.

"The _____ of _____ Himself will _____ us.; therefore, we His servants will _____ and build." Nehemiah 2:20b

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 2:9-16 and answer the following questions.

1. Who accompanied Nehemiah, helping to further legitimize his missions? (v.9)

2. How does this differ from Ezra's earlier attitude in having military accomplishment? (Ezra 8:21-23)
 - a. Why do you think that Nehemiah agreed to this more willingly than Ezra did?

3. What was the response of some of the local “neighbors” to Nehemiah’s arrival? (v.10)

4. Given Nehemiah’s burden, we’d expect him to get right to work. Upon arrival, what did he do instead? (v.11)

5. What did he do on the third day? (v.12-15)
 - a. Why do you think he did it secretly?

6. Nehemiah “viewed” the wall, which was a Hebrew medical term for probing a wound. What kind of condition did he find them in?

7. Why do you think he decided to concentrate on this facet of rebuilding Jerusalem rather than other areas first?

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Insert the missing words/phrase by memory if possible, below. Review the passage several times today.

“The _____ of _____ Himself will _____ us; therefore _____
 His _____ will _____ and _____.” *Nehemiah 2:20b*

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 2:17-20 and answer the following questions.

1. Nehemiah now shares this burden and vision with the people. How did he describe the conditions he discovered? (v.17)

2. What did he further describe to the people? (v.18)

3. The condition of the walls and the people were closely intertwined. The Hebrew word for distress refers to a moral deficiency. Despite their condition, how did the people receive the challenge? (v.18)

4. Through this challenge, Nehemiah called the people to revival. How did some of the prophets of his same general time period do the same?

Jeremiah 6:16

Ezekiel 18:30-32

Hosea 6:1-3

Amos 5:14-15

Micah 6:6-8

5. Thus the people set their hands to work, getting their hands ready for the “battle” ahead. How did that battle soon begin? (v.19)

a. What kind of things did Sanballat, Tobiah, and Gershem do and say to try to discourage the work? (v.19)

b. What courageous response did Nehemiah give to those trying to discredit their work? (v.20)

6. These people had no claim to Jerusalem, no portion (past holdings), right (present status), or memorial (future claim). Yet as Christians, how do we share in Israel’s:

Portion (Galatians 3:28-29)

Right (Galatians 3:5-8)

Memorial (Revelation 21:2-4)

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** By now you should know the passage fairly well by memory. Try to write it out completely: “_____

_____.” *Nehemiah 2:20b*

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Behind the Scenes

The “Bad Guys”

Sanballat the Horonite: Sanballat was the ringleader of opposition to the work. He may have worshipped God, as the names of his two sons are praise to Yahweh (Jehovah). Some historical sources mention him as the Governor of Samaria, so his opposition politically was that they would no longer have control of Judea from the north.

Tobiah the Ammonite Official/Servant: He probably governed the area on the western part of Judea and was either a subordinate to or in close collaboration with Sanballat.

Gershem the Arab: He most likely ruled a league of Arab tribes controlling Edom and Moab, east and south of Judea.

1. Nehemiah and the builders were surrounded by opposition on all sides. How does Ezekiel 38 verses 18-23 prophesy about future Israel being surrounded by opposition with no visible way out? What will the result be?

2. We too may have tremendous assurance that no matter what opposition we may face, God will stand for us. What are three of these wonderful promises? Are any conditions mentioned for our part in any of these?

Matthew 28:18-20

Romans 8:37-39

Hebrews 13:5-6

3. Besides the obvious political motive, are there any other reasons these groups might have opposed the work? Compare your answer with Matthew 27:18.

When the burden to rebuild was given to Nehemiah, he probably had no idea of the eternal significance of this obedience. He would have missed out on tremendous blessing that God could have allowed someone else to have if he hadn't been obedient.

It is so important for us to be faithful in the "little things" daily that come our way for they may be much more significant from an eternal perspective!

4. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Write out this week's verse by memory and review it several times today: "

_____." *Nehemiah 2:20b*

B. Practical Application

1. In many ways, Nehemiah serves as a great example for those of us who are employees. Did you notice anything in his character that would make you a better employee or more likely to be hired for a position?

2. One of Nehemiah's greatest strengths was that he carefully balanced human factors and planning with dependency on divine influence. Would you classify yourself as one who takes matters into your own hands without spending as much time in prayer as you should, or the other extreme of wanting to see God's will and pray, but not stepping out in faith and planning ahead? How can you begin to balance out your life more appropriately?

3. List one problem you've been having at work, at home or in ministry. Below it, you will see some steps that can bring about change in that situation. Share with your group what you're working on so they can pray with and for you:

Problem Area

Steps of Action

1. Realize your limitations and commit it to God's ability to work.
2. Organize a plan of action if possible.
3. Wait for His best timing and expect His help by faith.
4. Expect opposition but press on despite of it.

4. The only hope for Israel to continue as a people was revival. Today, we see our own nation crumbling from the inside out. God wants to bring change but expects the changes to begin as He works revival in His own peoples, who then in turn, can affect others. Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and answer these questions:

a. In what areas do I need to humble myself (in Hebrew, it means to judge self rightly)?

b. How earnestly am I seeking Him in prayer for change in my life and my country? When can I set aside time each day for such prayer?

c. Are there any wicked ways that are still binding me up that I need to turn from? How can I begin to see change in my life?

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Write out this week's verse by memory:

“

_____.” *Nehemiah 2:20b*

Challenge - Optional

The only way to effectively pray, plan, and serve is with a renewed mind (Romans 12:2). One way we can see our minds renewed is to program them for righteousness by actively focusing our minds on Scripture and other things worth filling our minds with. Based on Philippians 4:8, make a “think list” on a piece of paper or below and spend time daily meditating on those things, especially when you are tempted or struggling.

“There is one kind of person for whom God can do nothing; it is the person who is absolutely satisfied with what he is at this moment in the sight of God.” Alan Redpath

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 3 – Nehemiah 3/Ezra 1

Being Used of God

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 3:1-4 and answer the following questions.

1. Where did the rebuilding of the wall begin: (v.1)
2. Knowing that the sacrificial animals probably passed through this gate, how is this starting point significant?
3. What action did they take prior to building and making repairs?
4. Before we undertake any work for our Lord, we too must begin with consecrating ourselves to Him. What do these passages urge us to do?

Luke 9:23-25

Romans 12:1-2

1 John 1:9

5. From this beginning point of sacrifice and consecration, the people now built and made repairs (Hebrew for strengthening their hands for the work, a battle term). No other foundation will be successful for us in building and battling. How do these passages confirm this?

Exodus 33:13-16

Psalm 127:1-2

6. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is Psalm 133:1. Repeat several times each day and by the end of the week you'll be surprised how well you have it memorized. Don't forget to review the other verses that you've been learning!

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133:1

Use the rest of today's time to learn this memory verse.

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 3:5 and answer the following questions.

1. Verse 5 brings an interesting insight into some stubborn people. What does it describe as happening?

2. These nobles (at least in title) didn't bother themselves to get involved with the work. It was a step of humility to be involved in this work, for the Hebrew word means menial labor, having the flavor of bondage or military service, and the leaders of this group would not have any part in it.

a. Who is a leader, or noble, in the eyes of Jesus?

Matthew 18:2-4

Matthew 23:11-12

b. What condition does God expect of us to successfully serve Him?

Philippians 2:2-4

1 Peter 5:5-6

3. These nobles wouldn't put anything into the work; in fact, the Bible uses an interesting phrase that they wouldn't put their shoulder or neck into it. What symbols of petty pride does the Old Testament give us?

Exodus 32:9

Psalms 75:4-5

4. The end of verse 5, in the King James and other versions, states that this was "to the work of their Lord". Other versions may translate this as masters, giving a more earthly meaning. However, the burden of the humbling work was the Lord's; He wanted to work through these people to achieve great things, yet they gave up that chance to be used because of pride. What are some things we can learn from these passages allowing Him to bear these burdens and to work through us/ How can we put our faith into action rather than refuse the chance to be used by Him?

Matthew 11:28-30

1 Corinthians 15:58

Philippians 2:12-13

1 Peter 4:10-11

5. Scripture Memory Verse: Insert the missing words/phrases (by memory) below. Review the verse several times today.

“Behold how _____ and how pleasant it is for _____ to dwell together in unity!” Psalm 133:1

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 3:6-32 and answer the following questions.

This section of Nehemiah demonstrates great unity and cooperation by such a diverse group of people. It is a great testimony of the power of God to work through Nehemiah by using his gifts to coordinate this effort.

1. What were some of the various types of people we find working side-by-side?

Verses 1, 17

Verse 8

Verses 9, 14-15

Verse 12

Verse 22

Verse 32

2. What strategic locations did Nehemiah place people at in rebuilding? Next to your answer, write why you think they were put there.

Verse 1

Verses 10, 23, 28-30

3. Verse 20 highlights one worker. How does it describe his work?

4. As believers, our work should stand out to our employers. What should characterize it?

Matthew 5:16

Colossians 3:22-24

5. This was all done in a unified effort to complete the work at hand. We too have been assigned the work of building the body of Christ. To do so, we must make every effort to work and walk in unity with each other. How do these passages challenge us to strive for this?

Ephesians 4:15-16

Philippians 1:27-28

Hebrews 10:24-25

6. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Insert the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review the verse several times today.

“Behold, how _____ and how _____ it is for _____ to _____ together in _____!” Psalm 133:1

Day Four

Read Ezra 1:1-6 and answer the following questions.

We are taking a side trip to the earlier events recorded in Ezra to help us understand how God can use us and intervene in our situations.

1. In 539 B.C., the work of the Lord was fulfilled through Cyrus' declaration as recorded in verse 104. What was the declaration?

2. What promises were being fulfilled by this declaration?

Isaiah 44:28-45:2

Jeremiah 29:10-13

Note: Isaiah mentioned Cyrus as God's instrument through prophecy, 100-200 years before Cyrus was even born!

3. How does this again demonstrate the truth behind Proverbs 21:1?

4. Reread Ezra 1:5-6. Not only was God able to work through influencing a king, but also through the common people.

a. How were the people that would do the rebuilding motivated? (v. 5)

b. How were those unskilled in rebuilding still able to help see God's work accomplished? (v.6)

5. How does God's provision for the building of the Tabernacle also parallel Exodus 36:2-7?

6. God wants to use all of us to touch the world around us. He has given us spiritual gifts, talents, and skills to do so. We may not feel capable or competent, but as the above verses demonstrate, He is the one who gives us that ability. There are really three ways we can be involved in God's work here on earth. How do these passages summarize:

Praying: Matthew 9:37-38

Giving: 2 Corinthians 9:5-8

Direct Involvement: Matthew 28:18-20

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Record this week's verse here by memory if possible. Review it several times today.

“

!” *Psalm 133:1*

Day Five

A. Spotlight: The Gates of Jerusalem

1. Dr. H.L. Willmington, in Willmington's Guide to the Bible, points out some amazing parallels between the gates of Jerusalem that Nehemiah rebuilt and pictures of the Christian life. Let's consider these parallels by meditating on these passages below, recording what characteristics the gate may be referring to based on the passages.

The Sheep Gate (v.1): John 10:11

The Fish Gate (v. 3): Matthew 4:19

The Old Gate (v. 6): Romans 6:6

The Valley Gate (v.13): 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

The Dung Gate (v.14): Galatians 5:26-31; Philippians 4:7-9

The Fountain Gate (v.15): John 7:37-39

The Water Gate (v.26): John 4:10-14

The Horse Gate (v.28): Ephesians 6:10-17

The East Gate (v.29): Ezekiel 43:1-2; Matthew 24:42-44

The Miphkad Gate (v.31): 1 Corinthians 3:9-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10

B. Practical Application

We have seen in this lesson that each of us can have a vital part in building the body of Christ, but we must be faithful to make available to Him our time, resources, and gifts. It is our choice whether we are going to let Him use our lives or become a spiritual castaway rather than a victor.

1. What passages this week were most challenging to you? What areas do you see that need improvement? List them below.

2. To what extent can you be better involved in building your own local church through:

Your talents and abilities:

Your availability:

Your finances:

3. We may not all be able to be another Nehemiah or Apostle Pau, but we can be used as a Barnabas, who was called the Son of Encouragement. (Acts4:36) How can you be a better encourager and supporter of those who are doing the work of ministry?

4. What areas in your home or work setting could be used more effectively as an opportunity to minister to others?

5. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Write out this week's verse by memory.

“

!” *Psalm 133:1*

Challenge – Optional

Building the body of Christ begins at home. Whether married or single, the battle for godly living and service is waged there more than any other facet of ministry we undertake. On the back of this page, list some ways you can build up these areas of your life.

If Married...	If Single...
Family Devotions	Personal Spiritual Growth
Time with Family	Personal purity as a single
Work Life	Managing your time
Ministry/church commitments	Ministry/church commitments

“Yet the power source for effectively winning the world lies in how well we love one another and affect the unity that Jesus prays for...” “Until the fruit of unity is evident, Christianity is merely another philosophical system to be debated but not to be live...selfishness is the source of division and servanthood is the basis of unity.” Gayle Erwin

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 4 – Nehemiah 4

Build and Guard

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 4:1-6 and answer the following questions.

In the last chapter, Nehemiah gave us an overview of how the work was organized and accomplished. He now returns to describing the work and the opposition that began to arise during the building process.

1. What was Sanballat's emotional state when he learned about the accomplishments made on the wall? (v.1) How did Tobiah's "joke" (v.3) simply encourage him all the more?

2. Sanballat's anger literally could have been translated from the Hebrew as "his nose became hot". It was an emotional term describing the heat of anger just after it has been ignited, or exasperation after something being stirred up to a heated condition.

a. What are some wrong ways of handling angry emotions when they are stirred up in us?

Proverbs 14:17

Proverbs 29:11

b. What are better ways to handle these emotions?

Psalm 37:4-8

Ephesians 4:22-24

3. What were some of the things the enemy said to try to discredit the work? How could statements such as these discourage us today in our efforts to accomplish some task for the Lord?

4. In what two ways did Nehemiah respond to these attacks? (vs.4-6)

5. Nehemiah's prayer may seem harsh at first glance, but remember he was praying for God's justice to be done rather than for revenge. How should we as Christians handle our enemies?

Matthew 5:43-45

Romans 12:18-21

6. They didn't give up but kept building with their hearts being even more committed to the work. To have a mind for the work that God would have us to do, we must have the mind of Christ. How does Philippians 2:5-8 describe this?

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** This week's verse is Ephesians 6:10. Repeat it several times each day and you'll be surprised how well you have it memorized by the end of the week. Don't forget to review the other verses you've been learning!

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." Ephesians 6:10

Use the rest of today's time learning this memory verse.

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 4:7-12 and answer the following questions.

1. When the opposition's plan didn't work and they saw the wall being built up and its gaps repaired (the Hebrew word for repaired is healing or health being restored to soundness), how did they respond? (vs.7-8) What type of discouragement were they now trying to use?
2. What was the Israelites' two-fold response again? (v.9)
3. The half-way point of any project is most dangerous. Many people give up at this point, just prior to when they would see God really work a change despite the difficult circumstances, they were in. How did Judah begin to crumble under these circumstances? (v.10)
4. How did this begin to affect the other workers? (v.11)
5. We are often sidelined by circumstances when we lose sight of the eternal perspective or the vision that God has given us. These people felt incapable of completing the work because of the amount of rubble and broken stones to be removed and the Hebrew implies that they were being led away from the work. How can we regain the eternal focus when under attack of the enemy?

John 15:18-21

Colossians 3:1-10

2 Corinthians 1:3-6

Hebrews 12:1-3

6. Scripture Memory Verse: Insert the missing words/phrases (by memory) below. Review the verse several times today.

“Finally, my _____, be strong in _____ and in the _____ of His might.” Ephesians 6:10

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 4:13-14 and answer the following questions.

1. How did Nehemiah organize the people in view of these threats? (v.13) What important strategy did he use?

2. Nehemiah then challenged the people. What two-fold challenge did he give them? (v.14)

3. The Hebrew word for remember means to impress and pierce onto the memory, declare, and bring to mind. Without this proper focus on the Lord, they would have faced defeat and abandonment of the work. In the following passages, what are some things you can pierce onto the memory of your heart to better stand when the enemy attacks?

2 Chronicles 20:5-12

Psalm 119:9-11

Isaiah 26:3-4

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Hebrews 2:18

Hebrews 13:5b-6

4. Which of the above passages helps you the most in the situations you find yourself in today? Share why with your group.

5. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Insert the missing words/phrases below (by memory if possible). You should have this memorized soon!

“Finally, _____, be _____ in the _____ and in the _____ of _____.” Ephesians 6:10

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 4:15-23 and answer the following questions.

1. What was the result of the people’s response to the enemy’s attack? (v.15)
2. How did they continue to stand strong against the enemy’s threats? (vs.17-18)
3. What further instructions and provisions did Nehemiah make for the people in case of attack? (vs.18-20)
4. How else were the people constantly ready and alert against the enemy’s schemes? (vs.21-23)

5. They worked all day, six days a week even if it was too dark to see, and they kept a guard alert at all times. What a picture this is of our Christian service: serving tirelessly with our whole hearts until the day we go to be with Him and all the while being on guard against the enemy. What else can we learn about this from the following passages?

John 9:4

Romans 13:11-14

1 Peter 5:8-9

6. Scripture Memory Verse: Insert these missing words and phrases. You should be able to do so by memory now.

“Finally, _____, be _____ in _____ and in the _____ of _____.” Ephesians 6:10

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Our Spiritual Weaponry

Our memory verse this week has been urging us to be continually strengthened by the active power that is available to us from the Lord. Earlier this week we also read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, which told us that our warfare is not something of this world but is spiritual in nature. Our own natural abilities will never achieve the victory won already for us at the Cross of Christ. We must follow Paul’s urging in Ephesians 6:11 to clothe ourselves with the full armor of God, or else we will be spiritual victims rather than victors. It is through God’s intervention, using His equipment for both attack and defense, that we will see spiritual victory. Let’s study through some of that weaponry available to us listed in Ephesians 6:13-18.

1. According to Ephesians 6:12, who do we wrestle against? What does 1 John 2:15-16 add to our list of enemies?

Note: The example of wrestling against our opponent shouldn't be taken lightly. In Greek wrestling contests, the loser had his eyes gouged out! We're fighting for our families, our lives, our churches, and the work God has called us to do.

2. How extensive of a warfare should we be waging? (Ephesians 6:13) How much effort does God expect from us in our fight?

3. List below what each piece of armor symbolizes and why you think it is spiritually important.

Belt:

Breastplate:

Footwear:

Shield:

Helmet:

4. What are your two offensive weapons listed in Ephesians 6:17b-18?

5. How can prayer be used as an offensive weapon? Share how prayer has helped you or others in spiritual battle. See also Mark 14:38

6. God's Word is our mightiest weapon. How do the following passages emphasize the use of His Word in spiritual battle?

Matthew 4:1-11

Ephesians 6:17b

Hebrews 4:12

B. Spiritual Application

1. How are you handling the threats and discouragements the enemy brings your way? Based on the lessons you've learned this week, what new tactics can you now apply to times of trial and distractions?

2. How can you help a fellow Christian who is facing discouraging times?

3. Are there any areas of your thought life that need to be made more Christ-like? How can you refocus your thoughts more along the lines that He would have you think?

4. List several specific ways you can pierce into memory the Lord's working in your life. Recall His faithfulness, so that you can better stand against the enemy's attacks and accusations.

5. How can you more effectively use the spiritual weapons and armor that God has given us? What particular pieces of armor have you been neglecting? How can you begin to better see victory over sin by their use?

*And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us; we will not fear, for God
hath willed His truth to triumph through us.*

*The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not at him; his rage we can endure for lo,
his doom is sure! One little word shall fell him!*

Martin Luther

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

The Israelites had a rallying trumpet. When blown, they would all gather for the fight. One day we all will be gathered together at the last great trumpet blast, forever to be with the Lord. For now, however, He still wants us to have a rallying place to gather for fellowship, so we can more effectively go back out for service. As Hebrews 10:24-25 says,

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching.”

6. **Scripture Memory Verse:** By now you should be able to write out this week's verse by memory.

“

_____.” Ephesians 6:10

Challenge: Optional

What rubbish is there in your life that is slowing you down from victorious living and service? Take some time to pray and write these things below. After you are done, confess each of these to the Lord and ask Him to enable and equip you to overcome these areas so that you are running the race without the constraints of this unnecessary baggage. Know that God has removed all that separates you from Him. Get rid of that rubble once and for all!

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 5 – Nehemiah 5

Internal Strife

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 5:1-5 and answer the following questions.

1. What internal problem began to now affect the work?
2. To what extremes were the people going to meet their financial obligations?
3. How did a similar internal problem threaten the early church? What steps did they take to meet these needs? (Acts 6:1-7)
4. What was wrong with what the Jews were doing to one another according to the following verses?

Exodus 22:25

Leviticus 25:35-30

Proverbs 28:27

5. The Jews had let their physical needs become more important than remembering that God was in control of the task at hand, thus they took foolish steps in dealing with their problems. In fact, they summed up their problem as needing to eat and live. While this is obviously true, where does true life come from?

Deuteronomy 8:3

Job 23:12

Psalm 119:50, 93

6. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is Leviticus 19:11. Repeat it several times each day; you'll be surprised how well you have it memorized by the end of the week. Don't forget to review the other verses you've been learning!

"You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another." Leviticus 19:11

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 5:6-9 and answer the following questions.

1. How did Nehemiah respond to this crisis? (v.6) How does verse 7 demonstrate that his was a different type of emotion than Sanballat's in the last lesson?

2. Like Nehemiah, we'll all face anger from time to time, but we make the choice of what we'll do when it is aroused. What can you learn from the following passages about controlled, yet constructive anger?

John 2:13-17

Ephesians 4:25-32

3. What steps did Nehemiah take in dealing with this problem? (vs.6-9)

4. What procedure did Jesus give to us in handling such conflicts within the body of Christ? (Matthew 18:15-20)

5. When Nehemiah rebuked those guilty of taking advantage of their own brethren, what concerned him the most? (v.9)

6. How can our behavior bring reproach to God?

2 Samuel 12:13-14

Romans 2:24

“Failure to treat others, especially fellow believers, with compassion is an insult to our Maker and blot on our testimony.” E. M. Yamuchi

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Insert the missing words/phrases (by memory if possible) below. Review the verse several times today.

“You shall not _____ nor deal _____ nor _____ to one another.” Leviticus 19:11

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 5:9-13 and answer the following questions.

1. What action did Nehemiah propose to meet the people’s needs? (vs.10-11)

2. How did the guilty respond? (v.12)

3. What further step did Nehemiah have these people take to ensure they would do so? (v.12)

4. How did Nehemiah graphically display the severity of breaking this oath? (v.13)

5. What does this action remind us of in the New Testament? (Matthew 10:14-15)

6. The preventative measures summed up in verse 9 should be taken to heart by all believers. It is so easy to get our eyes off the eternal perspective and God's promises and onto temporary, earthly concerns. How can the following passages help you to:

Walk in Truth:

Psalm 26:3

Psalm 86:11

2 John v.4

3 John vs.3-4

Walk in the fear of God:

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Joshua 24:14-15

7. Scripture Memory Verse: Insert the missing words/phrases below (by memory if possible) below. Review the verse several times today.

“You shall not _____, nor _____, nor _____ to one another.” Leviticus _____

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 5:14-19 and answer the following questions.

1. Obviously, this passage was added later by Nehemiah as an example of how his term as governor (444 B.C. – 432 B.C.) was a living example of righteous dealing with such needs. What did he refuse to do? (vs.14-15)
2. Why did he refuse to do what all his predecessors as governor did? (vs.15)
3. How did he set an example for those building the wall under his leadership? (vs.16)
4. Nehemiah’s table fed many more than the nobles of the land – in fact, the amount listed here fed hundreds one meal a day. Although seemingly large, how did this compare to the daily provisions for King Solomon? (1 Kings 4:22-23)
5. The body of Christ cannot function as it should when there are divisions caused by believers ignoring the needs of those who are hurting. In fact, 1 Corinthians 12:26 states that if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. How should we be following Nehemiah’s example of ministering to the hurting, poor and needy?

Proverbs 14:31

Romans 13:8-10

Galatians 6:1-2

1 John 3:17-18

6. How did Nehemiah close out the chapter? (v.19)

7. Some may say that it is selfish to pray in such a manner, yet how did these other people pray for remembrance (blessings) before God?

Jabez: 1 Chronicles 4:10

David: Psalm 25:7

Jeremiah: Jeremiah 15:15

Thief on the cross: Luke 23:42-43

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Record the entire passage here by memory if possible. Review it several times today.

“

.” *Leviticus 19:11*

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Christian Finances

While the problem addressed in Nehemiah 5 is that of believers taking advantage of each other and causing division, we cannot ignore the issues of personal responsibility and how the Lord would use the finances He entrusts to us. Today's economy and lack of good stewardship has caused many believers to stumble in this area to the point that we are often "selling" our families into the slavery of increasing debt. They are putting themselves in a place to be used by others rather than to successfully accomplish the work that God has set before them. Let's spend our time today briefly considering what the Bible says about our finances. There are several principles of financial stewardship we must put into practice.

God cares more about your financial needs than you do!

1. What do the following passages teach you about this important truth?

Luke 12:22-28

Romans 8:32

Philippians 4:19

God holds us accountable.

2. God Expects us to be good stewards of all that He has given to us. Finances are His gift to us to use wisely and provide for our needs and those of our families. What do the following passages say about this? What is our role as a good steward?

Psalms 50:10

Matthew 25:14-30

1 Corinthians 10:26

The Bible offers steps toward financial recovery.

3. Read the passages below and describe how God can help us to overcome our financial problems.

a. Give your finances over to Him:

Romans 12:1-2

1 John 5:14-15

b. Correct wrong attitudes toward money:

Matthew 6:24

1 Timothy 6:10

c. Don't live self-indulgently or beyond your means:

Luke 12:15; 14:28-30

d. Begin to give regularly, even sacrificially:

Proverbs 3:9-10

Haggai 1:3-6

Malachi 3:9-21

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

e. Prayerfully restructure your finances one step at a time:

Matthew 6:25-34

f. Focus on contentment and the eternal perspective:

Philippians 4:11-13

1 Timothy 6:6-9, 17-19

B. Practical Application

1. On Day Four, we saw that the Jews struggled with physical needs over spiritual needs. How would you rate yourself in this area? Are you more concerned about “eating and living”, your physical concerns, or are you balancing out your life spiritually and trusting Him for the results? What changes can you make to bring this kind of balance into your life?

2. Even righteous anger that is uncontrolled can lead to disaster. How can you begin to channel your emotions in a godlier fashion based on this week’s lesson?

3. Are there areas in your life that bring reproach to the Lord? What are some constructive ways that you can begin to walk in the truth and in the fear of the Lord to overcome these things?

4. What kind of example do you set in your daily work? Nehemiah did all that he could to fulfill his role as governor and to be a witness and example of godly actions to those around him. What changes could you make in your life to better honor God?

5. Are you involved in helping to meet the needs of others in the body of Christ that are hurting? What kind of actions could you be taking to better do so?

6. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Write out this week's verse by memory.

“

.” *Leviticus 19:11*

The Christian life is one of constant change, challenge, and adjustment. It is very important for us as believers to keep on top of our financial affairs, for God holds us accountable to wisely use the resources He gives us. Chuck Swindoll, author of *Hand Me Another Brick*, lists four steps of behavioral change based on this passage in Nehemiah that we can apply to our financial “habits”.

1. Determine how to put a stop to the problem. (Nehemiah 5:10)
2. Make specific plans to correct the situation as soon as possible. (Nehemiah 5:11)
3. Declare your plans for correction. (Nehemiah 5:12-perhaps to your family, your group, etc.)
4. Realize the serious nature of your “vow” to change in this area. (Nehemiah 5:13)

“Many Christians are excellent in areas of public ministry, but in the handling of their money, they’re a reproach to the name of Christ...Wise handling of our saving, our investing, our spending, and our giving pleases our God. Never think that money doesn’t matter to your Master.” Charles R. Swindoll

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 6 – Nehemiah 6

No Compromise

Remember to pray for God’s guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don’t merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 6:1-4 and answer the following questions.

1. What was the status of the rebuilding of the wall? (vs.1)
2. What tactics did Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem use to try to interrupt the work this time? (vs.2)
How frequently did they try this? (vs.4)
3. Sanballat and his group asked Nehemiah to “meet” with them, which in Hebrew implied not just a meeting, but more of a joining together. Their thought (Hebrew for planning out, carefully weaving together a plot) was to do harm to Nehemiah, either through just interrupting the work or causing bodily harm. Either way, it was a call for Nehemiah to compromise the work God had called him to do. How did he handle their temptation to compromise? (vs.3-4)
4. God has also called us to complete a “great work” for Him and to be diligent in what He calls us to do. What are some things you can learn from the following passages about our works and diligence in them?

Proverbs 22:29

Matthew 5:16

1 Thessalonians 1:3

1 Peter 2:12

2 Peter 3:14

5. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is 1 Samuel 15:22b. Repeat it several times each day and you should have it memorized by the end of the week. Don't forget to keep reviewing the other verses we've been learning!

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams." 1 Samuel 15:22b

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 6:5-9 and answer the following questions.

1. What was Sanballat's fifth attempt to get Nehemiah?
2. What kind of things were rumored about Nehemiah and his intentions? (vs.6-7)
3. How did Nehemiah respond to these slanderous reports?
4. What positive step did he take in the face of slander rather than letting it disrupt his work and service to the Lord? (v.9)
5. What more can you learn about this from Jesus' teaching on the subject? (Matthew 5:10-12)
6. How else can you be strong in the Lord in the face of such attacks? (Isaiah 50:7-10)

7. Nehemiah demonstrates great discernment throughout this chapter. Without it, he could have fallen to these temptations to compromise. How can we follow the early positive example of King Solomon in pursuing such wisdom and discernment? (1 Kings 3:5-12)

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Insert the missing words/phrases (by memory if possible) below. Review the verse several times today.

“Behold, to _____ is better than _____ and to heed than the _____ of rams.” 1 Samuel 15:22b

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 6:10-14 and answer the following questions.

1. What was the next method used against Nehemiah and the work at hand? Who was involved in this?
2. What did this person “prophecy” to Nehemiah?
3. How did Nehemiah handle this? (v.11)
4. What was the real intent of the “prophecy”? What would have resulted if Nehemiah had given into it? (v.13)
5. What could have been the result, besides humiliation, if Nehemiah gave in to this false prophecy out of fear? (Numbers 1:51)

6. Fear can be a positive, life-preserving response to things in our environment, or as pointed out here, it can be a sinful response that may lead to our downfall or foolish actions that would discredit our testimony. How can we be victorious over the fears Satan wants to use against us?

Psalm 91:1-6

Psalm 118:4-6

Proverbs 3:21-26

Isaiah 12:2

7. Once again, Nehemiah committed the problem over to the Lord and His guidance. What did he specifically pray? (v.140)

8. **Scripture Memory verse:** Insert the missing words/phrases below (by memory if possible) below. Review the verse several times today.

*“Behold, to _____ is _____ than _____ and
to heed _____.” 1 Samuel
15:22b*

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 6:15-19 and answer the following questions.

1. The wall was completed on the 25th of Elul (September). What was the amazing length of time it took to complete it? (v.15)

2. When the enemies and nations surrounding Jerusalem saw this, what was their response? What did they have to recognize as a result of this fact? (v.16)

3. On Day One, we studied several passages on good works. As you review them again, how do they fit in with the results recorded here? Especially fitting is Matthew 5:16.

4. The enemy was disheartened by this action. Another way to translate this phrase in verse 26 is “they feared and fell in their own esteem.” Our enemy, Satan, is also defeated by the work of the cross. Read the following passages and describe how he, and our sinful nature, have been defeated.

Romans 5:6-14

Colossians 2:13-15

5. How did Tobiah still maintain a foothold to attack the work? How did he specifically go about this? (vs.17-19)

6. Although defeated at the cross, Satan still searches for ways to distract and attack us. How does 1 Peter 1:13-16 and 5:8-10 teach us to deal with these attacks more effectively?

7. One of Satan’s greatest weapons against us can be the tongues of other believers not yielded to God’s control and guidance. There is nothing he would rather see than Christians tearing down each other with their words. Read the following passages and record how you can avoid falling to this same trap.

Proverbs 6:16-19

Ephesians 4:25-32

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Record this week's passage by memory. Spend the rest of today's time reviewing the passage.

“

.” *1 Samuel 15:22b*

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Dealing with Criticism

Nehemiah knew what it was like to be criticized, as well as how to criticize others in a godly fashion, and he sets an example for us in this chapter in how we can deal with criticism. One of the biggest problems Christians have is both facing and giving criticism in a scriptural, godly manner. Criticism can be healthy, whether positive (identifying a person's strengths and accomplishments) or negative (evaluating weaknesses and mistakes). It can easily become destructive or taken to extremes. Thus, we must be careful in how we deal with or use criticism. Let's spend some time today learning how we can better do so.

1. As we learned in Day Four, Satan would like nothing better than seeing the body of Christ and our effectiveness for service torn apart by poor use of our speech and criticism of others. Carefully read the following passages and record the lesson they teach about our speech and criticism, both positive and negative.

Psalms 15:1-3

Proverbs 12:25

Proverbs 16:28

Philippians 2:14-15

Colossians 4:5-6

James 3:5-13

1 Peter 2:12, 20-23

1 Peter 3:15-17

2. Real discernment is needed in dealing with criticism. How can we gain the discernment and wisdom we need?

Psalm 119:18, 41-42

James 1:3-5

1 John 4:1-6

There are several principles we can learn from Nehemiah in dealing with those criticizing us:

- a. Wisdom and waiting in our response to discern what the real motive is and not counterattacking those criticizing us, which would only be destructive.
- b. Face it with boldness, denying false accusations in a straightforward, but gentle way.
- c. Don't allow fear or other negative emotions to take control, leading to impulsive responses.
- d. PRAY!! Bathe the situation and the critic in prayer, committing it over to the Lord for Him to reveal what the best steps of action are in response to criticism you receive.

B. Practical Application

1. What are some ways you have been tempted to compromise or meet the enemy half-way? How can you better handle these temptations based on Nehemiah's example?
2. How would you respond if you were the subject of a false rumor? What principles from this lesson can be applied to such a circumstance?
3. Fear has destroyed many lives. What steps do you need to take to be more victorious over fear and its deadly effects?
4. Both Satan and our sinful nature were defeated at the cross. What areas of your life still need to be surrendered over to the victory that is already won?
5. How can you better deal with the criticism you receive? If you face such a situation currently, how will you put the principles of this lesson into practice?

6. Scripture Memory Verse: You should now be able to write out this week's passage by memory.
Record it here.

“ _____
_____.”

“Inadequate positive criticism is a weakness among Christians. There needs to be more healthy encouragement (appreciation, thanks, and commendation) without being superfluous. ‘Lord, give me the ability to see strengths and achievements in people and commend them honestly.’ Let that be our prayer...The negative critic is an unpleasant person to have around. He seems incapable of recognizing what is good and commendable; he calls attention only to what is wrong and deficient, always pointing out weaknesses in other people. Negativism is a disease, and it is contagious. One of the mysteries in evangelical Christianity is how there can be so many chronic complainers in the body of Christ.”

J. W. Alexander

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 7 – Nehemiah 7

Prerequisites for Successful Building Part 1: Faithfulness

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 7:1-3 and answer the following questions.

The first six chapters of Nehemiah described the record of the building of the wall. But the task wasn't finished with the external building effort. Chapters 7-13 describe how God was going to build His people into what He intended them to be. This is a very close parallel to us as well, for although we have been saved by receiving Christ as our Lord and Savior, the work isn't done. He wants to continue to mold and shape us into what He would have us to be. One of God's requirements for successful building is faithful obedience to Him.

1. Once the wall was built and the gates were hung, what was Nehemiah's next task? (v.1)
2. Nehemiah also chose Hanani and Hananiah to take charge over Jerusalem. What qualities made them the right men for the job? (v.2)
3. Faithfulness is the quality we want to focus in on. The fear of God is also crucial, but we have covered this extensively in earlier lessons. The Hebrew word for faithfulness means firmness, stability, truth, surety, and continuance. How do the passages below demonstrate God's faithfulness?

Deuteronomy 7:9

Psalm 36:5

1 Corinthians 1:9

Hebrews 10:23

4. What are some of the rewards of our faithfulness and obedience?

Exodus 19:5

Psalm 103:17-18

5. God's primary desire for us is our faithful obedience to Him. Record below what you learn about this truth from these passages:

Deuteronomy 10:10-12

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Hosea 6:6

Matthew 22:35-40

6. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is Luke 16:10. Repeat it several times each day and you should have it memorized by the end of the week. Don't forget to keep reviewing the other verses we've been learning!

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 7:4-73 and answer the following questions.

1. What was the condition of Jerusalem now that the walls were rebuilt? (v.4)

2. What was Nehemiah led to do? What did he find to help him in this task? (v.5)

3. As we have learned previously about Nehemiah, he was constantly seeking the Lord and dependent upon God's leading in every move he made. It probably would have been tempting to Nehemiah just to sit back at this point and rest on this accomplishment. But if he had, the people would have missed out on the great blessings that followed his seemingly insignificant act of obedience in gathering the people together for record keeping purposes, as we'll learn about in the rest of Nehemiah.

A. How can you seek God's guidance for your daily course of action?

Psalm 25:1-5

Psalm 27:11-14

Psalm 143:10

b. How does God promise divine guidance to those that follow and obey Him?

Psalm 23

Psalm 73:23-26

Isaiah 42:16

Isaiah 43:18-19

John 16:13-14

Verses 6-73 is almost an identical recounting of the listing of those who returned as accounted in Ezra 2:1-70, with a few minor changes and additional information. Thus, the people were gathered together for the work that God would do next, with the combined efforts of Nehemiah and Ezra leading the way to a national revival. A similar set of circumstances is found in Ezra 3 that didn't quite lead to a national revival but demonstrates what happens when a people turn to God whole heartedly and walk in faithful obedience to Him. We will examine this chapter in Ezra next.

4. Scripture Memory Verse: Insert the missing words/phrases (by memory if possible) into the blanks below. Review the verse several times today.

“He who is _____ in what is least is _____ also in much; and he who is _____ in what is _____ is unjust also _____.” Luke 16:10

Day Three

Read Ezra 3:1-7 and answer the following questions.

1. What especially characterized this gathering together of the people at this time? (v.1)
2. There were several things that the people did to take steps once again of faithful obedience to the Lord. What were they?

Verse 2-3:

Verse 3:

Verse 5:

Verses 6-7:

3. It is interesting that the priest who was leading the way to renewed obedience was named Jeshua, or Joshua, which is the Hebrew form of the name Jesus. How did our High Priest, Jesus, make it possible for us to return to renewed obedience and faithfulness? (Hebrew 9:12-15)

4. What two obstacles did the people have to overcome to return to obedience to the Lord?

Verse 3:

Verse 6:

5. How did the prophet Zechariah encourage Zerubbabel and the others working at this time in the face of these obstacles? (Zechariah 4:6)

6. These people had gathered in the month of Tishri, the 7th month of the Jewish calendar year. (September-October to us) This was a special month for them. Read Leviticus 23:23-44. State why the things that they began to celebrate once again were important and/or what they meant:

The New Year (Rosh Hashana): Leviticus 23:23-25

Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur): Leviticus 23:26-32

The Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth): Leviticus 23:33-44

7. What were the New Moon feasts about? (Numbers 10:10, 28:11)

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Insert the missing words/phrases by memory below. Review the verse several times today.

*“He who is _____ in what is _____ is
_____ also in _____; and he who is
_____ in what is _____ is unjust also in
_____.” Luke 16:10*

Day Four

Read Ezra 3:8-13 and answer the following questions.

1. What task did the people pursue at this time?
2. What significant thing did the priest, Levites, and the sons of Asaph do during the building process? (v.10)
3. In 1 Chronicles 6:31-32, how did David set a precedent for these actions?
4. What was the content of their praises? (v.11)
5. Praises for God’s mercy and goodness abound in the scriptures, as they should in our lives. What can you glean from the following passages on these things?

Psalm 34:8

Psalm 103:17-18

Psalm 108:4

Lamentations 3:22-23

6. How did the people respond to this? (v.11) What mixed reactions were there among the people in verses 12-13?

7. The people simultaneously moved to sorrow and joy. There are benefits to both, if they lead to a change in our lives. The joy of the Lord is our strength. (Nehemiah 8:10) How can sorrow be a positive thing? (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

8. How did the apostle Paul set the example of leaving behind the past and making progress rather than being caught up in sorrow over how things once were? (Philippians 3:7-14)

Regardless of the reason, the people raised such a great shout that it was heard afar off or as one translation puts it, heard for miles. The Hebrew word for the sound of the shout, ruwa, means “*to split the ears with sound like blowing a trumpet.*” This was an ear shattering blast of rejoicing over what the Lord was doing, like someone blasting a trumpet in your ears! We will examine a little more the connection between worship and faithful obedience on Day Five.

9. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Try to write out the entire passage by memory here:

“

_____.” *Luke 16:10*

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Worship and Faithful Obedience

Worship is an interesting word. In Hebrew, it is *shachah*, to fall down before, humble beseech. In Greek, it is *proskuneo*, to kiss toward, an act of homage and reverence. Combining these definitions would define worship as realizing the worth of a person or object, and reverently and humbly bowing down our lives to that person or object. The Hebrew word for praise that we have been reading about in this lesson is *halel*, where we get the word hallelujah. This literally means to be bright, shine, praise or celebrate and is the root word for radiance. So, our worship too must be a radiant act of obedience and faithfulness to the Lord. Let's see how we can better understand these concepts and worship Him in the way that we ought.

1. How do the following passages demonstrate how great a privilege worship really is, and what our attitude should be?

Psalm 84:1-4

Psalm 122:1

2. What prerequisites are there for obedient worship?

Matthew 5:23-24

John 4:23-24

Ephesians 5:18-20

3. Many obstacles try to keep us from being able to successfully worship and benefit from it as God would have us to. One of them is the sin in our lives. How are we to deal with this to clear the way for obedient worship?

Psalm 139:23-24

Proverbs 28:13

1 John 1:9

4. Another obstacle is our having to get beyond our emotions and the physical resistance we find to worship. Our heart and fleshly nature are opposed to spiritual things and fight against our efforts to worship. How do the following passages help in overcoming these obstacles?

Romans 6:11-13

Galatians 5:16-17

Philippians 4:4-9

1 John 3:20

5. What are three ways we can worship the Lord?

a. Proverbs 15:8; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 6:9

b. Psalm 149:1; Psalm 150; Ephesians 5:19

c. Romans 12:1-2

One of the simplest ways that we can praise the Lord is to simply take time out to thank Him for all that He's done for us. The Hebrew word for thanks means to speak out, to confess, acknowledge and declare as a fact, thank and bless. How often we fail to take time to give Him a simple thank you when we pray, yet we quickly will give Him our list of requests with minimal worship in prayer.

B. Practical Application

1. What passage(s) from this week's lesson ministered to you the most? How can you begin to put it into practice in your life?

2. Do you find your daily life bathed in prayer for God's guidance, no matter how small or insignificant the day's tasks may seem to you? How can you better begin to follow Nehemiah's example in seeking God's guidance for each aspect of your life?

3. Are there any areas of your life that you see that you have been resting in past accomplishments rather than pressing on to the new tasks God wants to do through you?

4. What obstacles do you see in your life that need to be overcome to be able to serve and follow the Lord more faithfully? How will you begin the process of change?

5. How would you rate your worship? Are there areas you could be expanding in? How can you become a more effective worshipper?

6. Our worship life will in a large part reflect the state of our faithfulness and obedience to the Lord. Yes, people can pretend to be worshipping or put a phony smile on the faces during a church service, but the real test of their obedience is when they walk out those doors and return to the real world of sin, temptation, and daily living. It is then that our hearts will be revealed in our attitudes and actions, for people speak forth that which fills their hearts (Matthew 12:35). List a least three specific ways you will commit to putting the principles of worship from this lesson into practice over the next week.

a.

b.

c.

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** By now you should have this week’s passage memorized. Record it below.

“ _____

_____.”

“Praise is the act of publicly exalting God’s person and work. Praise can be enhanced through the use of music and songs. Praise is a participating activity, not a spectator sport; it is worship people joining in, not a program people watch. Praise involves God’s people in singing and playing, boasting and testifying to the greatness and goodness of the Lord.” J. C. Laney

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 8 – Nehemiah 8

Prerequisites for Successful Building Part 2: Revival

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 8:1-4 and answer the following questions.

1. What characterized the attitude of the people as they gathered together? (v.1)
2. What significant time did Ezra bring the Law before all the people? (v.2)
3. Ezra had been faithfully working among the people since his arrival in Jerusalem in 458 B.C., some 14 years prior to Nehemiah's arrival. There had been some bright moments in his ministry, but now God was going to fulfill His real purposes for Ezra in the land. What had Ezra's ministry goal been, according to Ezra 7:10?
4. In God's perfect timing, the joint efforts of Nehemiah's practical leadership in physical restoration, as well as the spiritual efforts of Ezra, were now going to result in revival and new direction for the Jewish people. The body of Christ also needs all of its parts functioning fully to achieve the type of work He wants done. How does 1 Corinthians 12:12-18 speak more on this?
5. The people were not just hearing but understanding. The Hebrew wording means more than just accumulated knowledge but hearing with wisdom and perception. What principles can you glean from the following on spiritual receptivity and being teachable?

Proverbs 18:15

Matthew 13:13-17

Acts 17:11

1 Thessalonians 2:13

6. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is 2 Chronicles 7:14. Repeat it several times each day and by the end of the week, you will have it memorized. Don't forget to review the verses we have memorized in past weeks. The three secrets of Scripture memory are: Review, review, review!

"If My people who are called by My name shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 8:5-8 and answer the following questions.

1. The people stood up as Ezra opened the book and remained attentive and on their feet for about five hours! What was Ezra's reaction? (v.6)
2. Being aware of God's greatness, as Ezra was, is essential in both understanding His Word and in bringing revival in our lives. How do the following passages describe God's greatness?

Deuteronomy 3:24

Psalms 95:3-7

Psalms 145:3-5

3. How did the people respond to this reading? (v.6)

4. The term amen means *so be it*, or an acknowledgement. Thus, the people's worship was an acknowledgment of the greatness of God and the power of His Word.

a. How does 2 Corinthians 1:20 describe the promises of God?

b. What interesting title is used of Jesus in Revelation 3:14?

5. Not only did the people bow themselves and shout amen, but they also lifted their hands to the Lord, symbolic of their surrender and worship of Him. What else does the Bible say about lifting our hands to the Lord in worship?

Psalm 63:1-4

Psalm 134:1-2

1 Timothy 2:8

6. What other steps were taken to make sure that the people really comprehended God's Word? (v.8) Who were some of the people involved in this effort?

The Levites all strove to make clear the Law to the people, reading distinctly and giving the sense of what the Law was saying. The Amplified Bible translates the phrase in verse 8 that they "*read...distinctly, faithfully amplifying and giving the sense.*" Some would teach that this meant that the people had forgotten much of the Hebrew they once knew and primarily spoke Aramaic, but clearly presenting the Word of God and explaining it in understandable terms is the duty of everyone who faithfully proclaims the Word.

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Try to fill in the missing words/phrases below. Review the verse several times today.

"If My people who are called by _____ shall _____ themselves and pray and _____ My face, and _____ their wicked ways, then I will _____ from heaven, and will _____ their sin and _____ their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 8:9-12 and answer the following questions.

1. How did the people respond to the reading of the Law? (v.9)
2. Nehemiah told the people not to mourn or weep, which could also be translated as not worrying, grieving oneself, or going through mental and physical anguish because of their sin. Rather, how did he and Levites redirect the people to properly channel their emotions? (vs.10-11)
3. The people thus greatly rejoiced and celebrated because they understood the Word of God. Indeed, the joy of the Lord is our strength and stronghold. Personal holiness often seems to be associated with justice and righteousness, humility and contrition, but joy in the Lord is just as importantly linked with it. What are some ways we can experience and understand the joy of the Lord, thereby making it our strength?

Psalm 16:11

Isaiah 35:10; 61:10

Jeremiah 15:16

Habakkuk 3:17-19

John 16:24

1 Peter 4:12-13

4. Revival manifested itself in the people's response to the Word, in both understanding of personal responsibility and rejoicing in the new life that was sparked by practical application of the Word of God. What steps did they take to make sure that all had the means by which to rejoice in this way? (vs.10, 12) How does 1 John 3:16-18 exhort us to respond in a similar manner to those in need in the body of Christ?

5. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review the verse several times today.

*"If My _____ who are _____ by _____ shall
_____ themselves and _____, and seek _____,
and _____, and will _____ their
_____ and _____ their _____." 2 Chronicles 7:14*

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 8:13-18 and answer the following questions.

1. What did the people discover that was especially important about that month? (vs.13-14)
2. How did they go about obeying God's Word concerning this feast? (vs.15-16)
3. How long had it been since this feast was fully celebrated as the Law commanded? (v.17)

Note: This doesn't mean this feast was never celebrated, because it was just a few years earlier, according to Ezra 3. It means that it wasn't celebrated with such great unity and conformity to God's prescribed command.

4. What was continued each day of the feast? What happened on the last day of the feast? (v.18)

John 7 records the Feast of Tabernacles as celebrated during the life of Jesus. At that time, Jesus demonstrated that all that the feast symbolized was being fulfilled in Himself. Expounding on this feast, G. Campbell Morgan describes an interesting part of the ritual (The Gospel According to John, pp. 137-138):

“...for seven days there was a procession of the priests, who went out with empty vessels...filled their vessels with water; and came back, chanting parts of the Great Hallel, then pouring out the water within the Temple Courts...the symbolism related to two facts, one, that God had supplied their need with water in the wilderness, a physical provision; the other, that promises had been made...that there should come a day when rivers of living water should revivify the desert lands, a spiritual significance...On the last day there was no procession of the priests, no carrying of the golden vessels of water...the omission was as significant as the observance had been...first that there was no need for the supernatural supply of water, because they were no longer in the wilderness, but in the land; and secondly, that the great promises of spiritual refreshment had not yet been fulfilled.”

a. What did Jesus say about His role concerning the things written in the Law, including rituals such as this feast? (Matthew 5:17)

b. What did Jesus say on the last day of the feast? (John 7:37-39) Based on the information, how does Jesus’ claim fulfill this feast?

c. What else does the New Testament teach us about Jesus and the Living Water He gives? (John 4:7-14; Revelation 22:1-5)

6. Scripture Memory Verse: Fill in the missing words/phrases below by memory. Review the verse several times today.

“If _____ who _____ shall
 _____, and _____
 _____, then I will _____, and _____
 _____ and _____
 _____.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

Day Five – Spotlight & Practical Application

Seeing Revival In Our Lives

Times of revival and renewal have come by God's grace during the history of Israel and in the church era. We hear of these great revivals in the past and wonder if God will do the same sort of work in our time. We see the virtual decay of our society around us and pray that God will bring a change in our world. Yet revival isn't something that happens to the unsaved. It is a phenomenon that occurs to God's people, drastically changing their lives. As a result, individual believers are used to reach out to those around them, having a societal impact. How we desperately need revival in our land today! This last day of study will be for understanding and applying the principles of revival in our lives.

Revival has been defined as "renewed conviction of sin and repentance, followed by an intense desire to live in obedience to God...giving up one's will to God in deep humility" (C.G. Finney, How to Experience Revival, p. 7). Each revival in history, including the one recorded here in Nehemiah, resulted from proclamation of the Scriptures and the equipping of the body of Christ for effective service. They don't begin from social programs or legislative pressure, even though these things are important. Our memory verse for this week, 2 Chronicles 7:14, serves as the best biblical basis for seeking and receiving revival in our own lives, churches, and ultimately change in the world around us. Let's examine how we can put the principles of this passage into practice.

If My People, who are called by My Name...

1. Revival happens to God's people, not non-believers. Have you realized this truth? How regularly are you seeking revival in your own life?

...shall humble themselves...

2. Revival will never come to the proud. We must be emptied and humble before Him. How can James 4:6-10 be put into practice in your life?

...and pray, and seek My face...

3. We must earnestly seek God and His Word, not just to know it, but as the people in this chapter, to understand and live it. Has the Word of God become routine to you? Are you feeling dulled to its convicting effects? How can you better spend time seeking Him through His Word, applying what it says? How about your prayer life? Do you find yourself merely going through the motions of prayer? How can you improve your prayer life?

...and turn from their wicked ways...

4. Are there any sins in your life that you have not confessed to the Lord? Or are there areas that you need to apply His power to for victory? If you hold onto sin, not seeking to take steps of repentance, you will never see revival or effective usefulness for the Lord. See 1 John 1:9 on how to deal with your sins.

...then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Only when our lives are fully surrendered to Him and we are seeking Him with our whole hearts, cleansed and forgiven out of His grace, will we see His healing hand stretched out upon our land. Judgment begins in the house of God; so, must the healing of our country.

5. Read Hosea 6:1-3 and 10:12. How does this call to revival need to be put into practice in your own life? He will be faithful to carry out His promises; it is up to us to give Him the opportunity to do so.

6. Seeking the Lord through His Word needs to be pursued systematically, be bathed in prayer with our hearts yielded to the Holy Spirit so that we can accomplish His purposes in our life. Below, list how you will specifically implement these important aspects of studying God’s Word.

- a. Set aside time each day for study

- b. Choose a place for successful study

- c. Follow a set plan in studying the Bible

- d. Keep a written record of the things you are learning

- e. Share the truths you learn with others

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Write out this week’s verse by memory.

“The fact is...Christians are more to blame for not being revived than sinners are for not being converted.” Charles G. Finney

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 9 – Nehemiah 9

Prerequisites for Successful Building Part 3: Repentance

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 9:1-4 and answer the following questions.

1. Up to this point, Nehemiah had referred to those involved in the work as the people. What does he now significantly refer to them as in verse 1?

2. What steps of humility did the people take? (vs.1-2)

3. What pattern did they follow in humbling themselves before God? (v.3)

4. What does confession of sin mean to you? What does 1 John 1:9 add to your understanding of it?

5. A real change has taken place in the people's lives. They now address the Lord as their God, they spend a fourth of their day hearing the Word, and then appropriately respond to the Word for another fourth of the day; and the rest of the chapter and the actions they will take in chapters 10-13 demonstrate that revival has taken place. But there wouldn't have been revival without the repentance recorded here.
 - a. In the last chapter, how were the people instructed when they began to weep over their sins? (Nehemiah 8:10-12)

b. Now the time was appropriate for them to weep. How does Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 help you to understand God's timing and our responses to it?

6. In verse 4, those leading in confession and worship cried out with a loud voice. The Hebrew word for cry out can also be translated as shrieking from anguish or a sense of danger, like a distress signal. It was their "S.O.S." cry out to God, in response to how they and their forefathers had failed to obey His Word. Read Isaiah 6:1-8 and record how Isaiah had a very similar experience and how he responded to it.

7. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is Proverbs 28:13. Review it several times each day and by the end of the week, you'll have it memorized. Don't forget to keep reviewing the eight other verse you've been learning!

"He who covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Proverbs 28:13

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 9:5-15 and answer the following questions.

This prayer of the Levites and leaders makes for fascinating and convicting study. Verse 5-15 record their praises to God for all He had done for them.

1. What did they exhort the people to do in verse 5?

2. The word bless means to bend the knee, kneel down and praise. Yet they are told to stand up while bowing down! How does this reflect the importance of our attitude in prayer and praise rather than specific posture or ritual?

3. His name is to be exalted above all blessing and praise, forever and ever (the Hebrew wording means to the vanishing point, time without end). Why is He so worthy of praise according to verse 6?

4. Why was Abram chosen? (vs.7-8) What significantly transpired in his life because God chose him?

5. Re-read verse 7-15. Notice all the action words associated with God. List and underline these action words below as they recall God's provision for His people:

Verse 7: God...(example) chose Abram, brought him out, gave him a new name

Verse 8: God...

Verse 9: God...

Verse 10: God...

Verse 11: God...

Verse 12: God...

Verse 13: God...

Verse 14: God...

Verse 15: God...

6. What can you conclude from all these facts about God's intervention in their history?

7. Scripture Memory Verse: Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review the verse several times today.

*“He who _____ his sins shall not _____, but whoever

And forsakes them will have _____.” Proverbs 28:13*

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 9:16-31 and answer the following questions.

1. How did the Israelites respond to God’s goodness toward them? (vs. 16-17)

2. How did God continue to demonstrate His grace toward them despite their hardened hearts? (v.17b)

3. Their wandering in the wilderness is recalled in verses 18-21.
 - a. How did they act toward God in view of all that He did for them? (v.18)

 - b. What were some of the things that God did for them during their wilderness wanderings? (vs.19-21)

4. Their conquest and settling of the land is covered in verses 22-24. What were some of the things that God did for them during this time period?

5. Verses 26-31 discuss the period of Judges through the events leading up to their Babylon captivity.
 - a. How did the people respond to God’s goodness in giving them the Promised Land? (v.26)

b. What was God's course of action toward them? How did the people continue to respond? (vs.27-30)

c. How does verse 31 summarize God's consistent actions despite those of His chosen people? How does Lamentations 3:22-23 remind us of this fact?

6. Scripture Memory Verse: Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review the verse several times today.

"He who _____ his _____ shall not _____, but whoever _____ and _____ them will _____." Proverbs 28:13

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 9:32-38 and answer the following questions.

1. After confession of the multiple sins of their fathers, the Israelites may have been hesitant to ask anything of the Lord. Yet how did they approach Him now? (v.32)

2. What did they have to admit to God? (vs. 33-34)

3. Much like the people of that time, we as Christians today have nothing in ourselves to make us acceptable to God. We must come to Him because of what He has accomplished for us despite our repeated failures and sins. What are some reasons that we can confidently approach Him?

Romans 5:6-8

Romans 8:1-4

Hebrews 4:14-16

4. What did they realize was true despite the grace that God extended toward them even then? (vs. 36-37)

5. Galatians 6:7-10 describes a sad truth about the choices we make of sin versus obedience. What is that principle and the lesson we should learn?

6. What did they do to mark their repentance from these activities back to obedience to God once again? (v.38)

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below by memory. You should be close to having this verse memorized.

"He who _____ his _____ shall _____, but
_____ and _____ then will

_____." Proverbs _____

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Repentance

Repentance is essential in the Christian life. Yet many Christians seem unclear as to what it is or how to go about it. We'll never see revival, as Nehemiah and his people did, unless we turn from our wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14). As we confess and forsake our sin, we then find mercy (Proverbs 28:13).

The Old Testament wordings for repentance are linked to the idea of being comforted; it is connected to a change of heart or disposition, mind, purpose, and conduct. It means to return or to turn again to something, almost like doing an about face. The New Testament word for repent is *metanoia*, literally meaning later knowledge, but signifying a change of mind, opinion, feelings, will, or thought because of the remorse and regret resulting from dissatisfaction with the mindset as a result of our sin.

1. Putting these two definitions together, how then would you define repentance? What does repentance mean to you?

2. What were some of the factors we have been learning about in the last few chapters that led Nehemiah and the people to repentance?

3. The Bible has much to say about repenting and repentance. What are some things you can learn from these passages about repentance?

Acts 3:19

Romans 2:4

2 Corinthians 7:9-10

2 Peter 3:9

4. You may feel so enwrapped in sin and selfishness that it is almost impossible to change. What hope do the following passages give to all of us?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

1 Corinthians 10:13

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Philippians 2:12-13

5. In Revelation 2-3, Jesus sent letters to the seven churches of the ay, many of which closely resemble our churches and lives today. Read His letter to the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7.

- a. What good things were they accomplishing as a body of believers?

- b. What problem was keeping them from experiencing His blessing on all that they did?

- c. Verse 5 outlines three steps to change. What are they?

B. Practical Application

Hosea the prophet urged Israel to turn to the Lord in repentance, to break up their fallow, dried up , unused ground and to seek the Lord with their whole hearts. (Hosea 10:12) A lot of ground needs to be worked on in our lives through repentance and the changing power of God's Holy Spirit, but the result will be that of bearing fruit. He wants us to experience revival, but are we too caught up in sin, self, social issues or doctrinal concerns to see the dramatic changes God wants us to have? Let's prayerfully consider the changes needed in our lives today not letting Satan have victory even one more day.

1. The Word of God was the key stimulus for change in the life of Israel at this time. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching us), for reproof (conviction of sin), for correction (showing us how to change), for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (mature), thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” How can you begin to better get a grasp on God’s Word? What study habit changes or improvements do you need to make? How will you begin to make changes to allow God’s Word to do its work in your life?

2. We also read how worship became a vital part of the revival they experienced, as an earlier lesson showed us. How are you implementing worship in your own personal devotional life? How about in your church attendance and other times of fellowship?

3. What facts about God and His gracious working stood out the most to you this week? How does this strengthen your love for Him?

4. In Psalm 103, David urges us to bless the Lord and to not forget any of His benefits (all that He’s done for us) and goes on to list many of the reasons he could worship the Lord. Please take time here to do the same. List at least ten things that you can be thankful for and then take time to thank Him for all that He’s done. If nothing else, you can be thankful for the first example that is listed for you!

a. *Christ died for my sin, saving me from eternity in hell!*

b.

- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.
- i.
- j.

5. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Write out this week's verse by memory.

“ _____

_____”

Challenge – Optional

It's time indeed to break up our fallow ground and let God make us into fruit-bearing believers. David prayed that God would search and know his heart and reveal any ways displeasing to Him. (Psalm 139:23-24) Pray the same for yourself and record below any areas that need changing and how you'll do it.

Sins of Omissions (not doing the things you should)

Poor Spiritual Attitude

Hypocrisy

Sins of Commission (wrongful actions)

Relationships with Others

“It is the humble and contrite heart which God does not despise...if you avoid in your present Christian life a daily humiliation before God, you will soon become hardened, cold, and indifferent to the things of God...God will never plant the seed of His life upon the soil of a hard, unbroken spirit. He will only plant that seed when the conviction of His Spirit has brought brokenness, when the soil has been watered with the tears of repentance as well as the tears of joy.” Alan Redpath

“...a revival does not only depend on the open doors of the house of worship or on the existence of divine services. More is needed than those outward acts of piety. There must be a turning around. That turning is twofold: it is a turning from sin, the first ninety-degree turn, and a turning towards God, the second ninety degree turn, to make a complete about-face.” Walter C. Kaiser

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 10 – Nehemiah 10/Ezra 6

Commitment to Obedience

Remember to pray for God’s guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don’t merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 9:38-10:29 and answer the following questions.

1. Because of God’s amazing grace to Israel despite their faithlessness toward Him, the people were going to recommit their lives to following Him. How did they go about making this promise of renewed obedience? (9:38)
2. One commentator (Charles R. Swindoll, Hand Me Another Brick) referred to this covenant as the peoples’ declaration of dependence, completely submitting themselves to the Lord rather than following after their former independent and sinful ways. How did those who weren’t signers of this “declaration” commit themselves to renewed obedience? (10:28-29)
3. What limitations were the people using in deciding who was able to make such a commitment? (v.28)
4. What extremes were they willing to go to in order to ensure that they kept their vows? (v.29)
5. In this culture, an oath was a sworn, solemn verbal statement, which was then affirmed. In some cases, a curse was attached for punishment or penalties for breaking that oath. An example of this is seen in Deuteronomy 27-29 of God’s promises for obedience and the people taking curses upon themselves if they failed to keep His Law. What did Jesus teach about the true intention of oaths, as well as their dangers? (Matthew 5:33-37) What does James 5:12 add to this?

6. What is the primary commitment that the people were making? (v.29)

7. *To observe* comes from the Hebrew working for keeping a hedge around something, to guard and keep a garden or a flock. *To do* has the flavor of toil, labor or keeping an obligation. What should be our commitment to God's Word, especially when we have the benefit of the entire revelation of Scripture?

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** This week's verse is 2 Timothy 2:22. Review it several times each day and you'll have it memorized by the end of the week. Spend the rest of today's time learning this verse. Don't forget to review the other verses you've been learning week!

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Timothy 2:22

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 10:30-39 and answer the following questions.

1. Yesterday we read that the people committed to observe and do all that God's Word had commanded them. The working of His Word in our life should bring about this same desire for change in us. In verses 30-39, what are some of the other areas of their lives they were willing to commit themselves to seeing renewed obedience in?

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35-37

Verse 38

Verse 39

2. Giving out of oneself is a true mark of God's Word at work in us, whether it is of our finances, time or ourselves.

a. What will the results of faithful giving be? (Malachi 3:10)

b. Do you think that this applies only to our financial giving? What encouragement do you gain from 1 Corinthians 15:58 as we give out of ourselves in service to the Lord?

c. The Law only required the first fruits of seven specific plants to be given over to the Lord. Yet what did the people commit themselves to give? (v.37) What can we learn about giving from their example?

3. The Israelites also promised to stop their practice of intermarriage with other nations, which God had forbidden because of the dangers such a practice would bring.

a. What was one of the primary reasons God prohibited this according to Deuteronomy 7:3-4? How was this displayed in the life of King Solomon? (1 Kings 11:1-6)

b. Why is it also wrong for a Christian to marry a non-Christian? (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

4. Their final area of commitment was that they would not neglect the house of God. Yet believers today seem to neglect the house of God in many ways.

a. What should be our attitude toward the house of God, or going there for times of fellowship and instruction? (Psalm 122:1)

b. What purpose is accomplished when believers gather for fellowship? (Hebrews 10:24-25)

c. What important truth does 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tell us about His temple?

5. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review this verse several times today.

*“Flee also _____ lusts; but pursue _____, faith, love,
_____ with those who _____ on the Lord out of a
_____.” 2 Timothy 2:22*

Day Three

Read Ezra 6:10-18 and answer the following questions.

Ezra 6 is also a chapter that records the peoples’ return to obedience in rebuilding the temple, taking steps to not neglect the house of God.

1. Verse 10-12 are a record of Darius’ letter of approval for the building project. It had somehow been misplaced, but when found, ended the opposition to this rebuilding work. What command did Darius give in verse 12? How forceful was this?

2. The temple was finally completed. What factors led the people to be able to build and finish it? (v.14)

3. God's Word, particularly the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah, helped them to prosper and see the work through. What does this mean for you in your relationship to God's Word?

4. What are some of the results we will see in our lives as we walk in and keep God's Word?

Joshua 1:8

1 Chronicles 22:12-13

Psalm 1:1-3

John 15:1-8

5. What attitude did the people have as they completed the work and dedicated the temple? (v.16)

6. What two actions did they take in consecrating the temple? (vs.17-18)

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if at all possible. Review the verse several times today.

"Flee also _____; but pursue _____,
_____, _____, _____, with those who _____ on the
Lord out of a _____." 2 Timothy 2:22

Day Four

Read Ezra 6:19-22 and answer the following questions.

1. The people here were referred to as the children of the captivity, not fully grasping the freedom that was being accomplished for them. How does that compare with the attitudes we have been seeing develop in Nehemiah's writings about these people?

2. Are we to still view ourselves as children of captivity, bound to the past? What does Colossians 3:1-11 tell us about our status in Christ?

3. There are five steps of obedience that the people took in these verses. Can you list them here?

Verse 19

Verse 20a

Verse 20b

Verse 21

Verse 22

4. What reasons did they have to be joyful? (v.22)

5. They kept the feast of Unleavened Bread as prescribed by the law and the result of their obedience was joy. Jesus is the Bread of Life. How does John 6:32-40 describe Him? How does this bring you joy as you partake of Him?

6. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below. You should be able to do this by memory if you've been reviewing the verse every day this week.

*"Flee _____; but pursue _____.
_____, _____, _____ with those who _____
_____ out of a _____." 2 Timothy 2:22*

Day Five
A. Spotlight: The Prophets That Inspired Them

Ezra 6:14 records that the building project prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah. A third prophet, Malachi, also ministered at this time. Since their time period of ministry was after the Babylonian captivity and exile, theologians refer to them as the post-exilic prophets. Let's very briefly consider the impact that these three men had on God's people in motivating them to service.

Haggai

Haggai wrote at approximately 520 B.C. The leaders that he ministered to were primarily Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest. He encouraged them to keep on rebuilding the temple, and to get their focus back on proper worship. Fittingly, his name means "festive", taken from the Hebrew word meaning festival of Yahweh (Jehovah), because he directed the people away from careless to careful worship of and work for the Lord.

1. Read Haggai 1:1-9. What were some of the problems that plagued Israel? What was the solution for these problems?

2. In Haggai 1:12-13, what attitude change took place in the people? As a result, what did God promise them in their work?

3. What further comfort and promises did God give His people as they worked?
(Haggai2:4-5)

Zechariah

Zechariah wrote in the time period between 520 B.C. and 470 B.C. Again, the leaders primarily affected by his writings were Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest. He encouraged them to rebuild the Temple, not as much through rebuke, but through displaying the future Messianic aspects of the Temple and their faithful work. Zechariah's name means *Yahweh (Jehovah) Remembers*, and He did remember His people and restore them to their land, fulfilling His promises to them.

1. What is God's challenge to the people in Zechariah 1:1-6?

2. How do you see this knowledge incorporated in the prayer of the people in Nehemiah 9:32-35?

3. In what ways was God going to act now out of mercy toward His people? (Zechariah 1:12-17)

4. What great encouragement is given to Zerubbabel so that he wouldn't get bogged down in the work? (Zechariah 4:6-10)

5.. The real significance of this rebuilding work is symbolized by an action toward Joshua the High Priest. (Zechariah 6:11-15) How is he and the temple project a picture of Jesus Christ and His work? Remember, Jesus and Joshua both come from the same name, meaning *Jehovah is Salvation!*

Malachi

It is most likely that Malachi's message came during the period of 432-425 B.C., during Nehemiah's absence from the people as he returned to Susa. It is quite confrontational as the people had begun to slip away from the promises that they had made to the Lord. It is primarily written to the priests but applies to all of us in general. Malachi's name comes from the word meaning *My Messenger*; or *Messenger of Yahweh (Jehovah)*. This is again significant because Malachi brought a message of renewed obedience for the people.

1. In what sort of ways were the people falling short? (Malachi 1:6-9)

2. What was God's intention for the priests? How were they now acting? (Malachi 2:1-9)

3. What else were they doing to displease God?

Malachi 2:11

Malachi 2:16

Malachi 3:8-12

4. What will result when God's people return to a life of obedience?

B. Practical Application

1. The people covenanted with God to observe and to do all that was commanded in His Word. What is your relationship to His Word? What are some ways you can make more of a priority in your life?

2. They also promise to obey Him in their home life. What are some steps you can take to better lead your family in the things of God? If you are single, what changes can you make in your life that would either help prepare you for family life or else be more glorifying to God in your home life or work?

3. In what ways could you be better in giving your time, self, and resources? These people gave God their all, their best; how much more should we as Christians today!

4. Are you somewhat guilty of neglecting the house of God? Do you need to have more regular church attendance? Are there any ways that you can spend more or better time in actual fellowship with others?

5. Did anything stand out to you as needing change or was it just challenging to you in what we read of the three post-exilic prophets?

6. **Scripture Memory Verse:** You should now have this week’s passage memorized. Write it here by memory.

“

_____.” 2 Timothy 2:22

“Under Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s leadership the people had been led to place a higher priority on spiritual things...” J.F. Walvoord and R.B. Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament Edition

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 11 – Nehemiah 11-12

Dedication (The Job Isn't Done)

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 11:1-18 and answer the following questions.

1. Once the people had covenanted to obey the Lord, Nehemiah wanted to make sure that Jerusalem was re-populated. In what two ways was this task accomplished? (vs.1-2)

2. What was the attitude of the people toward those that willingly offered to live in Jerusalem?

3. Nehemiah now begins to list those that re-populated Jerusalem. What groups are spoken about in:

Verses 3-9:

Verses 10-14:

Verse 15-18:
4. Verse 14 mentions mighty men of valor. What does this mean to you? Are there any men today that you would consider to be a mighty man of valor?

5. Just as the physical Jerusalem needed re-population, God is looking for those that wish to willingly occupy the Heavenly Jerusalem. What do the following passages have to say about that holy city?

Hebrews 9:11-15

Hebrews 11:8-16

Hebrews 12:22-24

Revelation 21:1-7

6. Scripture Memory Verse: This week's verse is Romans 12:1. Review it several times each day, and you'll have it memorized by the end of the week. Spend the rest of today's time learning this verse. Don't forget to review the other verse you've been learning each week!

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 11:19-36 and answer the following questions.

1. Nehemiah continues to list the various people that re-populated Jerusalem. Who does he mention in these passages?

Verses 19-21:

Verses 22-24:

2. What is discussed in verses 25-36?

3. The people began to resettle in the areas that were given to them by inheritance from the Lord. One of Israel's greatest problems was that they never fully entered into all that God wanted to give them. The same is sadly true for the church today. What are some ways that the following passages exhort us to "possess our possessions", enjoying our spiritual inheritance in the Lord?

Psalm 119:111-112

Acts 20:32; 26:18

Galatians 3:29-4:7

Ephesians 1:3-14

Colossians 1:12-14

4. Scripture Memory Verse: Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review this verse several times today.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the _____ of God, that you _____ your bodies a living sacrifice, _____, acceptable to God, which is your _____ service." Romans 12:1

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 12:1-30 and answer the following questions.

The wall was rebuilt; the temple again ready for service; the people had vowed obedience. Yet Nehemiah didn't let these achievements rest at that point. He wanted to make sure that the walls and the lives of the people were truly dedicated over to the Lord.

1. First, Nehemiah completes his historical documentation. Which groups of people are discussed in the passages below?

Verse 1-7

Verses 8-9

Verses 10-11

Verses 12-21

Verses 22-26

2. The dedication ceremony was now to begin. The Hebrew word for dedication is *chanukkah*, meaning a dedicatory sacrifice, dedication, inauguration. As a result of the Maccabean revolt in 168 B.C., worship was re-established in the temple, for Antiochus Epiphanes had desecrated the temple and worship had ceased. Their dedication ceremony is celebrated by Jews around the world in December as Hanukkah, a time of great rejoicing.

a. This dedication was also to be a time of great rejoicing. With what attitude and equipment were the Levites to lead this dedication? (v. 27)

b. Who else were going to be involved in the dedication? (vs.28-29)

3. What action was necessary for all the Levites and the people to undertake prior to (really a part of) their dedication? (v.30)

4. How do the following passages encourage us as believers to seek purification, thus better being able to dedicate our own lives to the Lord?

Isaiah 1:16-18

2 Corinthians 7:1

2 Timothy 2:21-22

1 John 3:1-3

5. Scripture Memory Verse: Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review this verse several times today.

“ I _____ you therefore, _____, by the _____ of God, that you _____ your bodies a _____ sacrifice, _____, acceptable _____, which is your _____ service.” Romans 12:1

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 12:31-47 and answer the following questions.

1. What did Nehemiah appoint as part of the dedication celebration? (vs.31,38)
2. What was the purpose of these two choirs?
3. The pathway that these two choirs took is almost exactly that which Nehemiah took when originally inspecting the broken-down walls of Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 2:12-16) How did this occasion dramatically differ from that earlier time? (v.43)
4. How was this day's dedication similar to that of Ezra 3:11-13

5. The sound of their joy was loud enough for all to hear. How will our service also lead to joy in the Lord?

Psalm 40:8; 126:5-6

Isaiah 61:10

Jeremiah 15:16

6. What other actions were the people moved to do out of this joy? (vs.44-47)

7. **Scripture Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review the verse several times today.

“I _____ you _____, _____, by the _____ of _____, that you _____ your _____ a _____ sacrifice, _____, acceptable _____, which is your _____.” Romans _____

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Being a Mighty Man of Valor

Earlier this week we read about some men that were labeled mighty men of valor. Except for their names being recorded here, history remembers little of them. God chose a place of honor for them in the Scriptures because they were willing to serve Him regardless of what they would gain in this life and whether they were seen and known by men. Let’s examine how we can be better dedicated to the Lord and be these types of men/women that He finds worthy of such a title!

1. What kind of man (woman) is God looking for today? (2 Chronicles 16:9)

a. What does He promise to do for such a man (woman)?

2. What type of men (women) were those recorded in Nehemiah 11:2? What does this tell us about the type of men (women) God looks for?

3. What paradoxical statement did Jesus make about who would be great in His sight? (Matthew 20:25-28)

4. Hebrews 11 has been called the hall of faith. There are many believers listed there that were well known and who faithfully followed God based only on what they knew. At the end of the chapter, the author states that we as Christians have an even greater revelation, thus a greater responsibility to dedicate ourselves to the Lord and to follow Him by faith. Read Hebrews 12:1-3 and answer the following questions about this.

a. Because of the testimony of those that have gone before us, what are we urged to do? (v.1)

b. What should we loosen up from our lives to best follow Him? (v.1)

c. How are we to run this race set before us? (v.1)

d. What is our focus to be on instead of the circumstances and problems that try to keep us from being fully dedicated over to Him? (v.2)

e. How can we avoid being discouraged in our service? (v.3)

5. What do these two great promises assure us about God's faithfulness in response to our service from Him?

1 Corinthians 15:58

Hebrews 6:10

6. Why do you feel that there are so few responding to God's calling to a life of dedicated servanthood?

B. Practical Application

1. Which passage(s) ministered to you the most this week? Why?

2. Are there any areas in your life that you have not been fully entering into the spiritual inheritance that is yours in Christ, as discussed on Day Two? If so, how can you better "possess your possessions", and make these things real in your life?

3. Would you be able to state that your life is marked by the joy these people experienced? What sort of obstacles have been blocking out your joy? How did Hebrews 12:1-3 help you to deal with this?

4. Have you taken time to consider all of those that have had a spiritual influence in your life, might men/women of valor the Lord used to strengthen you in Him? How can you show your appreciation to them and the Lord for their faithfulness toward you?

5. What, if anything, is keeping you from being that mighty man/woman of valor, fully dedicated to the Lord, that we have read about? What can you do to change this?

6. Do a motivational checkup. What really motivates you to get involved in Christian service? Is it to glorify God no matter the cost, or are you seeking great things for yourself? (Jeremiah 45) Seeking to fulfill God's role for you in leadership is an honorable thing (1 Timothy 3:1), but not for selfish motivation. It is God working through you that makes you valuable in His sight, not we ourselves. How will you seek to change from any selfish motivations in your service?

7. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Write out this week's verse by memory.

“ _____

_____.”

“Both Scripture and the history of Israel and the church attest that when God discovers a man who conforms to His spiritual requirement, who is willing to pay the full price of discipleship, He uses him to the limit despite his shortcomings.” J. Oswald Sanders

Studies in Nehemiah

Lesson 12 – Nehemiah 13

Sanctification (The Job Continues)

Remember to pray for God's guidance and direction as you study each day. Write out your own answers for each question; don't merely copy down a passage or rely on other resource books for your answers.

Day One

Read Nehemiah 13:1-9 and answer the following questions.

As we learn in this passage, Nehemiah had returned for an unspecified length of time to Artaxerxes, as he had promised (Nehemiah 2:6). He had been in the Jerusalem area for approximately 12 years, so it was time to return and give an account to the king of all that he had done as governor. Yet what a dismaying shock he received when he came back to Jerusalem! The people had turned their backs on almost every commitment they had vowed to the Lord as recorded in chapters 9-10.

1. What was the first thing Nehemiah made sure the people did upon his return? (v.1)
2. What were the two reasons that God didn't want Israel to intermix with these groups of people? (vs.1-2)
3. God had turned their attempts to curse the Israelites through the prophet Balaam (this story is recorded in Numbers 22-24) into a blessing. Deuteronomy 23:5 adds that God did this because He loves His people. How did Christ, out of love, also turn the curse against us into a blessing?

Galatians 3:10-14

Romans 8:1-4

4. How did the people respond to God's command? (v.3)

5. How else did the people, particularly Eliashib the priest, unbelievably compromise while Nehemiah was gone? (vs.4-7)

6. What steps of sanctification (setting something or someone apart for God's purpose) did Nehemiah take in view of this *evil* act [the Hebrew for evil is a very strong word, meaning bad, malignant, noxious, and spiritually injurious]? (vs.8-9)

7. Both the mixed multitude and Tobiah are symbolic of the fleshly nature. It takes strong action on our parts as well to sanctify, or set apart, our lives for God's purposes. How can we better do so according to these passages?

Psalm 119:114-115

John 15:3-5

Ephesians 5:1-11

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Our last memory verse for our Nehemiah studies continues from last week's verse, and also urges us to sanctification. Review it several times today.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2

Day Two

Read Nehemiah 13:10-14 and answer the following questions.

1. What was the next problem that Nehemiah faced? (v.10)

2. Who did Nehemiah particularly lay the blame on? What was the real issue at hand? (v.11)

3. How did the people repent of their lack of attending to the house of God? (v.12)

4. How did Nehemiah make sure that this would be carefully distributed? (v.13)

5. What characteristic marked these men?

6. What was the content of Nehemiah's prayer? (v.14) Do you feel this was a selfish prayer? What was he really asking for?

7. How did these people ask to be remembered in prayer?

Psalm 25:7

Psalm 106:4

Jeremiah 15:15

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Spend the rest of today's time reviewing this verse.

"And do not _____ to this world, but be _____ by the renewing of your _____, that you may prove what is that _____ and acceptable and _____ will of God." Romans 12:2

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 13:15-22 and answer the following questions.

1. How did the people continue to turn away from the dedication they had previously made? (vs.15-16)

2. The Hebrew word for *contend* (v.17) has the sense of repeating a warning over and over again, protesting, testifying against, and chiding. Who did Nehemiah address his warning to?

3. Again, he points out the evil in their actions (same wording as in verse 7). What was particularly wrong with what they were doing? (v.18)

4. How had God warned His people through Jeremiah prior to the Babylonian captivity about this?

2 Chronicles 36:14-21

Jeremiah 17:21-27

5. What steps did Nehemiah take in making sure the people obeyed? (v.19)

6. What were the merchants from Tyre and other places doing? How did Nehemiah respond to this? (vs.20-21)

7. What further steps did Nehemiah lead the people to do to keep the commitment they had made? (v.22)

8. How did Nehemiah pray at the end of this section? How did this tie in with the commitment the people had made in chapters 9-10 in view of all their forefathers had done? (See Nehemiah 9:32-38)

9. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if at all possible. Review the verse several times today.

“And do not _____ to this _____, but be
_____ by the _____ of your _____, that you may
_____ what is that _____ and _____ and
_____ will of God.” Romans 12:2

Day Four

Read Nehemiah 13:23-31 and answer the following questions.

1. In what crucial area had the people also compromised with their commitment to God? (v.23)
2. What was happening in these families? (v.24) What was the spiritual implication for this?
3. How did Nehemiah respond to this great evil on the part of the people? (vs.25-27)

Note: pulled out hair would have been hair from the men’s beards, a symbol of disgrace in that culture.

4. How does this compare with Ezra’s response to a similar situation?

Ezra 9:3-4

Ezra 10:1-5

5. Modern day marriage counselors don't usually resort to such methods, but this was a critical time for Israel. As Nehemiah pointed out, the same compromise had ruined Israel's golden era. How does 1 Kings 11:8 describe this?

6. What further steps did Nehemiah take to deal with the heart of Israel's problems and lack of sanctification? (vs.28, 30-31)

7. What was the content of Nehemiah's last two prayers? (vs.29-30) By them, what do you feel was his biggest concern? Was it merely a construction project?

8. **Scripture Memory Verse:** Fill in the missing words/phrases below, by memory if possible. Review the verse several times today.

"And do not _____ to this _____, but be
_____ by the _____ of you _____, that you may
_____ what is that _____ and _____ and
_____ of _____." Romans _____

Day Five

A. Spotlight: Being the Way of Balaam

Balaam, who is mentioned in Nehemiah 12, serves as an excellent example of what happens when a believer fails to sanctify himself and his gifts over to the Lord. His story is recorded in Numbers chapters 22-24.

Balaam was kind of a “prophet for hire”, using what God had given to him for his own selfish gain. When Balak, king of Moab, tried to hire him to curse Israel, God warned Balaam not to go. However, he went anyway, which led to the Angel of the Lord rising in opposition to him. Eventually, God allowed him to go and speak only what He commanded. Instead of cursing, every phenomenal word Balaam spoke was a blessing for Israel! However, in the end, Balaam gave in to more financial gain, and suggested that the Moabites try to get their young women to entice the Israelite men into sexual acts and also worship of their false gods, thus bringing God’s wrath upon themselves. Let’s study more to see how we can avoid the same error of Balaam.

1. Peter used the example of Balaam in his strong rebuke of such attitudes. Read 2 Peter 2:12-17 and record as much as you can about what fleshly living will result in based on Balaam’s example.

2. How does Jude verses 11-13 describe the error of Balaam and what characterizes such fleshly men?

3. What was the end result of Balaam’s fleshly greed according to Numbers 31:8?

Note: Midian was another name for the Moabites.

4. As we consecrate and commit our lives to follow and serve Christ, we need to be sanctified as well, setting our lives apart for Him. It may take strong action on our parts. How do the following passages describe our need to deal decisively with our fleshly entanglements as Nehemiah did with the sins and compromises of the Israelites?

Proverbs 22:3-5

1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Galatians 5:16-26

Ephesians 4:25-32

B. Practical Application

The subject of this week's lesson, as well as the memory verse, is one of the most important in the Christian life. Consider Romans 12:2 in two expanded translations, then answer the following practical application questions based on this lesson:

Do not be conformed to this world [fashioned after and adapted to its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect in [in His plan and purpose for you]. Amplified Bible.

Stop always trying to adjust your life to the world's ways. You must get a new attitude to life; your whole mental outlook must be radically altered, so that you will be able to decide what God's will is, and to know what is good and pleasing to him, and perfect. Barclay's Translation.

1. How conformed to this world are you? Are you trying to adjust your life to the empty pursuits of worldliness, still hanging on to old attitudes?

2. As you evaluate your life, based on Nehemiah 13, how would you like to see your outlook altered and life more in line with God's will, that which is good, acceptable, and perfect in His sight for you:

a. In reading and obeying the Bible? (13:1)

b. In not mixing with people or situations that you know can drag you down spiritually (13:2-3)

c. In cleansing out the 'rooms' of your life to make room for His purposes for you?
(13:4-9)

d. In giving to supporting God's work? (13:10-13)

e. In being faithful to your promises? (13:15-22)

f. In keeping your married or single life pure? (13:23-31)

h. In prayer for yourself, others, and God's work in your world? (13:14, 22b, 29, 31b)

3. *Scripture Memory Verse:* Write out this week's verse by memory.

“ _____

_____.” _____

Interestingly, Nehemiah ends with a sad account of what the flesh can do to destroy the work God wants to accomplish in each man's heart. Our choice is simple: revival, renewal, consecration, and sanctification of the destructive pursuits of the flesh. Our prayer is that through these lessons, you will make the choice to apply what you have learned, and that God will be dramatically transforming your life, your family, and your world as you grow in Him.

