

SERMON SERIES



NEHEMIAH

RECOMMITTING GOD'S PEOPLE TO GOD'S GLORY

STUDY GUIDE • NEHEMIAH 8

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HOW GOD WANTS US TO REGARD HIS WORD

NEHEMIAH 8

WELCOME: Fixing Our Focus

Share with the group an experience when you felt God speaking to you while studying the Bible.

WORSHIP: Adoring Our God

Suggested songs:

- Thy Word
- Good Good Father
- Standing on the Promises

WORD: Understanding the Word

LESSON AIM

1. Members will commit to spend time daily in studying the Bible.
2. Members will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as they study the Bible.
3. Members will commit to obey God.

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we saw how God continued to rebuild His kingdom. Around a century earlier, the Jews returned from exile and began rebuilding the temple. Then God used Nehemiah to lead the Jews in the rebuilding of the wall. God then started working on the people of His kingdom. He moved Nehemiah to conduct a census to set apart those who are God's chosen people. In this chapter, we will see how God moved in the hearts of the people and used Ezra, together with the Levites, to spur a renewal of the people's covenant relationship with Him.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

1. What request did the people give Ezra as they gathered together into the square? (vv. 1-2)
2. How much time did the people give to the reading of the Law? (v. 3)
3. What did the people do when Ezra opened the book? (v. 5)
4. What did Ezra and the people do before the Law was read? (v. 6)
5. How did the Levites help the people during this time? (vv. 7-8)
6. What was the response of the people after the Law was explained to them? (vv. 9 & 12)
7. What instructions did the leaders tell the people? (vv. 10-11)
8. What did the heads of households do the next day? (v. 13)
9. What did they do when they learned of God's commands in the Law? (vv. 14-17)
10. What did they do daily during the feast? (v. 18)

WORD: Understanding the Word

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. The whole population of Jerusalem gathered together to hear from the Book of the Law. Do you think it is a coincidence that everyone wanted the same thing?
2. The people listened to the reading of the Law from early morning until noon. Why do you think they were able to spend so much time in this?
3. Why do you think the people stood when Ezra opened the book? What was the attitude of the people as the Law was about to be read?
4. The Levites helped the people understand the Law. Why do you think it was important for them to understand?

God was drawing the Jews to Himself. He prepared them so that they would hunger for His Word. Nehemiah kept reminding the people that God was behind the rebuilding effort. When they finished the wall in fifty-two days, they could confidently claim that God was indeed with them! God had not abandoned His people after all. His steadfast love was still upon His people, and the miraculous completion of the wall was proof. This brought a longing for the people to know God more. They eagerly longed to know God that they did not mind spending half the day just listening to His words. The people (and those surrounding them) learned to fear God. They stood when the book was opened to show their reverence for the Lord and they worshiped Him. The Levites made the Law clear to the people so that they understood God's Word. Unless they can comprehend what God is telling them, there is no way for them to deepen their relationship with Him.

5. Why do you think the people wept when they heard the Law?
6. Why did Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites encourage the people to celebrate and rejoice instead of weeping or mourning?
7. Eventually, the people rejoiced because they understood the Law. Why do you think understanding Scriptures brings joy?

WORD: Understanding the Word

The people were convicted of their sins and the sins of their fathers when they heard the Law. They now understood why God had allowed them to be exiled from the Promised Land. He did not abandon them; He was disciplining them reveals God's grace and mercy. There's joy because in God we can find forgiveness for our sins because He loved them. God's Word reveals our sins and the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins.

8. Why do you think the people wept when they heard the Law?
9. The people immediately obeyed what they learned from the Law. Verse 17 says that Israel had not observed the Feast of Booths since the time of Joshua. Yet, we read in Scriptures that Israel did celebrate the feast during the time of King Solomon (2 Chronicles 8:13) and Ezra's return to Jerusalem (Ezra 3:1-4). How can we resolve this seeming contradiction in Scriptures?

The heads of households came to Ezra to study the Law. It is important for them to do so, for they are charged by God to teach it to their household (Deuteronomy 6:7). The people observed the Feast of Booths as they learned from the Law (Leviticus 23:33-43; Deuteronomy 16:13-15). Nehemiah recorded that this was not done by the nation since the days of Joshua, though there are records in the Old Testament showing that they did observe the feast. This is not a contradiction in Scriptures. Rather, Nehemiah was pointing out that it was only again during this time that the spirit behind the feast was present during its celebration. They celebrated the feast not just superficially, but inwardly as well, the way God meant for it to be celebrated.

WALK: Applying the Word

APPLICATIONS

- CHILDREN -

1. How much time do we give in reading and studying God's Word on our own? Do we take time to listen to the teaching of God's Word by our KIDS L.I.F.E Leaders as well as your parents when they teach God's Word? What can you do so that you can spend more time with the Lord and His Word?
2. How is our heart when it's time to learn from God's Word? Are we excited and happy, or are we not interested? Draw an emoji or emoticon that best describes your reaction when it comes to studying God's Word.
3. Pray that the Lord will give you that joy to study God's Word on your own and when you are with kids your age.

- YOUTH -

1. How much of your time do you spend intentionally going through God's Word? In the busyness of school and everyday life, what can you practically do to prioritize your personal time of reading the Bible?
2. Do you have a group of friends or people that walk through God's Word with you? How can you practice reading the Bible more with a community of other believers?
3. How do you translate what you read from the Word into action? What makes it difficult sometimes to obey what the Word says? How can you commit to applying what you learn in everything you do?

WALK: Applying the Word

- ADULTS -

1. What can you do to cultivate a habit of studying the Bible daily? If you already have developed that habit, share with the rest of the group some tips on how that habit can be cultivated.
2. How do you discern what the Holy Spirit is speaking to you when you study the Bible? Do you have a way of studying Scripture that helps the process?
3. What are some things you can do to commit to obeying God's Word? What are some difficulties you face in obeying God? What are some ways in which we obey God superficially?

- COMMUNAL -

1. How can parents, particularly fathers, lead their family in the study of Scriptures? What are some ways that we, as a church, can encourage fathers to lead their family spiritually?
2. How can we cultivate a culture of longing for understanding God's Word among our families, growth groups, or church?

- GLOBAL -

1. How can Christians and local churches share the truth of God's Word to the world effectively?
2. What are some things churches can do to spur spiritual renewal, especially in regions where Christianity is losing credibility and relevance?
3. How do Christians celebrate modern "feasts" such as Holy Week and Christmas superficially? What can we do so that we return to celebrating these "feasts" the way God intended?



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Know Christ and Make Him Known

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