

# SESSION 8

## NAMES AND OBLIGATIONS

### Nehemiah 10 / Personal Study

#### Opening Prayer

*Gracious Father, incline my heart to Your testimonies. Open my eyes that I might behold wonderful things in Your Word. Unite my heart to fear Your name and satisfy me with Your steadfast love. I ask this by Your Spirit and through Your Son. Amen.*

#### Introduction

Imagine you are an Israelite during the time of Nehemiah. You have just spent almost two months building the walls of Jerusalem under constant fear of attack from your enemies. You are hot, sweaty, tired and afraid. Your sword has rubbed the outside of your leg raw because you have had to wear it in case you get attacked while working. Although God has been gracious to you and your people by delivering you out of slavery in Egypt, giving you your own land and choosing you to be His people, you know that the reason you were recently exiled into both Assyria and Babylon was due to the fact that you and your people rejected God by disobeying His commands. You now hear God's law read aloud and repent. God has given you a second chance.

How will you do things differently moving forward?

#### **Read Nehemiah 10 and answer the following questions:**

1. Though many people are listed in the opening verses of chapter 10, to what groups do these people belong? *Note: Nehemiah is called the governor, and there are three other specific categories.*
2. What is significant about the leaders making an oath to be obedient? Why is godly leadership important?
3. In addition to the leaders, who else takes the oath to obey God's commands (10:28-29)?
4. Why should repentance and obedience be corporate acts as well as individual acts? Why are both corporate and individual repentance and obedience necessary and good?
5. What do the people commit to do with regard to:
  - Marriage (10:30)?
  - How they spend their time (10:31)?
  - How they spend their money (10:32-39)?
6. Why is it important for the Israelites not to intermarry with pagans (Exod. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:1-4)?

7. Why is the observation of a Sabbath rest important to observe faithfully (Deut. 5:12-15)?

8. What phrase is repeated in Nehemiah 10:32-39 to emphasize why the Israelites are committing to give their finances? Why is this phrase significant in light of the fact that it was torn down during the exile?

9. The Israelites turn repentance into action by committing to change the way they handle relationships, time and money. Which of these areas in your life needs to be impacted by repentance and change? Note a specific change you can make in each area.

10. What final thought closes out the covenant at the end of chapter 10? The neglect of God's house brings ridicule upon the Jews. Rewrite this statement as a positive commitment. What is the implied "we will"? What can you do personally to fulfill this "we will" statement?

### **Closing Prayer**

*Heavenly Father, I so often neglect the house of my God by spending my energies on my own concerns and by acting in ways that discredit Your grace. I confess my sin to You and ask You to alter how I treat my relationships, my time and my resources. Use them for Your glory so that Your house and Name might be great among the people of the earth. Amen.*

# SESSION 8

## NAMES AND OBLIGATIONS

### Nehemiah 10 / group Study

#### **Answer the following questions:**

1. What thoughts do you have based upon this week's personal study?
2. What stood out to you? What challenged you? What prompted questions?

#### **Read Nehemiah 10 and answer the following questions:**

3. The names and groups of people listed as affirming the covenant represent a unity of purpose across all levels of Jewish society. What is the link between corporate repentance and unity within the body? How does repentance set the stage for unity?
4. How is repentance linked to obedience in chapter 10? How is this link evident in your own life? Share an example.
5. Israel covenants to not intermarry with pagans to protect against adopting pagan practices (10:30). Is this still a valuable concept? How do we reconcile the Old Testament commands to be separate from unbelievers with the New Testament example of Jesus seeking out the company of unbelievers (see Luke 5:27-32)?
6. Israel renews its commitment to observing Sabbath rest (10:31). What activities or commitments are most likely to interfere with your obedience to observing regular periods of rest? What wrong thinking does an inability to cease from our labours reveal?
7. Israel covenants to not neglect the house of God with their finances (10:32-39). Why do we sometimes resent giving money to support ministry efforts? How is this resentment a failure to trust God with our finances?
8. Read John 14:21-24. How is obedience linked to loving Jesus in this passage? Is it possible to love Jesus and not obey Him? Explain.
9. What action do you need to take in your life in response to the words of Nehemiah 10?

**Guide to Prayer**

- Confess and repent of places in your life where you have failed to follow God's commands.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you delight in obeying God and to help you realize that God's commands lead to greater joy. Ask Him to protect you from legalism as you seek to be obedient.
- Pray for true repentance which includes not only being sorry for your sin but also a commitment to put that sin to death and a desire to respond in obedience.

# LEADER GUIDE

## SESSION 8

### **Names and Obligations** / Nehemiah 10

1. *Personal response*

2. *Personal response*

3. *This chapter is pointing out that the leaders of Israel and those who define the nation as a whole – the governor, priests, Levites and the leaders of tribes – are those repenting. It shows that corporate and individual repentance go together. Corporate repentance is a general acknowledgment of humility. We are never more willing to work together than when we are all keenly aware of our need for God and others.*

4. *The Israelites who were previously exiled because of their sin and idolatry have repented and are committing again to following the Lord. Repentance involves being obedient, not just feeling “sorry.”*

5. *There is a distinction between missional living and communal living. We can strategically reach out to those who are lost without giving them unlimited access to our lives that could result in a negative influence. In all our relationships with unbelievers, it is wise to periodically ask ourselves who is influencing whom.*

6. *The wrong thinking behind an inability to cease activity is usually self-reliance and self-sufficiency: “If I stop doing x the world will stop turning. I am indispensable in my role as x.” The point of Sabbath rest is to acknowledge that only God is self-reliant and self-sufficient. Everything relies on Him to create and sustain.*

7. *We may resent giving our finances because we want to specify how they are used. We sometimes believe that by giving to ministry we have earned a say in how it is run. In this, we fail to trust God with our finances, operating out of the wrong belief that they are ours – ours to control as we see fit, even after we have given them away.*

8. *One who truly loves Jesus obeys His commands out of the overflow of the heart. It is not possible to truly love Jesus and not obey Him. A person can love Jesus and fall into sin but continual, unrepentant sin is evidence that one does not love Jesus, no matter what they say.*

9. *Personal response*