

# LG | LeaderGuide

[Nehemiah 1:1-4]

## WARM-UP (10 mins)

**Prepare our minds to receive God's word.**

- How was everyone's week? [Does everyone know each other? Any introductions needed?]
- Anything new in your lives'? Are there any burdens we need to pray for or victories we can celebrate together?
- When reflecting on the message this past Sunday, what most resonated with you?

## PRAY

**Pause. Acknowledge that you are about to open God's word.**

[Pray for any burdens that have surfaced in conversation and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate His word during your time of study.]

## ILLUMINATE

**Open your Bibles to the primary text. If you do not have a Bible, your leader can provide one.**

1. Prior to us growing deeper in our knowledge of this book, what is your current understanding and experience with this book?

For many of us, we may have been introduced to this book at previous churches where a building project was a focus or maybe the teaching was highlighting Nehemiah's leadership principles. No wrong answer here, just gauging understanding before we launch!

2. Read Romans 15:4-5. Why are these verses so important for us today?

The Old Testament was the foundation from which all of scripture derived. Paul is emphasizing once again that we must pay close attention to the Old Testament Scriptures because they are for our instruction and encouragement that we might have hope. The Old Testament is not to be tossed to the side because it is old. It was prized by Jesus so it should be prized by us.

3. After reading the opening verses of Nehemiah (1-4), where are we at in the history of Israel? What are these foreign terms like Chislev, Susa, and "the exile"?

We find ourselves in the book of Nehemiah when the Babylonians have overthrown Judah, destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, and Persia has now come to power. By the favor of the Lord, the Persian

kings have allowed many of the exiles to return to Jerusalem to rebuild its ruins. Nehemiah is the tail end of this construction, following Zerubbabel and Ezra. **Terms:** Part of gaining a deeper understanding of the Bible is stopping and taking the time to look up terms. A study bible or commentary can help us with this. In the Hebrew calendar, Chislev corresponds to the months of November/December. Susa was the king of Persia's winter residence. "The exile" refers to the 70 years of exile of Judah and Jerusalem due to the Babylonians conquering their territory (600-530 B.C).

4. When and how did the wall of Jerusalem become destroyed? Where in the Bible can we read about this historical event?

In Ezra 4, we read that those who opposed the rebuilding of the temple wall wrote a letter to king Artaxerxes requesting the temple wall constructed be stopped because the city ultimately will not benefit the king and will cause harm. The king's response to this letter was to order the temple construction to cease. Those who were opposed delivered this message with "force" to those rebuilding the temple (likely destroying the wall).

5. Nehemiah's response in verse 4 was one of great sorrow and mourning. What was Nehemiah's connection to Jerusalem? Why did he have this type of reaction?

Nehemiah was far removed from the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C., but it was plain to see that he had a burning passion for the Lord. His genuine concern for God's people and deep rooted desire to honor God led him to weep, mourn, and fast upon hearing the news of the current state of Jerusalem.

6. How does Nehemiah's reaction instruct us on how we should respond in the face of terrible news, specifically Christian hardships/persecution? How can we become more sensitive to these events? Nehemiah displays that his place of refuge was in the Lord. Immediately upon receiving the news, he sat down and began fasting and praying before the Lord. Sensitivities to these types of hardships today only occur when we invest ourselves in them (taking the time to read, learn, and care about those who are hurting for the sake of Christ).

7. Nehemiah's response was a reflection of his habits. How do we begin to cultivate a life that is prayer dependent? Give examples of what this looks like in your daily life.

Prayer is birthed by the Holy Spirit and is fueled by the word of God. Time with the Lord and time in God's word intensifies a believer's desire to pray. Establishing daily times of prayer begins with identifying recurring moments where prayer can happen; in the shower, driving to work, before meetings, lunch breaks, during exercise, etc. When you have daily triggers that promote prayer, you develop a deep relationship with the Lord and it becomes your natural reaction in times of need.

## **PRAY**

**Use this time to pray specifically. What does tonight's conversation lead you to pray for?**