

LG | LeaderGuide

[Nehemiah 1:4-11]

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?

ILLUMINATE

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

1. Using what we have learned, who can give a brief history of Israel up to this point in Nehemiah in 1-2 minutes?

Events to consider: United Kingdom, Divided Kingdom, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Edict of Cyrus, etc.

2. Read our primary text. In Nehemiah's prayer, he describes himself as a God's servant. Why is this significant or worthy of note?

Nehemiah was the cupbearer to king Artaxerxes, essentially he was the most loyal and trusted servant. By him saying to the Lord that he was His servant, he was acknowledging that being a servant of God was paramount to being a servant of the king.

3. How does Nehemiah structure his prayer to the Lord? How does this instruct our praying?

In many ways, his prayer contains many elements of the Lord's Prayer. Nehemiah begins with acknowledging who God is, he spends time in confession not just for himself but for others, and he quotes scripture back to the Lord. Ultimately, he requests that the will of the Lord be done.

4. Read together Nehemiah 1:8-9. Now read together Deuteronomy 4:25-31 and Leviticus 26:40-42.

What essentially was Nehemiah saying in this opening chapter? Where does Nehemiah see himself in the history of Israel?

Nehemiah is displaying his understanding of Scripture and God's promises. Essentially he is acknowledging the sins of the people, both past and present, and is spiritually surrendering to the

Lord so that God might hear his prayer and allow God's people to return to their land and for God's "name to dwell there." [God has always desired for His presence to be with His people. He has not changed in this regard. However, he does require holiness and obedience for this to happen]. Nehemiah finds himself in the period of history where God fulfilled his promise of judgment to scatter his people, but is now looking towards God's promise of restoration if the "peoples will return to him and keep his commandments."

5. Given Nehemiah's prayer and his position as cupbearer to the king, how do you think Nehemiah views God?

Nehemiah has an extraordinary view of God. He is asking and believing for God to move monumental hurdles to re-gather His people in this "New Exodus." King Artaxerxes, which is Nehemiah's boss, has already put a stop order on the rebuilding of the wall (Ezra 4:23).

Nehemiah's request through prayer is asking for a king's heart to be shifted. If things do not go in his favor, it could cost Nehemiah his life.

6. Many would describe Nehemiah as simply a "wall builder." After reading chapter 1, how would you describe him?

Nehemiah is a student of God's word, as displayed by his recitation and recollection of scripture in his prayer. He loves the Lord and wholeheartedly believes that God will restore His people, for His glory. He is not scared of what might be, rather, he trusts the Lord to do the miraculous, which includes changing the heart of a king with a prayer.

7. Nehemiah asks God if his ear would be "attentive to the prayer of his servants and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name." What do you think it means to "delight to fear your name?" Do you find yourself having this type of delight in the Lord?

Fearing God's name is to fear God Himself (divine reverence). To delight in this is to find joy that God is God and we are not...that God is in full control and we are not...and that God's ways are higher than our ways.

PRAY

Use this time to pray specifically. What does tonight's conversation lead you to pray for? What burdens have been presented in conversation?