

LG | LeaderGuide

[Nehemiah 5]

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 (40 mins)

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

1. Read our primary text. What appears to be happening in Nehemiah chapter 5? What is the outcry of the people?

It appears that the work on the wall has taken the people away from being able to work in their own fields. Because of this, they have allowed others to work in their fields in exchange for grain so that they can feed their families. The other problem is, the king is continuing to charge his tax on the produce of those fields even though they are unable to work in them. In addition to mortgaging their fields, these families are selling their children into debt-slavery to survive. The people are struggling to survive and have brought their concerns to Nehemiah.

2. What is Nehemiah's response to the people? At the root, why is Nehemiah so angry? Someone read Deuteronomy 23:19-20.

Nehemiah was extremely upset. He was so upset that he had to "take counsel with himself" to gain his composure. The people were violating the Torah in "exacting interest, each from his brother" (Exodus 22:12-27, Leviticus 25:35-54). The Jewish people of wealth are primarily concerned with themselves and have not considered the effect of their dealings with their brothers.

3. We are not under the Mosaic Covenant, which means we are not under the ordinances in the Torah of Moses in regard to money. How does the whole of Scripture counsel us? See below:

- a. The Lord brings poverty and gives wealth - (1 Sam 2:7)
- b. The earth and everything in it...belongs to the Lord - (Ps 24:1)
- c. The one who oppresses the poor person insults his Maker, but the one who is kind to the needy honors Him" - (Prov 14:31)
- d. Go to the ant, you slacker! Observe its ways and become wise...it prepares its provisions in summer; it gathers its food during harvest - (Prov. 6:6,8)
- e. Paul calls the Corinthians to the spiritual discipline of giving as the Lord prospers them - (1 Cor. 16:1), as each decides in his heart, under no compulsion, for God loves cheerful givers - (2 Cor 9:7)

4. Read Nehemiah 5:9-10. Do you fear God in the way you deal with your money? How do you think you do on regulating your finances according to God's instruction in the Bible?

[Reflection/Discussion]

5. What was Nehemiah's new role as appointed by King Artaxerxes? How long did he have this role? What actions did Nehemiah take to care for the people as their Governor? Why did he make these decisions?

King Artaxerxes appointed Nehemiah to be Governor in the land of Judah for 12 years. It was customary that the governor accept/demand food allowances from the people; lavish amounts of food, wine and even silver. Nehemiah refused to put this burden on the people for 12 years. He made these decisions because ultimately, he feared the Lord.

6. Nehemiah provided for himself for 12 years while Governor of Judah. We continue to get a more accurate picture of the person of Nehemiah. What else have we learned about him in this chapter?

Nehemiah was extremely wealthy. At his expense, he was able to feed 150 men every day for 12 years. This daily meal included 1 ox, 6 sheep, birds, and wine in abundance. Even though there was great disparity in the nation, Nehemiah made provisions for the poor, but did not neglect the blessing of God. He lived in abundance and was generous to others in his abundance.

PRAY

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