

# youthESource Bible Study

## Nehemiah

by Bo Chapman

### Opening Thoughts/Questions

(Because of the nature of the following two questions, leaders may want to share a personal story first and/or reword the questions to fit within the context of their particular group).

1. Share a time in your life when something happened to you or someone close to you that really broke your heart?
2. How did you personally handle the situation?

### In The Word

Nehemiah had received some disheartening news in regard to the state of Jerusalem and those of the Israelites who were left behind after the rest of the people were carried off into exile by the Babylonians. The city was in ruins and the remnant that remained were very vulnerable to the surrounding nations. They were in trouble.

This news broke Nehemiah's heart because this was his country, his people who were suffering and in peril. It was also a reminder to him of the continued unfaithfulness of his people that led to the situation that they now faced. The news of the condition of the city and the remnant that remained brought Nehemiah to his knees.

Read Nehemiah 1:4-11.

What are some key items that you pick up from Nehemiah's prayer?

1. Nehemiah understands the power of prayer and to whom he is presenting his petitions. He trusts in the power, love and faithfulness of his Lord.
2. Nehemiah confesses not only the sin of his people, but also his own sins. He correctly points out that they have acted in disobedience to God's command and are thereby deserving of the punishment that they are receiving.
3. Nehemiah also "reminds" God of the promises He had made to His people—a promise to restore them to their land, no matter where they may be, if they would be faithful to God's command.

What are some other key items that you noticed in Nehemiah's prayer?

As noted in verse 6, Nehemiah was praying day and night for the restoration of his people. Finally, four months after receiving the news of the dilemma that the remnant found themselves in, Nehemiah had the opportunity to present his request before the king.

Read Nehemiah 2:1-6.

There was a danger in approaching the king with a rejected look. Whatever your personal issues, servants in the king's presence were always to be "on their game." In addition, Nehemiah was asking for something huge. Some could consider his request to be a backhanded condemnation as to the way that this ruling family had handled the situation in Jerusalem.

Regardless of the potential danger, Nehemiah took the opportunity to make his request and the king responded in the affirmative. Not only that, he also granted Nehemiah's request for letters to allow for safe-conduct through the region and supplies for his rebuilding program.

Was Nehemiah taking a risk in making his request?

Would God still be good and faithful if the king had denied Nehemiah's request?

What are some practical applications that we can take away from Nehemiah in regards to how we pray, what we pray for and then our actions after we pray?

## **Closing Thoughts**

Most, if not all, of us have had situations in our lives that just broke our hearts. We find ourselves on our knees praying for hope, healing or maybe that the situation would be completely different.

Nehemiah was well aware of his past and the past of his people that led them to the predicament that they were in. He also knew that his God remained true to His promises, loved His children and never stopped being involved in their lives, whether in Jerusalem or in exile. God never left them!

Knowing this about God gives us comfort and reassurance that we can go before Him 24/7 and present the things that are on our heart, the celebrations and the struggles. God loves His children and He is active in answering prayer—maybe not always the way we had hoped for or in our timing—but He is always answering prayer.

Share this verse and end in a time of prayer:

Phillipians 4:4-7: Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.