Harvester Christian Church

Life Groups | **PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**

NEHEMIAH | RETURN, RESTORE, REVIVE

**WEEK 6 – Chapter 8**

Remember that in Nehemiah 6 the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem had come to an end, completed in 52 days. By the time we get to chapter 8, the story is now more about God rebuilding His people. We will observe this week that God’s people in Jerusalem recommitted themselves to the Word of God (Law of Moses) and also renewed their celebration of one of the major yearly fests as commanded by God in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 23). We will be returning to a detailed discussion of the major Jewish feasts at another time. For this week our attention will be on how the reading of God’s Word touched the hearts of His people.

**Please Read Nehemiah 8**

Who was it that read the Law of Moses to the people (8:2)?

How are the people who gathered to hear the Word described (8:2-3)?

What do you think that means, given that we are told the scriptures had to be explained to them (8:8)?

How long did Ezra read from the Law on that first day (8:3)?

For how many days did that continue (8:18)?

What sign of respect for the Word of God did the people show when Ezra opened the book (8:5)?

When Ezra praised the Lord, how did the people respond (8:6)?

Nehemiah instructed the people to celebrate, and they did. What was the reason for their joy (8:12)?

**Understanding the Word of God**

God’s Word was read aloud in Jerusalem, but the people didn’t really understand it until someone explained the meaning to them. That is true for most of us when we are just starting our walk with the Lord. But we are not meant to stay in that place of ignorance. God wants us to grow in our understanding of His Word so we can even share it with others and explain it to them.

**Please read the following scriptures** and answer some questions related to reading, studying, loving, and understanding the Word of God.

In **Psalm 119:9-16**, how would you describe the Psalmist’s relationship with God’s Word? What are some things he did to live his life according to God’s Law?

What happens when some people hear the Word of God but don’t understand it in **Matthew 13:18-19**?

In **Acts 8:31**, when the Ethiopian was asked if he understood what he was reading in Isaiah, how did he respond?

For what practice did Paul applaud the Bereans in **Acts 17:11**?

What does **2 Timothy 2:15** say in regard to how we should handle the Word?

What does **Hebrews 5:11-12** say about some long-time believers who still weren’t “getting it”?

**Weekly Challenge**

Being a disciple of Jesus is mostly about discovering truth in God’s Word, figuring out how to apply it to our lives, and then sharing that truth with others. Think about one truth that you have recently learned in God’s Word. Who will you share that with this week? If no one comes immediately to mind, ask God to give you an opportunity this week to share and the boldness to actually do it when the opportunity comes your way.

**Group Discussion**

The writer of Psalm 119 spoke of his delight in the Law of the Lord. What is one particular part of the Bible (a verse, chapter, or book) for which you have special fondness and why? (It’s ok to say “I’m not sure.”)

Where do you see yourself in this story told in Nehemiah 8? Would you be among those listening to learn more about God’s Word or among those explaining it to others?

Why was it important for God’s people to recommit themselves to God’s Word once the walls were rebuilt?

What about the trajectory of your life in regard to time spent in God’s Word? Please share an example of how you are growing in that discipline or maybe of how you have been lacking in it.

Please share about anything you have found to be helpful in terms of reading and understanding God’s Word (a Bible reading plan, using a study Bible, listening to the Bible as you drive, etc.).

Was there anything else you wanted to discuss from this week’s lesson?