Harvester Christian Church

Life Groups | **PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**

NEHEMIAH | RETURN, RESTORE, REVIVE

**WEEK 5 – Chapter 5**

Up until point in our study we have examined Nehemiah primarily as a man of faith and a motivational leader. This week we learn that he was also a governor in the land of Judah (5:14). We will learn a lot in chapter 5 about the way in which he governed and the special care he showed to those in need.

**Please read Nehemiah 5.**

**The complaints of the poor (5:1-5)**

We have seen all through our story to this point how Nehemiah handled outside opposition to the building project in Jerusalem. This week we see him dealing with controversy that arises from within as some of the Jews were having a hard time keeping their families fed.

What two factors were contributing to the lack of food in verses 3 and 4?

What drastic measures had some of them already taken in verse 5?

**Nehemiah’s response (5:6-13)**

Nehemiah was very angry when he heard about the plight of the people, and he lashed out against the other officials, telling them the exacting of usury (charging unreasonably high interest rates) must stop. Read and summarize these verses from the Law of Moses about this practice.

Exodus 22:25-27

Leviticus 25:35-38

What response did Nehemiah demand of the officials in 5:11?

How did they respond in verse 12?

**Nehemiah’s example (5:14-19)**

The chronology here is tricky. We know the rebuilding of the walls took 52 days (6:15), and yet Nehemiah says that for this period of 12 years as governor in the land of Judah, neither he nor his brothers ate the food allotted to the governor (5:14). For that reason, this statement is taken as retrospective in nature.

Nehemiah mentions previous governors who placed heavy burdens on the people for the sake of their own luxury. What reason did Nehemiah give for conducting himself differently in verse 15?

What reason does Nehemiah give for not demanding the food allotted to the governor in verse 18?

**God’s concern for the poor**

Please read and summarize these additional passages that display God’s concern for the poor.

I Samuel 2:8

Psalm 82:3-4

Proverbs 14:13

Proverbs 19:17

I Timothy 6:17-19

James 2:14-17

I John 3:17-19

**Weekly Challenge**

The challenge this week is to pray about the people we may see or interact with on a regular basis who are having a hard time getting by. Who do you know that is struggling? As you pray, who is it that God is bringing to your mind? As you pray for and about them, ask God what, if anything, He might want you to do for them. Be prepared to talk about your experiences with the group next week.

**Group Discussion**

The Bible is packed with passages about poor people: How God feels about them, how we are to treat them, etc. Why do you think that is?

When it comes to helping the less fortunate, who do you think is primarily responsible: Individuals, churches, or the government? (Let’s be kind to one another as we discuss this sensitive topic!)

Nehemiah sacrificed some of his privileges in order to help others. Who do you know that does the same type of thing?

Who do you know that could use a hand over the next few months? What kind of help would be most beneficial to them?

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