Harvester Christian Church

Life Groups | **PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**

NEHEMIAH | RETURN, RESTORE, REVIVE

**WEEK 7 – Chapter 9**

After the public reading of the Law of Moses in chapter 8, Nehemiah told the people not to grieve but to celebrate. In fact, they spent a whole week celebrating the Feast of Booths and we are told “…their joy was very great” (Nehemiah 8:17). The next chapter has a very different feel to it as God’s people turn their attention toward confession of sin and repentance.

**Please read Nehemiah 9.**

The feast of chapter 8 turns into a fast in 9:1. Utilizing some of the tools we’ve used in the past, what do you learn about the purpose of fasting or the meaning of wearing sackcloth? (Look for information on BibleGateway.com, the Vines Expository Dictionary app, or consult the notes in your study Bible.)

What follows is a time of confession. What two things did the whole Israelite community confess in 9:2?

Confession is a beautiful thing. Forgiveness, healing, and restoration can come about when we are willing to admit to God and to others that we have sinned. Please read the following scriptures and answer a few questions about confession.

* Whose confession is recorded in **Psalm 51** and to what does it pertain?
* After his confession, what does he ask God to create in 51:10?
* What does he ask God to restore in 51:12?
* What did God want from him instead of sacrifices in 51:16-17?
* What was the result of the Psalmist’s confession in **Psalm 32:5**?
* What, besides forgiveness, is tied to confession of sin in **James 5:16**?

Most of what is recorded in Nehemiah 9 is a prayer of repentance and confession to God offered by the entire Israelite community. As you read the prayer (9:5-37), pay close attention to the actions of God and the actions of His people. Summarize each in the columns below.

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| The Acts of God | The Acts of God’s People |

**Weekly Challenge**

Confessing sin to God is a major theme of Nehemiah 9 and an important aspect of our ongoing relationship with Him today. Admitting our faults and shortcomings to the people with whom we regularly interact is also a sign of Christian maturity. Who is it in your world that deserves and apology or an explanation? Who have you offended or disappointed that would love to hear you say “It was my fault,” “I’m sorry,” and “Please forgive me”? Make it a point to do that this week and consider sharing that experience with your group when you meet for discussion.

**Group Discussion**

If someone only had this chapter (Nehemiah 9) to learn about God and man, what would they learn?

The people of Israel had moments of clarity when they realized that much of their pain and suffering was directly related to their disobedience and rebellion. Where have you seen an example of that in your own life?

Learning from our mistakes is a sign of growth and maturity. Where have you seen an example of that in your life?

This chapter is largely about confession of sin and wrongdoing. Why is the ability to admit when you are wrong so important? Why is it so difficult?

With whom can you be completely honest with no pretense of being better than you are and no fear of judgment in return?

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