

Nehemiah: freenotfree
Week 6 – freedom comes from giving

Transition: The rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem has been completed. Nehemiah has faced every adversity with courage, godliness, determination, and unwavering faith in the Lord. Since the project for which he came to Jerusalem is completed, we might think that Nehemiah would head back to his position as the king's cupbearer as he had promised. But that is not the case; there is more work to be done.

Context: This week we are going to do something a bit different. So far in our study of Nehemiah, we have worked our way through it chapter by chapter (with one exception). Today, we're going to look at one particular subject that appears throughout the book, namely, the idea of giving. As with any project, costs are incurred. When it comes to giving for the Lord's work, Nehemiah, is once again a brilliant example of how a person of God ought to give. As we consider how to apply giving principles into our lives today, we will also consult what the Apostle Paul taught.

Opening Question:

- Describe a time when someone was generous to you. (It doesn't necessarily have to be about money.) What impact did it have on you?
- Do you believe that giving monetarily is a reliable indicator for assessing spiritual maturity? Why or why not?

Scripture/Storying: Nehemiah 5:14-19, 7:70-72, 10:32-39, 13:10-14; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, 9:1-15

Discipleship Questions:

- In the Nehemiah passages, what did you learn about giving? (Keep in mind that because this is a narrative, generally, it is *descriptive* and not *prescriptive*. Also, what was written to the people of Israel may not apply to Christians today.)
- Would you describe yourself as generous? (...if so, on what basis?) What do you think it takes to be truly generous? What are some of the obstacles you face for being more generous?
- Skim through 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. What are the giving principles that Paul mentions? Write them down. Which principle(s) speak to you today? What is God leading you to believe and/or do as a result?
- Skim through 2 Corinthians 9:1-15, what are the giving principles that Paul mentions? Write them down. Which principle(s) speak to you today? What is God leading you to believe and/or do as a result?
- In what ways is giving similar between what the people of Israel practiced in the Old Testament (as mentioned in Nehemiah) and what Paul teaches to Christians in the New Testament (as mentioned in 2 Corinthians)? In what ways is it different?
- Think through as a group what role giving plays in fulfilling the Great Commission. Where do you see yourself fitting in?
- What is God leading you to do in the practice of your giving?

Prayer time: Pray for clarity in hearing from the Lord about your giving to Him.