

The Book of NEHEMIAH
Chapter 12
“Dedication Celebration!”

> **There are three keys to a *Dedication Celebration* (personal or corporate) –**

1ST KEY - THANKSGIVING TO GOD! (v1-26)

- **Psalms of Thanksgiving – Psalm 100, 107, 118, 136 (Neh 12:24 - who stood opposite them to give praise and thanksgiving, one section responding to the other, as prescribed by David the man of God.)**

Observation: *The grounds of praise.* - Sometimes God is praised for His inherent qualities. His majesty (Ps 104:1) or holiness (Isa 6:3) fills the mind, and He is "glorified as God" (Rom 1:21) in view of what He essentially is. More frequently He is praised for His works in creation, providence, and redemption.

The duty of praise. - Praise is everywhere represented in the Bible as a duty no less than a natural impulse and a delight. To fail in this duty is to withhold from God's glory that belongs to Him (Ps 50:23; Rom 1:20 f); it is to shut one's eyes to the signs of His presence (Isa 40:26 ff), to be forgetful of His mercies (Deut 6:12), and unthankful for His kindness (Luke 6:35). If we are not to fall into these sins, but are to give to God the honor and glory and gratitude we owe Him, we must earnestly cultivate the spirit and habit of praise. From holy men of old we learn that this may be done by arousing the soul from its slothfulness and sluggishness (Ps 57:8; 103:1), by fixing the heart upon God (57:7; 108:1), by meditation on His works and ways (77:11 ff), by recounting His benefits (103:2), above all, for those to whom He has spoken in His Son, by dwelling upon His unspeakable gift (2 Cor 9:15; compare Rom 8:31 ff; 1 John 3:1). (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)
Observe the power of praise – Acts 16:22-34 (Paul & Silas)

2ND KEY – WORSHIP OF GOD! (v27-30)

The worship of God comes through:

- **Fellowship - Hebrews 10:24-25** - *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

- **Singing - Ephesians 5:17-21** - *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.* (Side note: This verse leads into a teaching regarding husbands and wives and their marriage.)

- **Purification** - The outward purification with water, symbolizing man's need of inward purity before admission into God's presence. Jesus taught on inward purity in **Mark 7:14-23 (Holiness always precedes happiness!)**

3RD KEY – REJOICING IN GOD! (v31-43)

(v31) Notice the leaders are “on the wall” and not “off the wall.” “Off the wall” leadership is detached from the work and the people, whereas “on the wall” leadership are those who are one with the work of God, the people of God, and they ‘re always on the watch maintaining the safety and security of the body Christ. Jesus said in **John 10:11-15** - *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own."*

(v32-43) “God had made them rejoice with great joy” – Are you a joyful Christian? Are you a joyful leader? Yes or Yes (Circle the answer). Let’s get wisdom from Proverbs - Prov 15:13 - A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken. Prov 17:22 - A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones. J. Oswald Sanders writes in his book *Spiritual Leadership*, “Our sense of humor is a gift from God which should be controlled as well as cultivated. Clean, wholesome humor will relax tension and relieve difficult situations. Leaders can use it to displace tension with a sense of the normal.”

Chuck Swindoll challenges us with the following comments, “Do you bring joy to those you lead? Is your leadership marked by a good sense of humor? I know of few things more magnetic than a smile or a cheerful disposition, especially among those in God’s work. How easy it is to become intense, severe, and even oppressive! The people under Nehemiah’s leadership felt free to rejoice and laugh. Do the people who are under your leadership feel that freedom? How about your children? The Jews laughed on the wall as they rejoiced over God’s provision. They sang together, and their joy flooded the hillside so all could hear and be glad. Had their circumstances changed? **No, they had changed.** Have you?”

How to maintain joy? Perpetual practice - 1 Thess 5:16-18 - *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* The secret to the fullness of joy is found in **John 15:7-14.** Life’s lesson is to “abide in Him, His word, pray, & love one another!”