

# NEHEMIAH: Chapters 11-12

Week 7 | Jill Snodgrass

## Building and Battling for God's Kingdom (Part 2)

*Giving God all of ourselves, all for His glory.*

Nehemiah is still working hard to serve the Lord and unite and revive his people spiritually. Just because the wall has been completed, doesn't mean that his mission is done.

As we battle and work for the Lord in this life, we quickly realize that the Christian life is not easy. It is a battle as Paul tells us in 1 Timothy that we are to fight the good fight of the faith.

Surprisingly, the most difficult thing to overcome has nothing to do with anything or anyone out there, but has everything to do with what lies in us—a selfish and deceitful heart. More often than not, the battle we face is against ourselves.

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him.* Romans 12:1

When we truly grasp what Jesus did for us on the cross, the surrendering of ourselves will not seem like a sacrifice or a loss, but a privilege to give. Just as Jesus willingly gave Himself for us, we will willingly do the same for Him.

Yes, working for God is important but the most important of all is the posture of our hearts while doing the work.

The wall of the city has been restored, but no one really wants to live there due to it being a dangerous and difficult place to live.

But Nehemiah knew that God's holy city needed God's people living in it.

"*God had brought the remnant back home because He had a special job for them to do, and to abandon the restored city was to obstruct the working out of God's will through Israel*."
—Warren Wiersbe

**I. COMPLETELY SURRENDER OURSELVES**

This means our heart, soul, mind, and body.

**A. Willingly go where God wants you to be**

Even though there was a lot at stake for the people to move back into the city of Jerusalem, some went willingly on their own free will. By willingly choosing to give themselves to Jerusalem, they were placing God's agenda above their own. Their decision proved their devotion.

But still others, 10 percent of the population, were forced by the hand of God through the drawing of sacred lots to move back to the city.

Chapter 11 verses 3-24 lists those who lived in Jerusalem. The first ones mentioned are from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. These men were not just willing to sacrifice their livelihoods for God, but were willing to risk their lives to do His will.

In verses 25-36 are those who lived in the villages outside Jerusalem followed by the list of priest and then the Levites in chapter 12 verses 1-36.

All of these names give an implication to the roles and jobs they had in doing the work of God and living for Him, and also contain a richer, deeper meaning,

These lists prove them to be true Israelites, descendants of Abraham.

**B. Wholeheartedly do what God wants you to do**

The definition of wholeheartedly means with complete sincerity and commitment. This has everything to do with our hearts being in the right place when it comes to living and serving God.

It's an attitude of gratitude that doesn't say I have to do this, because it's what will please God, or fear of the consequence if we don't. No, it's a willing and thankful heart that says I get to, because He's already pleased with me. Jesus' death on a cross forever made us perfect in our Father's eyes.

And since our sins our forgiven we are now called not to live an impure life, but a holy life as Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4: 7. A life, that like these lists here in this chapter reflect right worship and the holiness of God. We the church are to be like these true and pure Israelites understanding God's holiness and our responsibilities as redeemed citizens of heaven, giving God our best.

We are to be holy and set apart by God for worship and we are to also be holy and set apart for His use.

## II. COMPLETELY SURRENDER OUR PRAISE

This joyful dedication consists of two parts. First is a festive walk on top of the wall all the away around the city with two different choirs. One choir was led by Nehemiah and the other by Ezra. Both choirs head out around the wall each going in opposite directions, meeting back together at the temple.

The second part of this celebration service consists of a formal service at the temple where both choirs sang and the priests offered sacrifices.

By them walking around the entire wall they could see that their labor was a group effort. Not one person could single handedly take credit or ownership of it, not even Nehemiah even though he was the leader behind it all. The truth is, the wall belonged to God, and they are proclaiming that day He alone deserves all the glory.

The people offered up their praise joyfully, thankfully, and loudly.

*Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name*. Hebrews 13:15

### A. Singing

As the people marched all around the wall, they sang their praises to God, and their praise was accompanied by the use of instruments. The people are not following the cue of Nehemiah, Ezra, or even the choir director, they all are ultimately following the example given to them through the original leader of this city, King David.

It was David who wrote many of the Psalms they were singing and instituted the use of these instruments in worship. More then likely these were the very same instruments that King David used that were preserved in Babylon during their exile and given back to them upon their release.

It's important to point out that everyone was singing their praises to God, not just the men or the choir, but everyone, including women and children.

Singing praise to God is not meant for certain people, just as it's not meant for certain days of the week. Singing praise to God is meant to be a part of our everyday lives, every day that we live.

**B. Rejoicing**

This points to the heart behind the song. It's praising the Lord with a joyful heart, a praise that swells with enthusiasm out of gratitude for all that He has done.

"*Their joy was spiritual, and not just a hedonistic thing. It was exactly what Paul was to speak of later in writing to the Philippians; "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, "Rejoice*!"—James Montgomery Boice

Knowing that God is sovereign and is for us, should cause us to rejoice in all circumstances, not just the ones that are good and happy. Even in the bad times, there is always something to praise God and be thankful for.

Throughout this dedication service, they are remembering the days of when King David ruled. They remember how they were once a thriving nation because of their reverent fear of God. And they want that back. Spiritual revival is happening. They're putting God back in His rightful place. But sadly this revival didn't take root.

For the city to be revived and strengthen by God that meant they had to be revived first. And that revival needed to be real and rooted.

## III. COMPLETELY SURRENDER OUR GIFTS

**A. Abilities**

The priest and Levites are serving the Lord the way He intended them to serve. They have His seal of approval because they are legitimate through the line of Levi and Aaron, and they are being faithful to minister in the proper way, according to King David and Solomon's orders.

**B. Financially**

The people also pleased the Lord, by gladly bringing their tithes and offerings to support the temple ministry.

It was a time of economic and political crisis. They were unstable financially, yet they were willing to sacrifice to support the worship of God.

When we put God in His rightful place, our hearts will be also, and vice versa.

It's important to know that ourselves (our heart soul, mind, and body) and our gifts (what we give or bring to the Lord, or do for the Lord) are not equal in God's eyes.

When we think about Romans 12: 1 in that our bodies are to be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. It's not the sacrifice itself that makes it pleasing to God, but rather it's obedience from the heart that matters most to Him. Because, this obedience from the heart only happens when we first fully give Him ourselves.

And it's when we fully and willfully give ourselves to Him that from our grateful heart comes the overflow of giving back to Him what is rightly deserving and rightly His.

WEEK 7

# NEHEMIAH: *Chapters 11 & 12*

MANY SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED ON THAT JOYOUS DAY, FOR GOD HAD GIVEN THE PEOPLE CAUSE FOR GREAT JOY. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE CELEBRATION, AND THE JOY OF THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM COULD BE HEARD FAR AWAY.

Nehemiah 12:43 NLT



# Day One

## NEHEMIAH 11

Nehemiah 11:1-19

## GROUNDWORK |

### PRAY | ***Begin your time of study with prayer.***

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

### READ | ***Read the following text for your time of study.***

*Nehemiah 11:1-19*

Write down any key verse(s):

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### OBSERVE | ***Observe what the passage says.***

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

- What is the main idea of this passage?

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- Are there any repeated words or phrases?

- Who are the key people in this passage?

- How was it decided on who would move to the city of Jerusalem?

- What is the importance of this passage?

Write down what you observe from the text:

APPLY | ***Apply it to your life.***

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- What does this passage teach us about God or His character?

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- What does this passage teach us about the importance of doing God's will?

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- What does this passage teach about the importance of making personal sacrifices in order to live for God?

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- What is God speaking to me after reading this passage of Scripture?

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- What changes do I need to make after reading this passage of Scripture?

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Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:

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## BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading?

## FIRM FOUNDATION |

If there was a verse from the passage that spoke to you, pray that verse back to the Lord. Ask Him to specifically recall to your heart and mind anything you just read that He wants to teach you. Write anything He reveals to you below:



# Day Two

## NEHEMIAH 11

Nehemiah 11:20-36

## GROUNDWORK |

### PRAY | ***Begin your time of study with prayer.***

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

### READ | ***Read the following text for your time of study.***

*Nehemiah 11:20-36*

Write down any verse(s):

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### OBSERVE | ***Observe what the passage says.***

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

- What is the main idea of this passage?

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- Are there any repeated words or phrases?

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- Why was it important for the city and nearby villages of Jerusalem to be populated with God's people?

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- What is the importance of this passage?

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Write down what you observe from the text:

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## APPLY | ***Apply it to your life.***

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- What does this passage teach us about God or His character?

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- What does this passage teach about living where God wants you to live?

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- What does this passage teach us about surrendering ourselves to God?

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- What is God asking you to do for the good of His people?

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- What changes do I need to make after reading this passage of Scripture?

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Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:

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## BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading of God's Word?

## FIRM FOUNDATION |

Spend some time in prayer with the Lord. Reflect on how well you live for Him. Ask God to reveal anything that He wants to teach you about completely surrendering to Him. Write anything He reveals to you below:



# Day Three

## NEHEMIAH 12

Nehemiah 12:1-26

## GROUNDWORK |

### PRAY | ***Begin your time of study with prayer.***

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

### READ | ***Read the following text for your time of study.***

*Nehemiah 12:1-26*

Write down any key verse(s) that speak to you:

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### OBSERVE | ***Observe what the passage says.***

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

- What is the main idea of this passage?

  _____

- Are there any repeated words or phrases?

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  _____

- What role did the priests and Levites have?

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- Why was it important they be authentic ancestors of Aaron and Levi?

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- What is the importance of this passage?

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Write down anything else you observe from the text:

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## APPLY | ***Apply it to your life.***

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- What does this passage teach us about God or His character?

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- How does this passage teach us to take God's work seriously and do it diligently?

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- How do these lists reflect the importance of right worship to God?

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- What is God speaking to me after reading this passage of Scripture?

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- What changes do I need to make after reading this passage of Scripture?

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Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:

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## BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading of God's Word?

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## FIRM FOUNDATION |

Spend some time with the Lord in prayer. Reflect on the importance of being holy and set apart by God for worship and being holy and set apart for His use. Ask God to reveal truths in regards to living a holy and pure life for Him. Write anything He reveals to you below:

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# Day Four

## NEHEMIAH 12

Nehemiah 12:27-47

## GROUNDWORK |

### PRAY | ***Begin your time of study with prayer.***

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

### READ | ***Read the following text for your time of study.***

*Nehemiah 12:27-47*

Write down any key verse(s):

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### OBSERVE | ***Observe what the passage says.***

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

- What is the main idea of this passage?

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- Are there any repeated words or phrases?

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- What's the importance of a dedication service, especially for something that's been done for God?

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- What was significant about the manner in which the people made their sacrifice of praise?

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- How did the people sacrifice material things?

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- What changes do I need to make after reading this passage of Scripture?

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Write down what you observe from the text:

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## APPLY | *Apply it to your life.*

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- What does this passage teach us about God or His character?

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- What does this passage teach us about the sacrifice of praise?

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- When is praise a sacrifice for you?

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- What are some ways God has given you cause for great joy?

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- Do you give God your best?

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Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:

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## BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading of God's Word?

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## FIRM FOUNDATION |

Spend a few moments in prayer before the Lord. If there was a verse from the passage that spoke to you, pray that verse back to the Lord. Ask Him to specifically recall to your heart and mind anything you just read that He wants to teach you. Write anything He reveals to you below:

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