



# A QUESTION OF CHARACTER

LESSON 8

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# WORD FOR THE JOURNEY

- **James 1:21-22** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

- Doers: *poietai*: a performer; especially a poet

- Hearers: *akroatai*: those who listen without participation

- **LEARNING GOAL FOR THIS CLASS:**

Learning to hear God and respond to Him in such a way that His purposes can be fulfilled in us

**We play an active role in the renewal of our minds**

**Acknowledging God's sovereignty is**

**key in the process**

# MIND RENEWAL

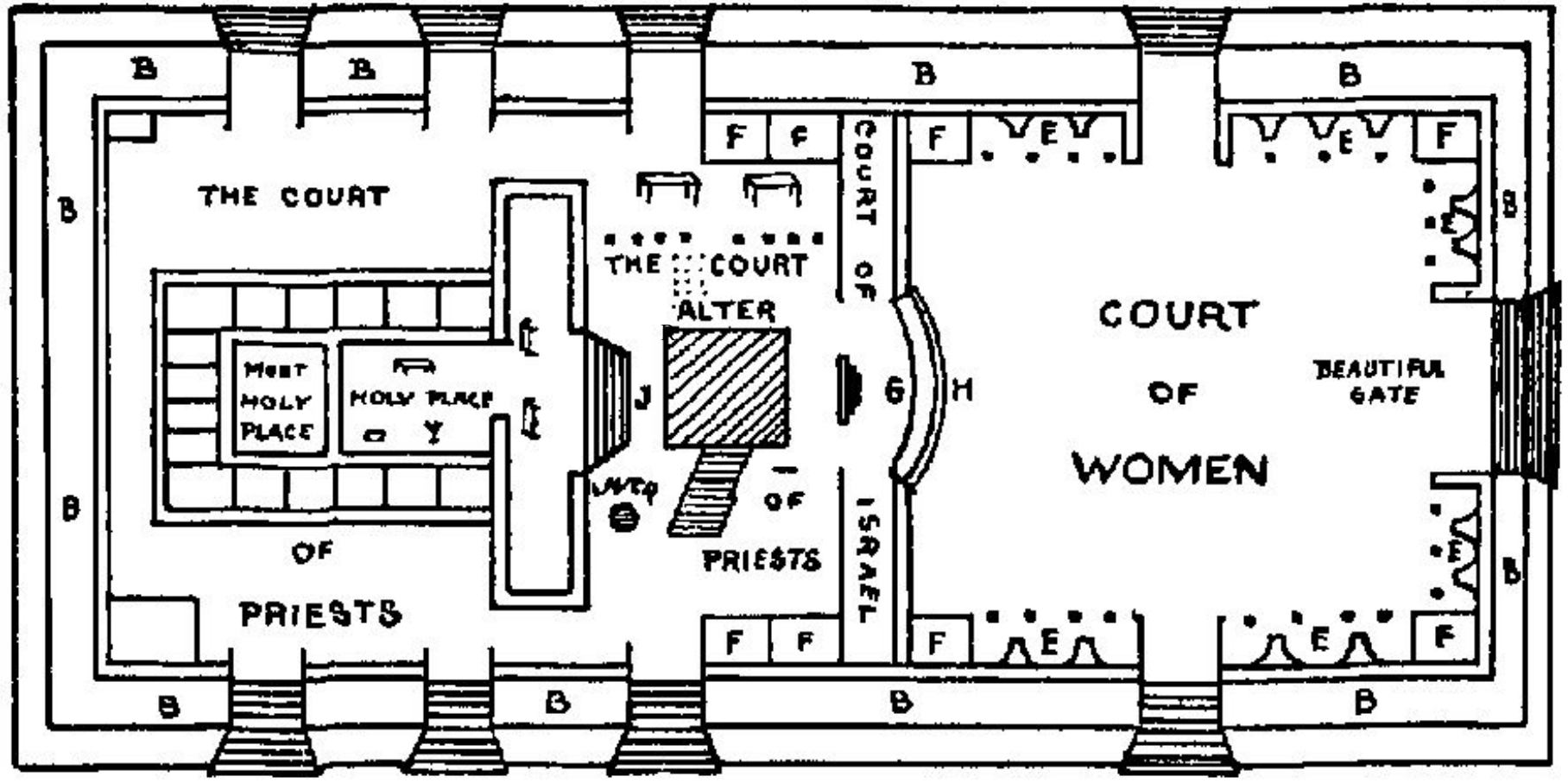
- **Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- Anxious: *merimnao*: overly concerned or worried
- Prayer: *proseuche*: worshipful prayer; usually thought of spoken; usually thought of in chapel or other group setting
- Supplication: *deesis*: making requests, public or private
- Thanksgiving: *eucharestia*: expressing praise to God in a grateful manner, public or private
- Requests: *aitema*: your needs
- **Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- Guard: *phroureo*: a watcher in advance; to post as a

# WHAT IS INVOLVED

## CHANGING OUR FOCUS TO SOMETHING GOOD

- **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.
- True: *alethes*: nothing that has any falsehood
- Honorable: *semnos*: dignified in an honest way
- Right: *dikaios*: righteous; just
- Pure: *hagnos*: innocent; free from sin
- Lovely: *prospheiles*: showing brotherly love
- Good repute: *euphemos*: receiving a good report/reputation
- Excellence: *arete*: virtue; intrinsic worth
- Praiseworthy: *enainos*: commendable

# TEMPLE FLOOR PLAN





# NICANOR (BEAUTIFUL) GATE



# RENEWAL IN ACTION

• **Acts 4:23-29** When they had been released, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.' For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all

# PRAYER ASSUMES GOD'S CONTROL

- If God isn't sovereign, why pray?
- Satan wants us to focus on our past failures, our current problems, or other diversions that he plants in our minds
- God wants us to focus on good things and press on
- **Philippians 3:12-14** Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- **Isaiah 43:25** "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins."



# A GOOD SCREEN SAVER!

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...
- If we could only use human means to fight against the enemy, we would be in big trouble!
- We have the power of the Holy Spirit working in us *dunata to theo*: powerful through God
- Fortresses: *ochuroma*: strongholds, arguments; often those created by faulty logic or incorrect facts
- Speculations: *logismos*: things that people imagine or believe that are not true

# OUTWARD APPEARANCES

- **2 Corinthians 10:7, 10** You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we...For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."
- Focus on accusations or physical appearance? Focus on purpose given by God?
- Satan wants to establish strongholds in our minds; it is our responsibility to stop him with weaponry provided by God
- **1 Samuel 16:7** But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

# HERE I AM; SEND ME

- **Nehemiah 1:1-4** The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped *and* had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. They said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire." When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

- Date: around 444 BC; Ezra has returned 10 years earlier; the first exiles returned around 537 BC; work on temple began in 535 BC but was stopped; finally completed 516 BC; in 445 BC the wall of Jerusalem was still in ruins

# NEHEMIAH'S POSITION

- **Nehemiah 1:11** "O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man." Now I was the cupbearer to the king.
- The cupbearer usually also carried the king's signet ring and was a financial advisor to the king's household
- **Nehemiah 2:1** And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine *was* before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.
- **Nehemiah 2:4-6** Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. I said to the king, "If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

# NEHEMIAH'S SUCCESS

- Nehemiah 3 details those who made repairs to the various gates and wall portions of the city
- When Sanballat became concerned and raised objections, things became dangerous
- **Nehemiah 4:2-3** He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy *men* of Samaria and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore *it* for them-selves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones?" Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* near him and he said, "Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on *it*, he would break their stone wall down!"
- The workers were being demoralized
- The project was being threatened
- The wall was completed while weapons were held in one



# UNDERSTANDING REALITY

- In difficult circumstances, we must seek God's will and think things through with renewed minds so that we see the truth
- **1 Chronicles 5:18-20** The sons of Reuben and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, *consisting* of valiant men, men who bore shield and sword and shot with bow and *were* skillful in battle, *were* 44,760, who went to war. They made war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. They were helped against them, and the Hagrites and all who *were* with them were given into their hand; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him.
- Knowing our part and knowing God's part is crucial
- In critical times, prayer acknowledges our belief in God's sovereignty and our dependence on His agape love
- God's expectation is that we will take responsibility to use the means that God has provided for us