"Affirming Some Covenants Before the Lord (Nehemiah, Part 9)"

Text: Nehemiah 10:1-39

The people of God made four vows/promises in Nehemiah 10. After hearing what God wanted from them and confessing their own persistent rebellion, Nehemiah 9:38 says that the people made "*a sure covenant*" or "*a binding agreement*" to follow the Lord wholeheartedly. The names of those who agreed to this covenant are listed in the first 27 verses of chapter 10. The Bible contains many examples of people who made vows and covenants with God, only to later break them. We probably all have way too many *oath-breaking stories* of our own. And yet, it's still beneficial to make vows. When we make a vow, we are promising to do something specific. And vows give expression to our love. God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, even when we don't keep our end of the deal. We don't succeed as Christians because we *make* promises to God, but rather, because we *believe* the promises of God and act upon them! However, sometimes we have trouble in our walk with God because we never get specific with Him.

One vow worth making is: ***I will submit to God's Word*** (10:29). The people of God were serious in their desire to devote themselves to everything that was spelled out in the Bible. Make up your mind that God will have all of you that there is. A *second* vow worth making is: ***I will be separate from the world*** (10:28, 30). Separation is total devotion to God no matter what the cost. Like the Israelites in Nehemiah 10, we must also separate ourselves *away* from the surrounding peoples and their pagan practices and *unto* God and His Word. Few things can threaten to weaken or destroy one's relationship with God like a wrong, human relationship can. A *third* vow worth making is: ***I will set aside the Lord's Day to rest and honor/worship the Lord*** (10:31). This day is to be different from the other days of the week, so we may offer our worship to the Lord without being distracted by the demands of everyday life. Here's a *fourth* vow worth making: ***I will support God's work*** (10:32-39). In Nehemiah 10:39 the people made a commitment to *not neglect the house of our God*. When we bring our *first fruits* to God's house, we are declaring that God is the Giver of all things, and everything belongs to Him, and He is worthy of the best we can offer Him. Tithing, or giving 10% of our income to God is a great place to start.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Have you asked for forgiveness for any broken promises you have made to God or others?
2. Believe the promises of God and act upon them.
3. When you sense the Spirit's tug, carry out the decisions the Lord wants you to make.
4. Devote yourself fully to everything that is spelled out in the Bible.
5. Don't let a wrong, human relationship come between you and God.
6. Look for ways to keep Sunday special.
7. Don't just give what you don't need; give more than you can spare.