



Unit 9 Guide

SERIES: LESSONS ON THE POWER OF COMBINED EFFORT

Lesson #9: “Joining Together to Share in God’s Wisdom”

Nehemiah 8:1-12

Announcements and opening prayer.



Connect: an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters. **Icebreaker:** Have someone come up front. Have them put both hands up to their eyes. Now have them slowly pull their hands away until they can see the details of their hands clearly. At that point they stop and let everyone see how far they had to back them away from their eyes.

Sometimes we have to step back refocus on what is important. Someone or something has to get our attention to get us to do that. Nehemiah will give us some insight into how this applies spiritually.

The Bottom Line: When God’s people refocus upon His Word, we find ourselves rejoicing in the treasure of His loving hand.

LESSON PLAN

 Denotes “Apply”

Exercise: On a scale of 1–10 (with 1 meaning “I never do that!” and 10 meaning “I do that almost non-stop!”) evaluate your relationship to the written Word of God in the following areas. After you are done, just give me the average number from each table.

- Hearing the Bible preached or taught
- Reading the Scripture
- Studying God’s Word
- Understanding the Bible
- Memorizing the Word of God
- Meditating on Scripture
- Obeying the Word of God
- Teaching God’s truth to others

Read Nehemiah 8:1-3

Background: *The Old Testament Book of Nehemiah details the extraordinary accomplishment of the Jewish people, under the capable leadership of Governor Nehemiah, of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem in only 52 days (chapters 1–6). But the remainder of the book (chapters 7–*

13) tells of an even more significant process—the spiritual renovation of the people who lived behind the walls.

Following the completion of the walls in the face of great opposition (chapters 3–6) and the family “census” of the people of Jerusalem (chapter 7), there is a great “Bible conference,” with Ezra the scribe as the special speaker. At the rebuilt Water Gate, “The Book of the Law of Moses,” most likely the Pentateuch was read. Ezra could certainly have brought back with him the Torah (i.e., the Pentateuch), the first five books of the Old Testament.

The Law was **read and explained** to a great assembly. The initial effect was that the people were convicted and grief-stricken regarding their failure to keep God’s law. But with the help of the Levites, Nehemiah convinced the people of God’s mercy and forgiveness. Consequently a profound sense of joy saturated the people of God. They became excited and celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. The result? Jerusalem was not only a city with an impressive new wall; it was a city populated by people with a new spirit and a new focus to live in the light of God’s Word! It was as if they’ve taken our quiz, and now they are ready to allow God to do “Greater Things!”

⦿ What example does this reading and explaining of the Word of God present to us?

⦿ Is there sincere application without some explanation of Scripture?

We are called to be disciples, students of Jesus. That is the definition of a Christian. If we are students of the Word of our Lord, the Holy Bible, then Spiritual Growth is something we can never take lightly or we will drift slowly away from Christ and swear yet all the time swear He is dear to us.

1. Something unique was created by the rebuilding of the wall and gates that led to finally getting to settle down in their towns. What is this unique thing we see as they all gather together in the square near the water gate?

2. What do the people ask Ezra to do and when did he do it?

Ezra brought the law of the Lord, which he had set his heart to study, practice, and teach to the people. At this time, the law was a scroll, as opposed to a text consisting of bound pages. Such a reading was required every 7 years at the Feast of Tabernacles, even though it had been neglected since the Babylonian captivity until this day. Ezra read and explained the Scripture from daybreak to noon, a period of at 5-6 hours while the people stood and listened.

⦿ What do you think would happen today if your preacher stood up and read and explained the text of God for 5-6 hours?

3. Listening for 30 minutes is not easy. How did the people do with their ability to listen for 5-6 hours?
- ⦿ What do you think we could do to be more excited about hearing, understanding and applying the Word of God to our lives?

Read Nehemiah 8:4-6

4. Let's map out this event:
 - a. Everyone stands as Ezra opens the Scripture to read.
 - b. Ezra opens with praise
 - c. The people respond by lifting their hands and saying "Amen! Amen!"
 - d. The people bowed down and worshiped the Lord with faces to the ground. They were prostrate before their God.

- ⦿ What does this tell you about the heart of worship within these people?

- ⦿ Let's speculate from what we know from the Book of Nehemiah. What do you think Ezra might have said in praise as he opened the Book of the Law of Moses?



Interactive Teaching Ideas: ideas for learner-focused teaching. Ask the class to discuss at each table the following assignment and then share the results from each table: **What can you do as part of the body of Christ, your church, to praise God for on this day?**

Read Nehemiah 8:7-8

5. What are the Levite priests doing after the initial opening by Ezra?
6. Why were the people weeping?
7. What do Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites tell the weeping people and how do they respond?

- ⦿ What is the most important truth you have learned from this lesson?



Going Deeper/Homework:

Memory Verse: “But let all who take refuge in You be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread Your protection over them, that those who love Your name may rejoice in You” (Psalm 5:11).

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