



SERIES: LESSONS ON THE POWER OF COMBINED EFFORT

Lesson #11: “Joining Together on the Word of God Alone”

Nehemiah 13

Announcements and opening prayer.



Connect: an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters. **Icebreaker:** If you could design your own country, what would it be like? Do you think your ideas would have any hope of uniting all people?

The Bottom Line: God alone can unite His people.

LESSON PLAN



Denotes “Apply”

Read Nehemiah 9:38; 10:28-31

1. What was promised by God’s leaders and His people?
2. Do you think this time they finally stuck to it? Why or why not? *(They were quick to forget God’s hand in their lives. Let’s see exactly how this happened and why.)*

Background (John MacArthur): *The history of God’s people reveals a depressing truth: heartfelt passion and sincere devotion is usually short-lived. Chapter 13 of Nehemiah is a clear example of this truth. Nehemiah left Jerusalem in the 32nd year of Artaxerxes, about 433 B.C. and returned to Persia as he had promised. During his absence, the people returned to their former ways, led by the high priest Eliashib. In violation of their earlier promises, they failed to separate themselves from their pagan neighbors. They also failed to support the Levites and priests. A third evidence of their spiritual decline was that they consistently violated the laws of the Sabbath. It was during Nehemiah’s absence that Malachi wrote his prophetic book indicting both priests and people for their sinful defection. Possibly having heard of Eliashib’s evil, Nehemiah returned to oversee the needed spiritual house cleaning or reforms. His response to the waywardness of the people was swift and severe, reminding us that we must be quick and decisive in our dealing with sin.*

3. What contributed to the sins of the people of God?

- 🕒 How does a leadership who ignores the sin of the people help create an atmosphere of unholiness and hypocrisy?
- 🕒 How important is it that our church has a decisive and strong leadership?

Read Nehemiah 13:1-3

4. What was the big deal with God's forbidding the Ammonites and Moabites to come into His assembly?

Ammon and Moab were the neighboring countries east of the Jordan whose beginnings were by Lot's incestuous relationship with his two daughters who got him drunk and slept with him to have children while he was passed out (see Gen. 19:30–38). This was the morality of the people from Lot's family.)

- 🕒 How does this relate to Paul's command that we do not become unequally yoked with unbelievers?
- 🕒 What are some of the ways we can become unequally yoked?

Read Nehemiah 13:4-13

5. What had Eliashib the priest done while Nehemiah was away?
 6. How does Nehemiah deal with this disaster in the leadership of the priest?
 7. Why does Nehemiah follow this act with prayer?
- 🕒 If you were to share your heart with someone who was a Christian and yet was sinning, what do you think you should pray before and after addressing the issue with them?
 - 🕒 Notice that all this was not dealt with until God's word was read once again by His leader. What important lesson should that teach us?



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: The first rebuke is for neglecting the House of God (13:11). Have 1 group read 13:15-22 and a 2nd group read 13:23-31. Discuss the information. Determine what the 2nd and 3rd rebukes were for. What were they doing that was wrong? How did they get to this degenerated state of faith? Why was it so important that Nehemiah straighten these things out? (*On **Sin #1.** Ask the class how we neglect the house of God today. This was the first sin addressed. **Sin #2.** Desecrating the Sabbath. Ask what the Sabbath is to a Christian. Point out that it is living in the Sabbath by our intimate relationship with Jesus as our Lord. **Sin #3.** Intermarrying with people outside the family of God.*)

- 🗣️ What can we learn from today's lesson that we can apply as a church in order to allow God to unite us?



Going Deeper/Homework:

Memory Verse: "I have given them glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one..." (John 17:22).

