

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Nehemiah - Part 5 That's not how the story ends

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Introduction

When the walls of Jerusalem were completed, the people of God renewed their covenant. It addressed three key areas: maintaining the house of God, keeping the Sabbath, and staying separate from the surrounding cultures. Yet, several years after this, the people compromised on each of these areas. Even as we live in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ, these principles still apply to believers today. How might we apply them in our lives?

Read: Nehemiah 10:26-39

Discuss

1. "The more we have of what we need, the less we recognize our need for God." How can a blessing or provision become an idol or a distraction?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. Our bodies are regarded as a temple of God in which the Holy Spirit resides. How can this temple be defiled? What can we do to avoid defiling this temple?
3. The people in Jerusalem neglected to bring their tithes and offerings, which meant the Levites had to stop working in the temple and had to work outside (Neh 13:10-11). Do you think the practice of bringing tithes and offerings is still relevant today? Why do people find it challenging?
4. What is the difference between a contributor and a consumer in the house of God? How might a contributor behave differently from a consumer in a church?
5. Read Hebrews 4:8-9. The principle of sabbath rest is about time set apart to rest in God, worship Him, wait on Him and be renewed. How do you practice this?

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6. Read 2 Corinthian 6:14-18. What does this passage teach us about being in a relationship with someone of different spiritual values? What are some of the challenges of being in a relationship with someone who does not share the same spiritual beliefs and values?
7. "The grass is greener where you water it, not on the 'other side.'" How can a relationship be nurtured to remain fresh and healthy?
8. Read Ephesians 2:4-9. What does it mean to be saved by grace and not by works?

Respond

The story of Nehemiah teaches us that despite good intentions, it is impossible to keep God's covenant in our own strength. While the temple and the walls may be rebuilt and the covenant renewed, what is required is a change of heart through the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Only Jesus can make someone a 'new creation' (1 Corinthians 5:17). Which one area in your life needs to be re-dedicated to God? Take a moment now to surrender it back to Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict, restore and strengthen you in this.