

Nehemiah 1: Growth Group Guide

SCRIPTURE READING QUESTIONS

Before diving into the group discussion, consider these four questions as you read the text:

- **What does this passage say about God, who He is, and what He does (Father, Son, and Spirit)?**
- **What does this passage teach me about me?**
- **What comfort/challenge can I take away from this passage?**
- **How will I respond or live differently because of what I've read?**

PART 1: THE FOUNDATION

Loving God's People (The Community Lens) In Nehemiah 1, when Nehemiah hears about the distress and broken walls of the survivors in Jerusalem, he is moved to deep mourning, fasting, and prayer. Our "One New Family" identity means being so interconnected with the body of Christ that when one part suffers, we share in their grief and actively carry their burdens.

- **Key Question:** "How are you pursuing authentic community with other believers right now?"
- **Key Question:** "What gets in the way of community with other believers?"

Looking to God's Word (The Truth Lens) This chapter grounds our "Wealth in Christ" in the character and covenant of God. In his prayer, Nehemiah quotes God's promises from Scripture, acknowledging both the reality of judgment for sin and the sure promise of restoration for those who return to Him. Our identity is anchored in a covenant-keeping God who remembers His promises.

- **Key Question:** "How is God's Word challenging you?"
- **Key Question:** "What can you do to prioritize God's Word?"

PART 2: THE WALK

Listening to God's Voice (The Prayer Lens) Before taking any practical action, Nehemiah spent days in fasting and prayer. Walking in the Spirit requires us to quiet our own rush to solve problems so we can confess our sins, align our hearts with God's priorities, and listen for His direction.

- **Key Question:** "How is God directing you?"
- **Key Question:** "What do you need to quiet in your life to hear God better?"

Living Sent (The Mission Lens) Nehemiah ends his prayer by asking God for favor in front of King Artaxerxes, recognizing his daily role as cupbearer as a God-given platform. True "sending capacity over seating capacity" means seeing our secular jobs, positions, and everyday spaces as strategic opportunities to point people to God's restoration.

- **Key Question:** "What everyday opportunity have you used to point someone to Jesus?"
- **Key Question:** "What opportunities did you miss to tell someone about Jesus?"

GROUP PRAYER & SUMMARY

- **Closing Thought:** Nehemiah 1 demonstrates that genuine spiritual renewal and missional action begin when we allow God to break our hearts over the brokenness around us and respond with persistent, Scripture-saturated prayer.
- **Final Action:** Identify one area of brokenness in your community or circle of influence this week, and commit to praying specifically and daily for God's restoration in that space.

PAGE 3: FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET

The Structural Lens

Indicative vs. Imperative: The theological framework rests on the **Indicative** that God is the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps His gracious covenant with those who love Him (v. 5). The **Imperative** (the call to action) is implied: Nehemiah's intercession and readiness to step into the gap flow directly from knowing God's faithful character. Remind the group that taking action for God must always be birthed in prayer and grounded in who God is, not in human ambition.

Facilitation Tips

- **Corporate Confession:** Point out how Nehemiah includes himself when confessing Israel's sin ("I and my father's family have sinned," v. 6). If the group tends to talk about the culture's problems in an "us vs. them" way, gently redirect them to practice Nehemiah-style humble confession.
- **Moving from Emotion to Prayer:** Help the group see that Nehemiah didn't just feel sad; he turned his emotional burden directly into structured, persistent prayer. Ask: "How can we turn our frustrations or anxieties into purposeful prayer this week?"

Leader Insights

- **Community:** Nehemiah was living in luxury in Susa, yet his heart was tied to the struggling community in Jerusalem. True "One New Family" community resists detachment and cares deeply about the health of the broader body.
- **Truth:** Nehemiah's prayer is filled with biblical theology—recalling Deuteronomy 30. The "Truth Lens" shows us that effective prayer uses God's own Word to remind Him of His promises.
- **Prayer:** Notice the balance of adoration, confession, biblical grounding, and specific petition in Nehemiah's prayer. It models how prayer prepares our hearts before our hands start building.
- **Mission:** Nehemiah realized his job as cupbearer wasn't an accident. Our "sending capacity" starts by asking how God wants to use our current positions and everyday vocations for His kingdom purpose.