



HOUSE GROUPS

HOUSE Groups: Discussion Questions:

Nehemiah 8:1-18

(Key Verse)

Nehemiah 8:10 "...Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

(Nehemiah 8:1-3): **1** Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that [was] in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. **2** So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who [could] hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. **3** Then he read from it in the open square that [was] in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people [were attentive] to the Book of the Law.

Question: It says that the people gathered together *as one man*. How does the Holy Spirit work in uniting large groups of people together?

Question: What are some ways that we can hinder the working of the Holy Spirit at the individual, and collective level?

Question: How does giving of our time to receive the teaching of God's Word involve personal sacrifice?

Question: What do you think we can do to increase our desire for the study of God's Word?

(Nehemiah 8:4-6): **4** So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkihah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, [and] Meshullam. **5** And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was [standing] above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. **6** And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with [their] faces to the ground.

Question: What practical preparations can be made in order to maximize the teaching, and proclamation of God's Word?

Question: Why is having a heart that is prepared to receive from God's Word so important, and how can you prepare yourself to hear from God's Word?

Question: How does the ministry of the teaching of God's Word compound when those who are hearers of God's Word, are also doers of God's Word?

Question: How does the teaching of God's word impact us in such a way that we are drawn to give thanks, spend time in prayer, and worship the Lord?

(Nehemiah 8:7-8): **7** Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people [stood] in their place. **8** So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped [them] to understand the reading.

Question: Why do you believe that the Lord raises up specific individuals to help people understand God's Word?

Question: Why is it important to actually understand what it is that the Bible is saying?

Question: What should you be looking for from any teaching of God's Word, and how do you grow in your understanding of the Scriptures?

(Nehemiah 8:9-12): **9** And Nehemiah, who [was] the governor, Ezra the priest [and] scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day [is] holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. **10** Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for [this] day [is] holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." **11** So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day [is] holy; do not be grieved." **12** And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

Question: How can the Word of God pierce our hearts in such a way that we are overwhelmed with sorrow?

READ 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

Question: How can realizing the gravity of our sin overwhelm us to the point that it overshadows Jesus being greater than our sin? What do we do to regain a proper perspective?

Question: How do you differentiate between how the devil uses guilt, and the Holy Spirit uses conviction?

Question: What is the *joy of the Lord*, and how is it our strength?

Question: How can we take our emotions under control, and choose to rejoice in the Lord even when we do not feel like it?

(Nehemiah 8:13-18): **13** Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' [houses] of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. **14** And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, **15** and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as [it is] written." **16** Then the people went out and brought [them] and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. **17** So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. **18** Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day [there was] a sacred assembly, according to the [prescribed] manner.

Question: How can a leader's disobedience to the Lord affect far more than just them personally?

Question: Why is it that obedience to God's Word can bring such joy?

Question: Why is it so important to keep the daily study of God's Word as the primary focus in our relationship with the Lord?