

BLUEPRINTS

FOR A REBUILDING YEAR

WEEK 6 - GROUP STUDY

Nehemiah's story ends by dealing with spiritual messes while following God's calling on his life. He reminds us that the key to finishing well isn't grandiose, but simply being faithful.

CONNECT

- **What is the best celebration you have ever been a part of (birthday, anniversary, wedding, etc.)? Why?**

CONSIDER

- **Watch Video - Session 6: Finishing Well (mynorthside.com/Blueprints)**
- **What encouraged or challenged you from the sermon, devotions, or video this week?**

CHRIST

Fast Forwarding Nehemiah: Chapter 12 ends in celebration with the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem and all that God has done. There was worship, music, choirs, parades, sacrifices, giving to others, and great rejoicing from all the people. Nehemiah 12:43b sums it up best, *"the sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away."* After this moment, Nehemiah returns to Persia, and comes back to Jerusalem a few years later (ch. 13).

- **With the celebration of chapter 12 in mind, how do you think all who had worked on the wall felt about the rejoicing happening in Jerusalem? How about those who opposed the work? Have you ever experienced anything like this celebration of God?**
- **Back in 8:10, Nehemiah writes *"the joy of the Lord is your strength!"* Throughout the Blueprints study, what has resonated with you the most? What do we need to celebrate from the Blueprints study?**

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Read Nehemiah 13:4-14

- Nehemiah returned from Persia to find the city thriving, but the people spiritually dying. This is vastly different from the celebration in chapter 12. As he returns, Nehemiah confronts 3 spiritual messes surrounding the temple, the Sabbath, and marriage. **What can we learn from Israel's quick spiritual backsliding after a great season of rebuilding? How do we prevent this from happening in our own faith?**
- Nehemiah discovered that Tobiah, one of his opponents, is living in the temple. Tithes and offerings on grain are unable to be stored. The people have stopped tithing, giving and the priests/singers responsible for temple services have gone to work elsewhere. Teaching and worship have stopped, and it all began with a compromise (Tobiah), and a lack of trust (stopped giving). **Where do you feel the temptation to compromise when it comes to your faith? How might God be calling you to trust Him through giving (tithes, offerings, serving, etc...)?**

Read Nehemiah 13:15-22

- Nehemiah discovered that people were working on the Sabbath, a day meant for rest, worship, and family. While we aren't under the same Sabbath regulations as the Jewish people, the heart is the same. We need regular rhythms of rest and refreshment to connect more with God and others, and for our overall health. **What are some practices pulling life out of you? What practices do you need to put into place to breathe more life into your spiritual, physical, emotional, and/or mental health?**

Read Nehemiah 13:23-30

- Nehemiah discovered that people were failing to guard their faith by marrying people who worshiped other gods. As a result, children were growing up not knowing the Hebrew language to understand Scripture (v. 24). In fact, all 3 of the messes in chapter 13 impacted the next generation. People were unable to worship (13:4-14), skipping rest and family time of the Sabbath (13:15-22), and not teaching their kids the ways of God (13:23-30). In each case, faith and the next generation were at stake. **How are you helping the next generation learn the ways of God (in or outside of your family)? Is there an area of your family that you need to build, rebuild, or repair?**

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- Nehemiah confronted each mess and then prayed for God’s mercy (v. 14, 22, 30). These short prayers show his dependence and hope. They aren’t about accomplishments, but the heart of a man trying to be faithful in the midst of brokenness. The defining characteristic of Nehemiah’s life was his faithfulness to God. Mother Teresa’s famous quote might sum up Nehemiah best, “I was not called to be successful but faithful”¹ **Read Colossians 3:15-17, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, Hebrews 12:1-3, and 1 Peter 2:4-6 as a group. With Nehemiah’s story in mind, what stands out to you from these passages? As we end this study, how has God been building you up, and how is He calling you to be faithful?**

CALLING

- Through this study, there have been challenges to pray for others, to learn more about your gifts, and to live it out serving others. **What is your one next step to take in response to what you have learned through the Blueprints study.**
- **Blueprints Daily Devotions:** Spend 15 minutes each day with the daily devotions from this study guide. Devotions can be found through Northside’s App, by texting JOINGOD to 81411, or at mynorthside.com/Blueprints.
- **Memorize:** *You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 2:5*
- **Further Study:** Read the book of Nehemiah. Take notes on the moments he prayed, the moments he relied on God, and the moments he stayed faithful to God’s calling.

¹ Trevor Hudson, *Ten Signposts To Spirituality* (Fleming H. Revell, 1996), 149.