

Nehemiah

A note of introduction...

Nehemiah is all about leadership, and a good synonym for leadership is influence. You lead someone to the measure that you influence him or her. The late President Harry Truman referred to leaders as people who can get others to do what they don't want to do—and, make them **like** doing it. Whoa! That sounds like what I do every day as a mom! Who am I trying to influence? Everyone I come into contact with—my husband, my children, my parents, my neighbors, the grocery-store checkout girl, the pharmacist, my children's teachers—everyone I speak to each day. Actually, isn't that what Christ calls us to do? Matthew 5:16 tells us "*let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*"

This obscure and sometimes unknown book written about 425 BC is a classic work on effective leadership—influencing those around us to do good. Nehemiah speaks to many of the exact same issues that you and I face today: the balance between faith in God and personal planning; how to handle discouragement; the list goes on and on. As you study, you will discover timeless and reliable guidelines that work! Nehemiah himself will model these truths as he accomplishes an incredible project against unbelievable odds.

My prayer is that God will bless every woman who opens this study guide and begins her journey through Nehemiah. I hope that you will learn a small part of what Nehemiah knew—how to lead people to accomplish what God desires.

This study guide is written by women for women. Our prayer is that God will use these lessons from Nehemiah to challenge you to grow into the woman only God's enabling can make possible. Here are a few suggestions as you start your study.

Every lesson is divided into five sections to make it easier to study a portion each day. Daily Bible study is a highly desirable habit. Second, all questions are written from the New International Version. Third, please remember to pray for focus, God's guidance and receptivity to God's truth before you begin each lesson.

A short word of explanation is in order about the "*Past to Present*" question at the beginning of each lesson. This is a specific challenge to help you observe God working in your life (present) in the many of the same ways He worked in Nehemiah's life (past). The challenge comes from the material that you studied the week before. Pay attention to the details and watch for the moments God is working in your life. Prepare to give Him the glory in your discussion group.

May God bless you as we take this spiritual walk together.

Paula Rhodes

Cries of Distress

Nehemiah

Lesson 1 1:1-11

Past to Present: What task are you praying about for God's Kingdom?

1. Where was Nehemiah when he heard about Jerusalem and what was the news?

2. What was Nehemiah's first response?

3. What was the response to crisis in each of these passages?

I Kings 17:17-22 _____

I Samuel 7:7-9 _____

Psalm 34:4-7 _____

II Corinthians 12:7-9 _____

4. What is your first reaction to unexpected bad news?

Section II. Read Nehemiah 1:4-11.

5. How often did Nehemiah pray in his distress?

6. How did Nehemiah use the four elements of prayer?

Praise _____

Confession _____

Thanksgiving (Recalling fulfilled promises) _____

Petition _____

7. Are each of these present in your prayer life? Which one is most difficult for you to incorporate?

Section III. Read Nehemiah 1:4-7.

8. What attributes of God did Nehemiah mention in his prayer?

9. What promises has God kept to you this week and how will you remember them in your prayers?

10. Compare Psalm 32:1-5; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9 with Nehemiah 1:6-7. Why do you think God requires us to confess?

11. What are the results if we choose not to confess?

Section IV. Read Nehemiah 1:8-9.

12. What was the result of disobedience among the Jews?

13. What scripture(s) was Nehemiah quoting as he claimed a promise from the Lord in 1: 9?

14. When you feel alienated from the Lord, what scripture has God given you that brings comfort and/or hope?

Section V. Read Nehemiah 1:1-11.

15. In verse 11, what specific request did Nehemiah make of God?

16. How do you think Nehemiah's attitude changed as he fasted and prayed?

17. How did prayer prepare him to take action?

18. Name some benefits of prayer you have experienced recently.

19. What would change if you prayed before taking action every time there was a crisis...

...personally? _____

...in your family? _____

...in your church? _____

20. What challenges will you accept as a result of the confidence you have received through prayer?