

ARTIOS

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It's Time To Do Your Part!

Nehemiah 8 exposes the need for spiritual and what will happen if people allow it to develop.

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Nehemiah and the people finally finished rebuilding the walls surrounding Jerusalem. What a task that was! In this real life situation, they had to do everything themselves. While working, they had to prepare their food, sleep, wash clothes, and get all their materials for the job and fight to protect them from the surrounding enemy. And they did this for 52 long, hard days. I don't think it was a lot of fun, but boy, it was ever so important for they eventually took back what was taken from them. When they reached the end of those days, they were hungry, hungry for the words of God so they asked Ezra to bring out the bible!

Nehemiah 8:1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and **they spake unto Ezra** the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.



If only they knew that their own personal hunger for God and His Word act as a heavenly control valve.

What a day it would be when THE PEOPLE would ask for God's Word. Yes, I know that some do, but for the most part, most people rely on the words and actions of another for their spiritual sustenance. From the pastor's perspective, this can be quite frustrating. He would love to see a newfound hunger from God's people today. Personally, I am always ready to teach, to help, to heal, and to give in a ministry capacity. I would love to see more hunger from all of God's people. Nehemiah's crew had genuine hunger for God's Words.

Nehemiah 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

Here's the timeline to better enable you to understand:

- **Ab 5th month** — The rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall was started on the first of the month Ab.
- **Elul 6th month** — The wall was finished 52 days later on the 25th of Elul.
- **Ethanim 7th month** — And... about six days later, in the month Ethanim — Nehemiah 8:1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses...

All it took was 52 days of super hard work and another 6 or so days and the people demanded to hear God's Word. I absolutely

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love seeing this kind of hunger. When people are hungry, God delivers! This is a fantastic truth. In fact, the hungrier people are for God's Word, the more He will provide. People often wish they could see God move in their lives, they hope for miracles, they beg for signs. If only they knew that their own personal hunger for God and His Word act as a heavenly control valve. What God does is not entirely up to Him. It is also up to you. Are you really hungry for God's Word? I have seen that the majority of people in any given meeting, when pressed on the issue, are not as hungry as they would make you think. All you have to do is start talking actual scripture – real verses – and within a few minutes, the subject has already been changed to something else. Kind of sad isn't it. Why? Because once again, the heavenly control valve has been snapped shut. Deliverance has been forced into suspension somewhere between here and heaven. Well, these people in Nehemiah were truly hungry and it was time to feed them.

Nehemiah 8:3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people

were attentive unto the book of the law.

Wow! From morning until midday! No matter how you count this, it comes up to several hours. Ezra read and the people listened. I can only imagine the excitement in their hearts as they heard to the point of understanding. Keep in mind that they had been in captivity, slavery their ENTIRE lives. They had never really tasted the Word of God. They had only

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tasted scraps from God's table. I hope slavery isn't the only thing that produces hunger. What do you think? How does natural hunger grow? Have you ever not wanted to eat? Sure. And when have those times been? Maybe you were sick? Maybe you had eaten too much the night before? Maybe you had been lazy and not really worked up an appetite? Maybe you have forced yourself to not eat, say on a diet or such? Throughout your eating experiences, you know you have complete control. You can push yourself away from the table after the first serving (something that more of us should do more often), or you can stay for dessert. You can fast for days.

You can eat only meat. You can do so many different things with your eating habits, so much so, that you know you are in complete control. If you can control yourself like this, why can't you do the same with spiritual hunger? Well, you can, and you should. Make you get to that point, and then start demanding MORE OF GOD'S WORD!

Nehemiah 8:4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

The people had such great respect for their spiritual leaders. They took care of Ezra so that they could more easily hear him teach. Sometimes, I wonder if people will ever be like this again. The answer is yes, but it will take some work. The people have to be hungry and WILLING to do what it takes to make it happen. They have to get to the point that they refuse to accept nothing less for the rest of their lives.

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Nehemiah 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

The people stood up out of respect. This custom even carried into our times. In some churches, the people stand up when the bible verses are read. Of course, they don't read for hours like Ezra did. Their church board won't allow it, but at least some of God's Word is read, and, out of respect, the people are asked to stand. Pretty cool, isn't it?

Nehemiah 8:6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

They got into it with their whole bodies. You don't have to do this, but some churches do. They have a thirty or so minute period before the Word is introduced when there's lots of music and dancing. This is definitely not a requirement in Christianity. In fact, it is important to make sure you are

not detracting from God's Word with associated worship activities. God's Word is the most important thing we have and we are to NEVER misuse it, even under the guise of religion or religious events.

Nehemiah 8:7 Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites,

It's time to, IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, tell satan to take a hike, to get his ugly hands off of your soul, and then for you to take a stand on God's Word.

caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place.

Nehemiah 8:8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and **caused them to understand the reading.**

Here's the part that is so often lacking today. The spiritual leaders caused the people to understand God's Word. It's sad to see how little understanding there is today. God's Word is so misused. There are so many different versions, which are

renditions of the translator's opinions of what they think was being said and want people to believe. These lead to confusion and grave misunderstanding. Then you have the different denominations, all with their own opinions. That's a sad mess too. Unfortunately, it's about the best that we have to offer people and we find ourselves conforming to some form of this offering. Just like politicians, you have liberals, fundamentalists, conservatives and so on. You can usually find a group that suits you. Even though this is happening, it's not what God really wants. He wants one church, the Church of Jesus Christ. The purer a man's words are according to God's Word, the closer he can keep people to this great spiritual Church. The end result will be the same. The people will understand God's Word!

Nehemiah 8:9 And Nehemiah, which *is* the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day *is* holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

What great show of emotions! They were so glad that they

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wept. God was definitely moving in their hearts and lives. The people connected with God and wouldn't let go. The devil will work on you to let go, but you must hold on, just like these people did. Tears are seen as a sign of weakness today. I know of no greater weakness than to be without God's Word. Even in the midst of biblical teachings, if there is no accuracy, and if there is no understanding, there will be great weakness. If you are weak, or if your people are weak, then it is a "God's Word" issue. Our true spiritual strength comes directly from God and His Word.

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this day is holy* unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; **for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**

There you have it. If you are weak, you need the strength of God. His Word brings joy and His joy transforms itself into strength. But you have to be hungry enough to gobble up enough to do any good. Like I said earlier, most people can take a minute or two of His Food, but that is all. No wonder there is so much weakness in our churches today. You have a strong pastor,

and a few strong deacons or such, but that's about all. It's so sad, but we can all do something positive about it now. It's time to, IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, tell satan to take a hike, to get his ugly hands off of your soul, and then for you to take a stand on God's Word. What are you willing to do? No man has ever been able to force your hunger and no man ever will be able to. It is totally and completely up to you!

The time for making excuses is over, and the time for jumping in is now.

Nehemiah 8:11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is* holy; neither be ye grieved.

Nehemiah 8:12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, **because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.**

If you are going to go anywhere with God, you have to understand His Word. Somewhere along the line you have to learn to trust what is written in the bible. I hear lots of excuses from people who are afraid to delve into the greatest spiritual buffet of all times. The

time for making excuses is over, and the time for jumping in is now. Even though it is not used as much today as in past years, the Authorized King James Version is one of the most accurate bibles available. Plus, it has far more research tools than just about any other version.

America is a great land with a wealth of material abundance. If you have ever gone into one of the countless buffet-type restaurants, you know, the all-you-can-eat ones, there's more than enough food to go around. Well, God has prepared a special buffet too, one just for you. It is His Word buffet. But you have to get in line to receive it. You have to pick up a plate to receive it. You have to prepare yourself to receive it. Then when you finally open His Word, the bible, you are ready. Instead of gorging yourself on the opinions of men, gorge yourself on the real and vital words of The Word Itself! What a difference you will find that it makes.

Nehemiah 8:17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. **And there was very great gladness.**

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Not only did the people hear God's Word, they understood it. Not only did they stand up when the Word was read, they stood upon it for they started practicing it. And what was the result of this? There was very great gladness! I can't write that loud enough. **THERE WAS VERY GREAT GLADNESS!!!** Isn't this something every believer would love to see today? Sure it is, but it will never happen if we don't set our minds to work for it. It's not just the pastor's job to teach. It's also the people's job to stand upon what is being taught. Everyone has to do their part or nothing will change. The pastor will remain frustrated and the people will remain hungry. This is something that none of us can really afford.

God bless you Abundantly,

Jerry D. Brown

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