

12 July

TOPIC: Nehemiah Chapter 5



Let's hear your story

1. Have you been part of a project that no one in your team wanted to work together?
2. Against who did the Jews cry out in verse 1? (**Jewish brethren**)
3. What was the real reason for strife among the Jewish people? (**financial difficulty – see 2**).
4. Can you name the causes for financial difficulty? (**Famine – v.3; for the king's tax – v.4; and borrowing money – v.5**).



Let's go deeper

5. How did Nehemiah respond to the challenges? (**Nehemiah became angry because these problems led to a lack of unity – see verse 6**).
6. In verse 11, what did Nehemiah tell the nobles and rulers to do? (**To restore; if money had been charged unfairly it had to be set right**).
7. According to verse 12 – 13, how did the nobles and rulers respond? (**v.12; they said, we will restore it. V.13; The people did according to this promise**).
8. According to verse 15, why did Nehemiah put God's work above his own personal interest? (**The fear of God. He knew he would answer to God**).



Let's apply this

9. What can we learn from Nehemiah's generosity in this chapter?

Nehemiah, lived the way he told the nobles and rulers to live – to not take personal advantage of another's need. He did what every godly leader must do: he never expected more of his followers than he expected of himself. Nehemiah was an example for what he did not take and for what he did not keep.

1. Do you take personal advantage of other people's needs?
2. Like Nehemiah are you generous with God has entrusted you with?

SUMMARY:

Read: Nehemiah 5:1 – 19; 1 Corinthians 9:1 – 15 and Matthew 6:1 – 4

- **The book of Nehemiah chapter 5:**

v.1 – Chapter four ended on a great victory. The people of God were doing the work of God, despite all obstacles. They worked with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, and they would not let their enemies stop them. But in chapter five, there is no mention of working on the wall, indicating that the work had stopped. The work stopped because of strife among God's people. The enemy could not stop the work of God by direct attack, but the work stopped when God's people weren't unified and working together. When God's people fight one another they certainly are not fighting the real enemy nor getting God's work done.

v.2 – 5; The reason for strife among God's people: money problems. What caused the financial challenges? People had money problems because there was a famine, which made food more expensive. People had money problems because the government kept taxing them. People had financial problems because the loans they had taken out to live cost interest, and therefore, some had to give their children as servants to their lenders to pay off the debt.

v.6 – Nehemiah's immediate reaction: Anger.

v.7 – 11; Nehemiah's wise response: confronting those who were in the wrong. Nehemiah teaches us that the way a leader should approach problems is head on. Usury is interest that is either too high or should not be charged at all.

v.12 – 13; The response of the rulers and nobles who had done wrong. Nehemiah wisely knew their words were not enough. Their actions had to be followed through with real action and it was – the people did according to this promise. With the oaths, and public record of all this, Nehemiah assures accountability.

v.14 – 16; Nehemiah's godly example. Nehemiah was a great example of putting the work of God ahead of his own personal interest. He certainly had the right to tax the people for his support (others had done it before him), but he didn't take that right because it wouldn't help the work of God. The apostle Paul is another great example (see 1 Corinthians 9:1-15). Nehemiah did what was right before God, not what was "right" for his own cares and concerns; he knew he would answer to God.

v.17 – 18; Nehemiah's example of generosity. Nehemiah, lived the way he told the nobles and rulers to live – to not take personal advantage of another's need. He never expected more of his followers than he expected of himself.

v.19; Nehemiah's prayer, asking God to remember his good deeds.