

Nehemiah: Defending the Oppressed

[Nehemiah 5:1-19](#)

Nehemiah and his followers have weathered outside opposition and worked towards completing the wall. However, they must now deal with division and tension within their own ranks. Nehemiah leads with clear direction and by example—they are called to depend on God, be generous in caring for one another, and represent God’s compassion to the world.

Application

1. In this passage in Nehemiah, the wealthy are exploiting the impoverished. Are you aware of any exploitation in your immediate sphere of influence (business, organization, etc.)? How can you be part of the solution?
2. Discuss the idea that it’s possible to have “too much” as a believer. How can you be generous and release your resources for the good of others in such a way that you are forced to depend on God for contentment, security, and comfort?
3. Jesus is the greatest example of advocating for the marginalized. How have you seen the power of advocacy play out in your life or in the lives of those around you? What step can you take towards being a better advocate for someone in need?

Key Points

- Although the wall has progressed, there is conflict among the people of Jerusalem. It comes to Nehemiah’s attention that the wealthy are exploiting the impoverished, and he takes swift action.
- When Nehemiah tells the nobles and officials that their use of interest against their fellow Jews is the opposite of what God is doing, they respond in obedience. What they were doing was culturally acceptable, but it did not honor God.
- In Leviticus, God is clear that his plan is to protect and uplift the poor as well as check the power of the wealthy. We must also follow this concept of caring for our fellow believers.
- Generosity is essential in the Christian life. We must trust God enough to deplete ourselves for the good of others. Then, we will look to God for comfort, status, and significance.

- We are responsible to address division, bias, or prejudice within the church. It is our nature to create division among ourselves, but God calls us to strive for compassion and unity.
- While our first priority is caring for the body of Christ, we should also use our resources to uplift the oppressed in the world. We will not “fix” the brokenness around us, but we can build inroads for the gospel.
- As we give towards and advocate for those in need, we look to Jesus—the great advocate who completely depleted himself for our redemption.

Other Scripture References

[Leviticus 25](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:13-15](#)

[Acts 6:1](#)