

Nehemiah: Spiritual Reorientation

[Nehemiah 8:1-18](#)

In this passage, the people of Jerusalem come together to hear God's Word. As they hear the narrative, they help one another grow in understanding of who God is and who they are as his people. Although they respond in despair that they have failed God in the past, Nehemiah encourages them to rejoice in the reality of God's faithfulness and grace by celebrating the festival of shelters. As we interact with God's truth, we must also engage our thinking, feeling, and actions.

Application

1. How do you know if you have a relationship with God? Consider how you would answer that question. The Scriptures are clear that we get assurance from obedience. How does that truth impact your faith story?
2. Consider the three components of how believers interact with God's truth: thinking, feeling, and acting. Which of these facets is underdeveloped in your spiritual life? What steps do you need to take in order to move forward in that area?
3. When was the last time you realized that your thinking was out of line with biblical truth? What brought you to that realization? What needs to change in your life to challenge your thinking more often?
4. Our lives should be distinctive from the world. Do your life choices beg questions of those around you? How can you live out Scripture in such a way that others ask, "What does this mean?"
5. As believers, we should be part of a continuous, ongoing process where we are collectively affirming God's Word and working it out in our lives. How can you embrace this process both as an individual and as part of the body of Christ?

Key Points

- As God continues to establish his people in Jerusalem, they come together to listen to Ezra read the law of Moses. This shared experience is integral to how they learn who God is and who God wants them to be.
- In the same way, our lives should be bracketed by Scripture. Corporately—as the church—we must continuously affirm God’s Word and work it out in our individual lives.
- The people in Jerusalem already had knowledge of religious behavior and a veneration of reverence, but they had to come together and truly experience God’s Word in order to grow in genuine faith and understanding.
- The Israelites’ initial reaction to understanding their sin is despair, but Nehemiah encourages them to rejoice in the reality of who God is. We also should allow the truth of who God is to impact our affections.
- Our faith involves thinking, feeling, and acting. As God forms our thinking through his Word, our feelings must also change. And ultimately, his truth is evident in our lives through our actions.
- As God’s people, we should be clearly distinctive from the world. Our life choices should beg the question, “Why do you do this?” This distinction is a powerful part of how we further God’s kingdom here on earth.

Other Scripture References

[Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#)

[Exodus 12:25-26](#)