

Nehemiah: Unfinished Work

[Nehemiah 13:1-31](#)

At the end of Nehemiah, we discover that the Israelites have quickly lapsed into their old ways—compromising their holiness and conforming to the worldly cultures around them. In a redemptive act, Nehemiah confronts them, pointing them to the truths of the Scriptures. We must also understand that compromise and confrontation will be part of our reality until we are made complete in Christ.

Application

1. Compromise is always easier than holiness, and it leads us down a path of even more compromise and sin. When in the past have you compromised your commitment to God? What were the results? Where are you currently being tempted to compromise?
2. God uses confrontation—through believers and the Scriptures—to redeem us when we compromise. How have you seen this play out in your life? How do you receive confrontation? Are you willing to confront others? Why or why not?
3. Nehemiah was able to confront the Israelites' sin effectively because he was in God's Word and living a holy life. How can you live in such a way that you have spiritual power to humbly confront other believers who are living in compromise?
4. Our choices have generational impact—both our compromise and our faithfulness can transfer to the next generation. How should this truth influence your actions? How has it already impacted your life?

Key Points

- After a brief time away, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem to find that the Israelites have already fallen into sin and compromised their commitment to God.
- God uses both Nehemiah and the Scriptures to confront his people. Although often painful, confrontation is a redemptive act wherein God works to restore us to himself.
- The Israelites' compromise had been incremental. This is the nature of sin—we make small, sinful choices that seem insignificant. But over time, it leads to death.

- Nehemiah has spiritual power to confront the Israelites because his conscience is informed by God's Word and clean of sin.
- Not only does compromise lead to further compromise, but it also affects future generations. In the same way, our present choices will affect those who come after us.
- Although it seems that the story of Nehemiah ends in failure, it reminds us that the only One who can truly finish the work of redemption and restoration is Jesus.

Other Scripture References

[John 10:10a](#)

[Nehemiah 12:43](#)