

Building for Christ: The Book of Nehemiah
Bible Study
Lesson 4
Nehemiah 5

A Bible Study Series of The Mt. Zion Church

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We Have the Vision to be a LEARNING Church!
We are Rooted in Christ and Reaching the One!

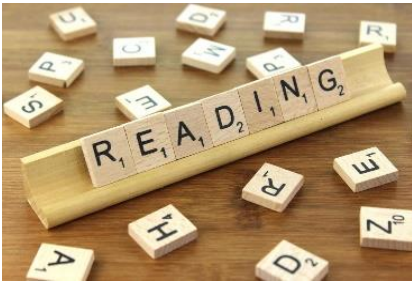


QUICK QUESTION: What are the characteristics of a leader (Pastor, President, Team Leader, etc.) that you find most important? What does God view as the most important characteristic?

Introduction: The previous lesson dealt with the OPPOSITION to building the wall. This lesson focuses on OPPRESSION which results from the economic conditions of the day. Chapter 5 picks up the narrative of the work of rebuilding the wall by indicating the suffering of the Jewish people in and around Jerusalem. We get a bird’s eye view of their poverty which, coupled with a famine, causes the people to begin selling themselves into indentured servitude. While the Bible teaches provisions for when someone faces a time of poverty and the remedy for the poverty (seen later), the approach that the people took did not align with the method the Word prescribed. In this lesson, readers will discover the role we should take when we see people in need.

Reading for week 4:

Nehemiah 5
 Exodus 21: 2-11
 Deuteronomy 15: 12-18



I. Identified Problems—Nehemiah 5: 1-5

The first five verses identify the conditions of the people over which Nehemiah is now Governor. It is unclear whether Nehemiah was appointed to his position during the building of the wall or afterwards, but verse 16 suggests that his new title occurred during the building of the wall.

In the first five verses, four issues are raised which Nehemiah must address. List those four issues below:

Issue	Seen In Verse X
Lack of	
Mortgaged the	

Borrowed	
Redemption	

To better understand the issue of selling self or family member into slavery, we must understand the concept of Biblical indentured servitude. Exodus 21: 2-11 and Deuteronomy 15: 12-18 teach how this should occur.

- Based on these two passages, why did the people have the right to be upset with the way they were being treated?
- Why does Nehemiah get upset?
- How could these issues increase the pressures faced by Nehemiah and the people? (See Nehemiah 4 issues of opposition)

II. Nehemiah's Response—Nehemiah 5: 6-11



Nehemiah's response! Verse 6-7A

“And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. After serious thought...”

Notice, after hearing the complaint which indicated the way people were being mistreated, Nehemiah is upset.

➤ Should Christians get angry? What examples of Biblical anger or scripture do we have regarding being angry? How do these four verses provide an answer about *anger vs. righteous anger*?

1. Proverbs 29:11
2. 2 Kings 17: 7-18
3. Mark 3: 1-5
4. Matthew 21: 12-13

We can see that Nehemiah was very angry at the cause of the oppression. The oppression came from their own people. The wealthy exploited the poor and burdened them in a way that was against God's law.

Verse 8 is a bit difficult to understand when not heard in context. Nehemiah has called together the entire group in a large assembly and begins to highlight the situation. His comment is that he and the men with him had been redeeming (buying back) those sold into servitude with their own money from other nations as a way to give them relief. However, as he and his men are trying to free people the wealthy members of the nation were putting people in positions of servitude with no chance to be redeemed.

Note: The process of redemption required someone to pay the debt of the indentured servant. The people had no chance for redemption because they had sold their land to the wealthy to pay for grain. In effect, they were in a cycle of poverty to their own people which was against God's law....Thus Nehemiah's anger!

➤ How do you see these types of behaviors today?

➤ Have you ever gotten upset about this type of mistreatment to the point where you spoke up?

How Did the People Respond to Nehemiah's Charge Against Them?

Verse 12-13.



This is a great picture of Repentance!!!!

- **We are moving in the right direction whenever we respond this way to God highlighting our wrongs.**

- **What do they say?**

- **What oath do they make?**

III. The Leadership Requirement—Verse 14-19

The end of chapter 5 presents a very power image of leadership. We are able to see key aspects of Nehemiah's understanding of a godly leader and the responsibility placed on the life of leaders. This model can be followed for anyone who desires to attain a leadership role.

We begin to see Nehemiah's willingness to sacrifice for the greater good in chapter 1, but here we see even more of his understanding of how to choose what is best.

- **How should leaders sacrifice for others? What does the Matthew 20: 26 teach us about leadership and "firstness".**

Verse 14-15 is a comparison of how Nehemiah’s role as governor differed from previous governors. List how Nehemiah differed from other governors.

Nehemiah	Others

True Leadership

Godly leadership centers on servanthood.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. Matt. 16: 24

Nehemiah’s Pattern of leadership is unique. As governor, he was allotted food and land benefits. Nehemiah could have loaned out money to the poor and charged them interest (usury) to gain greater wealth. He also could have taxed the people to provide food for him. He does neither. Instead, he pays to feed people and neither he nor his men acquire land.

1. Why do you think Nehemiah approached his role in this manner? What does verse 18 tell us about his choice?
2. How does verse 19 suggest that Nehemiah saw leadership differently than most?

Ending Activity:

Discuss the following quote related to leaders: The measure of a man is what he does with power- Plato