

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

20 – 24 August 2007

NEHEMIAH: MAN OF PRAYER & ACTION! ***#5 FINDING JOY IN A BOOK***

INTRODUCTION

- To what extent do you agree with the statement, "Christianity is a joyful religion."

TRAINING OBJECTIVE To discuss the role of God's Word in the rebuilding project.

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

After completing the wall, Nehemiah began registering the inhabitants of the city by families. The people of Judah assemble to begin rebuilding something different - a *spiritual* rebuilding. The book of the Law of Moses was probably the Pentateuch - the first 5 books of the Bible. Note that "the Law" is more than a list of regs, but shows God's faithful relationship with the Israelites and how they should live to reflect God's goodness and mercy.

Read Nehemiah 8:1-8

- Who asked for the reading of the law? Why?
- Who attended the reading?
- Whose authority was behind the law?
- How did the people respond?
- What did their response suggest about their attitude toward God? Toward the law?
- Why did the Levites "give the meaning?"
- What's the difference between *understanding* and knowing what was said?

Read Nehemiah 8:9-12

Note: It was customary to remember the poor by "sending portions of food" to them (v. 12).

- How do the people initially respond to the reading of the Law? Why?
- How do they respond later? Why?
- What are some ways that faith in God brings joy today?
- How important is understanding the Word of God today? Why?

Read Nehemiah 8:13-18

Note: booths are temporary shelters to remind them of wandering in the desert after Egypt. In these times you can see some of these in Jewish neighborhoods in Fairfax county during the Jewish "seventh month" (September - October). This is also known as the Festival of Booths.

- What command do they find in the Law on the second day of the month?
- What do they do about it?
- Why is their obedience to this new understanding important?
- Why do you think this feast was particularly joyful?

APPLICATION

- What laws or truths have you learned about God that make you want to weep or leap for joy?

He (Nehemiah) continued, "Go home and prepare a feast, holiday food and drink; and share it with those who don't have anything: This day is holy to God. Don't feel bad. The joy of GOD is your strength!" The Levites calmed the people, "Quiet now. This is a holy day. Don't be upset." So the people went off to feast, eating and drinking and including the poor in a great celebration. Now they got it; they understood the reading that had been given to them.

Nehemiah 8:10-12, The Message