

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

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

17 – 21 September 2007

NEHEMIAH: MAN OF PRAYER & ACTION! #9 CELEBRATION!

INTRODUCTION

- Describe a memorable celebration you participated in. What made it so special?

TRAINING OBJECTIVE To discuss the importance of celebrating God's goodness to us.

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Nehemiah 11:1-3

- The wall is completed. The Israelites have prayed, confessed their sin and renewed their covenant to obey God fully. Now they must decide who will inhabit Jerusalem, and very few people are signing up. Why might that be? (See 11:20 for one insight.)
- How did they solve the problem? How do we deal with similar situations today?
- Why is it significant some people volunteered to live in Jerusalem?
- What was the attitude toward those who volunteered? How does this compare to today?

Note: The next 55 verses list the heads of households by name, delineating those who lived in Jerusalem and those who lived in the nearby countryside. Good luck with pronouncing these!

Read Nehemiah 12:27-47

- This describes how they celebrated the dedication of the wall. After they called in all the priests, what was the first thing they did (v. 30)? Why is this significant?
- How did the people celebrate – what all was included (vv. 31-43)? Where did they end up?
- What do we learn about putting closure on a project?
- Throughout this we see everyone had a certain role or responsibility to fulfill, down to the children. What lessons can we glean here?
- The chapter ends describing something in which all Israelites participated – what was that? Why was this significant?
- How does the Chuck Swindoll quote below apply to serving in the Pentagon/NCR?

APPLICATION

- What just occurred or is coming up that you can celebrate in your family, church or organization? How can you involve people in various roles and give thanks to God?

One great application pours out of these verses: Happiness is not dependent on outward circumstances but upon inward choice. When you have chosen to focus on what's important in any situation, you can smile and sing through an experience and come out rejoicing. It all depends on what you choose to make your focus. My closing comments in this chapter go back to those of you who are now in leadership positions or plan to be in the future: 1) Do you bring joy to those you lead?, and 2) Is your leadership marked by a good sense of humor? I know of few things more magnetic than a smile or a cheerful disposition, especially among those in God's work. How easy it is to become intense, severe, grim, and even oppressive! The people under Nehemiah's leadership felt free to rejoice and laugh. Do the people who are under your leadership feel that freedom? How about your children? The Jews laughed on the wall as they rejoiced over God's provision. They sang together, and their joy flooded the hillside so all could hear and be glad. Had their circumstances changed? No, they had changed. Have you?

– Chuck Swindoll, "Hand Me Another Brick"