

BLUEPRINTS

FOR A REBUILDING YEAR

WEEK 1 - GROUP STUDY

Nehemiah's relationship with God leads to his heart breaking for the things of God. These moments are the beginnings of God stirring our hearts to step into His calling.

CONNECT

We all have memorable places we have encountered in our lives. It may be the first house you lived in (or bought), a classroom, field/gymnasium, where you got married, vacation spot, and the list could go on. **Share about a place that has had some significance in your life. What about this place makes it so memorable to you?** If possible, share a photo to go along with the story.

CONSIDER

- **Watch Group Video - Session 1: Broken For What's Broken (mynorthside.com/blueprints)**
- **What encouraged or challenged you from the sermon, devotions, or video this week?**
- **As you enter into this study, what are you hoping to take away from it?**

CHRIST

- There is a depth and richness in the Old Testament as it established the history of God's relationship with the Israelites. We can't jump into Nehemiah without setting up the story, and that begins with Israel. **Read through these scriptures: Genesis 1:1-7, Exodus 19:3-6, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, and 1 Kings 9:1-9. What do you learn about history, identity, and God's faithfulness to the Israelites? Write down your group's answers.**
- **Looking at your own history/story, how has God been faithful to you?**

Fast Forwarding To Nehemiah: Because of the unfaithfulness of the Israelites, God allowed them to be conquered. First the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:5-15), and then the southern kingdom by the Babylonians (2 Chronicles 36:11-21). This resulted in the Israelites being scattered and exiled from their land to other cities and countries. Later King Cyrus of Persia would overthrow the Babylonians and issue a decree (538-539 BC) allowing the exiled Israelites

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to return home. Through the book of Ezra, the rebuilding of Jerusalem starts but is hindered along the way. This is where the book of Nehemiah begins (445 BC).¹

Read Nehemiah 1:1-4 as a group.

- Jerusalem and its temple were significant and sacred places. It represented the city chosen by God for His name and presence to dwell. **What can you learn about Nehemiah from his response to the news about Jerusalem (vv.4-5a)?**
- Author AJ Sherrill writes, “Spiritual Formation works like this. The habits we form end up forming us. The idea of rising to the occasion is false. Few if any of us can actually rise to the occasion when times are hard; instead, most of us default to our highest level of previous training.”² When he was hit with the brokenness of Jerusalem, Nehemiah had a spiritual reflex of compassion, fasting, and prayer. **When you experience the pain or brokenness of others, would your spiritual reflexes be the same as Nehemiah’s? Why or why not? What do you need to be doing to develop your spiritual reflexes?**

Read Nehemiah 1:5-11 as a group.

- **What words or phrases stand out to you from Nehemiah’s prayer? Why?**
- Nehemiah grew up in Persia and had never been to Jerusalem. His heart for the city and his exiled people was born out of the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the Old Testament). He references several passages in his prayer that all center around God’s promises. He is not necessarily praying for something new, but for God to continue being faithful. **Throughout the Bible, what are some promises of God that come to mind? Use the following passages to help get your group started: Deuteronomy 31:8, Psalm 19:7, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 26:3; 41:10, Matthew 11:28-29, John 10:10, James 1:17, and 1 John 1:9. Write down all of your group answers.**
- **Of the promises listed, which ones resonate with you right now? Which do you need to add to your prayers?**

Read Luke 19:18 and 19:37-46 as a group.

¹ Donna and Thomas Petter, *The NIV Application Commentary Ezra-Nehemiah* (Zondervan, 2021), 21-38

² AJ Sherrill, *The Enneagram For Spiritual Formation* (Brazos Press, 2020), 128.

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- Jesus is making His way to Jerusalem, and there are three important moments that lead to movements: joy/hope (v.40), compassion (vv.41-42), righteous anger (v.45). In our lives, there are things that bring joy with hope, break our hearts with compassion, or make us mad with indignation. Each of these moments may be the beginnings of a God-ordained burden/passion, just like Nehemiah. **Right now, which of the three moments are you experiencing? What burdens or passions might God be placing on your heart?**
- Nehemiah's compassion for Jerusalem was born out of God's own heart. His heart was breaking, because God's heart was breaking. Nehemiah's prayers would ultimately lead to a calling in his life. **Is there a person, place, or people that you need to start praying for? What about as a group?**

CALLING

- For the next six weeks of this study, pray through these questions:
 - **Are you broken for what's broken?**
 - **What person, place, or people is my heart breaking for?**
 - **How is God calling me to pray and/or act in response?**
- **Rebuilding Year Daily Devotions:** Spend 15 minutes each day with the daily devotions from this study guide. Devotions can be found through Northside's App, texting JOINGOD to 81411, or mynorthside.com/blueprints.
- **Memorize:** *When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.* - **Nehemiah 1:4 (NIV)**
- **Further Study:** Read Nehemiah 2 in preparation for Session 2.