

## Small Group Study Guide

Preparing Your Heart for Renewal

Series: Nehemiah Rebuilding a Life of Faith

Nehemiah 8:1-18; 9:1-5

From Sunday November 1, 2020

### Appetizer:

**Activity:** What captures your heart? What are you passionate about? Why? What breaks your heart? What gets you really excited?

### Main Course:

**Calls for renewal or revival in the church have been happening for decades, perhaps centuries.** There is always a concern that God's people are in danger of forgetting what they have been called into, that they have forgotten the power of the Gospel, and that they have lost interest in their community, their values, and their practices.

When we look at the passage today, we see a cry for renewal that has come out from among the people: they want to have their hearts recaptured by the things of God again.

**Have someone read Nehemiah 8:1-18.** What do you notice? What details stand out?

**In the sermon, it was suggested that Nehemiah 8 teaches us a few things about what renewal looks like. In order to hear your spiritual heartbeat again, you need a renewal in three areas:**

1. A renewal of attentiveness.
2. A renewal of conviction.
3. A renewal of joy.

**Questions:** Let's take some time to talk about renewal. How would you define spiritual renewal? What do you think can trigger spiritual renewal?

**Let's talk about the three aspects of renewal mentioned in the sermon. It is hard to find your heartbeat when you are not paying attention to what matters.** Over the years many Christians talk about how they have felt distance from the faith, or have lost interest in church, or have become annoyed with other Christians. However, when asked how their spiritual practices are going, or how

they are spending their time when it comes to spending time with God, the conversations grows silent quickly.

**Question:** Author John Mark Comer states that *"What you give your attention to is the person you become."* How is this important for our journey towards spiritual renewal?

**The passage talks about how, when the people found understanding, they were convicted.** In fact it brought them to tears.

**Question:** Why is understanding so important to conviction? Why does it seem today that the gospel doesn't produce conviction like it should? What do you think is missing when it comes to understanding the gospel? What role does the Holy Spirit play in someone's journey from understanding to conviction?

When people are spiritually renewed, they can't help themselves but find joy... not a happy-go-lucky emotion that dismisses the struggles of this world, but a deep sense of peace, positivity, and hope that brings life and a smile to their faces.

**Question:** Do you see a connection between spiritual renewal and joy in your own life? Why or why not?

### Dessert:

Do you see signs of renewal around you?

**KEY QUESTION:** "When the church is renewed, the world takes notice." -What does a church renewed look like to the world?

How can you as individuals and as a group encourage one another towards being more attentive towards God?

**Activity:** Pastor Jeff encouraged everyone at Emmanuel to spend time in the month of November to pray for a renewal of our hearts through becoming more attentive, convicted and joy-filled by the things of God. Take time as a group to pray for one another's spiritual renewal.