

# Nehemiah—Building for the Future

## STUDY 7

### The generous leader

Nehemiah Chapter 7 & 10

#### Introduction

In this study we see another tremendous attribute of Nehemiah; his generosity. Bible commentator Raymond Brown writes of Nehemiah, “He knows how wrong it would be for a leader to expect from others, that which he had not already done himself. Generous giving can inspire others to loosen their purse strings; it is a practical testimony to a believer’s gratitude as well as an expression of love, obedience and trust that the Lord will meet our needs.”

Chapter seven is mostly a genealogical record and so limited in information for a whole study, however some related themes in this chapter are also in chapter ten, therefore we will examine both chapters in this study. (The Message of Nehemiah, The Bible Speaks Today series. Raymond Brown. Inter-Varsity Press, Norton Street Nottingham NG7 3HR, England. Page 125. Copyright 1998.)

#### Opening Discussion Questions

Can you recall a time somebody blessed you financially when you were in a moment of need? How did it make you feel?

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Can you think of an occasion when you gave a generous gift? How did it make you feel?

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As a group, read Nehemiah 7:1-5, 66-73, 10:32-39.

1. Read Nehemiah 7:1-5. Now that the city's defensive walls are complete, what are Nehemiah's next priorities?

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2. Read Nehemiah 7:5-7 & 66-69 (verses 8-65 are purely a genealogical record). Why was this record important at the time, and why would God choose to include this in the Bible?

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Consider Nehemiah 7:70. 1,000 drachmas of gold is equivalent to 8.6 kilograms. 24 karat gold in Australia in 2019 was valued at \$65,000 per kg. multiplied by 8.6 = \$559,000. (Gold Eagle Empowering Investors Website. NIV Study Bible Commentary. Zondervan. Page 677.)

3. Nehemiah was a wealthy man, but this level of giving was extraordinary! Why is it important that leaders set the example of generous giving?

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3a. Nehemiah also paid for many golden bowls to be used at the temple and hundreds of priest's garments. What does this tell us about Nehemiah?

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Silver per kilogram in Australia 2019 Perth Mint would buy for \$680. 4,200 minas of silver = 2,300 Kilos  
2,300 kg of silver x 680 = \$1,564, 000  
(Perth Mint Website.)

40, 000 drachmas of gold = 344 kg  
344 kg x 65,000 = \$22,360,000  
(Gold Eagle Empowering Investors Website. NIV Study Bible Commentary. Zondervan. Page 677.)

4. Examine Nehemiah 7:71-72. According to the above research the Jewish community, including the governor's offering, gave approximately \$24,483,000. Over 24 million you might say in a single special offering! This money was for the ministries of the temple and maintenance thereof. What does this tell about the Jewish community?

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5. What sort of examples of extravagant giving do we observe in the New Testament? (Acts 4:32-37.)

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5a. How important is generosity in the church today? Are you committed to giving to the church offering and/or supporting overseas missions?

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6. Read Nehemiah 10:32-33. A Shekel was an average month's wage. In 2019 in Australia the average salary was \$74,563 per annum, excluding overtime. (NIV Study Commentary. Zondervan. Page 710. [www.livingin-australia.com](http://www.livingin-australia.com).) This means the monthly income would be \$6,213. A third of this is \$2,071; equivalent to a third of a shekel offering. What did this Jewish annual offering go towards?

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6a. For many years I gave my whole tax return as an "annual shekels offering". Can you think of something else that may fit the category of a shekels offering?

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7. Read Nehemiah 10:35-37a. In brief how would you describe a first fruits offering, and where was it given?

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7a. Most people in our cities today don't have crops or cattle but we are blessed by God with resources. I prayed for a young lady who deeply wanted a position she had applied for. She got the position and was so grateful to the Lord Jesus that she gave all her first month's pay in the church collection as what she called a "first fruits offering." Can you think of other examples that might match the concept of a first fruits offering?

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8. Examine Nehemiah 10:37b-39. What percentage of a person's produce was a tithe? Check Leviticus 27:30-34 to confirm your answer.

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8a. Were the Spiritual leaders the Levites, expected to tithe too?

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8b. What was the final challenge to the people as to why they should tithe in the last part of verse 39, and who did these tithes support?

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In conclusion, we have learnt from chapters 7 and 10 a whole variety of ways the Jews of Nehemiah's time practiced generosity; giving to the work of God and the ministries operating from the temple:

- A. God calls leaders to set the example of generous giving (Neh. 7:70).
- B. God calls his people at times to extraordinary levels of financial giving (Neh. 7:71-72).
- C. God calls people to a shekel offering, an annual offering to support the house of the Lord (Neh. 10:32-33).
- D. God calls people to a first fruits offering, when the Lord has blessed you with new resources (Neh. 10:35-37a).
- E. God calls people to tithe, to give 10% of their resources (Neh. 10:37b-39, Lev. 27:30-34).

You may be thinking, this is too complicated, all these different types of offerings. The most common one generous people commit to is the tithe. How challenged do you feel about putting Jesus first in your finances by tithing?

Do you find yourself saying there is no way I could afford to tithe? You may already be tithing; do you feel the Holy Spirit could be prompting about also giving in one of the other listed formats?

Close your time praying for your churches' finances, ministry finances and missionary finances. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to have faith to be more generous in his work and for God's house.

# Study Notes: