

GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



Renovation: Rebuilding for Purpose

Week 07 | Conflict Within Our Walls (Nehemiah 5:1-13)

For a brief overview of why (and how) to engage in each of these practices, you can read the Guideline For Growing on our website.

<https://www.gymeabaptist.org.au/growing/pages/guideline-for-growing>

What is a Discipleship Menu?

A discipleship menu is a selection of discipleship activities to engage in to continue the conversation that begins on Sunday throughout the week. The aim is to extend our interaction as a community of faith around activities that help us follow Jesus every single day. The activities vary from week to week (though there are some standard activities) and you are encouraged to do as many as you find helpful (like a menu; you don't need to eat everything on it!). Do them on your own (God and you), with a couple of friends (you and a few), or in a Life Group (you and a crew). The important thing is to do a few!

GBC Sermon Podcast and The GBC Big 3 Podcast

Don't forget you can review this week's sermon on the GBC Sermon Podcast. The sermon is usually uploaded by Monday afternoon. You can also listen in to the GBC Big 3 podcast; a weekly podcast where Matt, Jess, and Marc sit down and continue the conversation by engaging in three big questions raised by the congregation about the sermon. The GBC Big 3 comes out on Wednesdays.

Overview

Nehemiah 5 tells the story of how the conflict that had faced Israel and threatened their completion of the wall suddenly became a fight inside the walls. The poor were being exploited and oppressed by their own people, against God's commands and these actions damaged internal relationships, damaged the good work that they had begun, damaged the overall mission of God and exposed Israel (and by extension God) to ridicule, reproach and contempt among the gentile neighbours.

Internal conflicts, difficulties and disagreements in Christian Communities likewise don't just effect us, they can damage our witness to the wider world. When (not if) conflict occurs, a commitment to a Godly, grace-drenched, mature approach that promotes healing will go a long way in managing a difficult situation. Conflict may not always be resolved, but we can attempt our best to honour God and respect others in times of difficulty and disagreement. Please note, if you are undergoing significant conflict, relational or otherwise you might consider further help from a counsellor or mediator.

Passages to Read

We believe that the Word of God is living and active and that reading and reflecting on it is one way we encounter God. As you read, we encourage people to ask a set of simple questions: What stands out to you? What questions do you have? What is the invitation of God to you? Who can you tell?

The readings selected this week have all been chosen because of the insights they provide about having an attitude of preparedness for God's work. As you read them, consider how the practices these passages imply would prepare our hearts to hear from God.

- Matthew 18:15-17
- James 1:19
- Romans 12:17-21
- Ephesians 4:26
- Galatians 6:1

Questions to Reflect on

These questions can be used as the basis of a small group discussion or as journal questions. As with the rest of this menu, use the questions that are most useful for you or your crew.

1. Healing situations often requires Truth-Telling, Justice-Seeking, Grace-Giving and Peace-Making. Consider times in your life where you have used one or more of these skills in order to bring healing or restoration or solution to a problem or conflict. Have you been the beneficiary of any of these during your life? What was that like? In what ways can you now see the hand of God in your experiences?
2. Nehemiah first heard the complaints of the men and women of Israel which stirred him to action. Who is God asking you to hear and pay

attention to? What is God stirring your heart towards? What situation or injustice makes you angry? Pause and pray about this and bring this before God, asking for his guidance and solution. Ask God: Is this something to notice, or something to action?

3. Nehemiah challenged those who were in the wrong, and called them to account before the community. The result was a restitution, a mended community and an entire people praising God. Use your imagination to consider where you would like to see God be praised and exalted by a formerly disobedient and ungodly community. Pray that God will move in that place/relationship/community and bring His plans and purposes into that space.

Creative Exercise – Confession

Set aside some time for confession and self-examination. Light a candle and ask God to illuminate your heart so He may reveal the hidden corners and the His light would pierce your darkness. Ask yourself: Who have I injured recently through thoughtlessness, neglect, anger and so on. As the Holy Spirit brings people to mind, confess your feelings about and/or sins before God. Ask for forgiveness. You might write an apology then destroy the paper or speak out loud what you would say to that person if they were present. If needed (and wise for your situation, which is not all circumstances), you might even write an email or letter of apology or make a phone call to bring healing to the relationship, using the principles of:

- Truth Telling (the objective facts)
- Justice Seeking (right must be done)
- Grace Giving (mercy and forgiveness)
- Peace Making (when possible and suitable, seeking reconciliation of relationship)

Use the **Jesus Prayer** as a form of meditation and reflection. Spend several minutes in this meditative prayer.

As you breath slowly in and out, recite the words to the Jesus prayer, imagining God is emptying you of your sin and shame, and filling you with his love, presence and Holy Spirit.

INHALE: "Lord Jesus Christ. Son of God.

EXHALE: Have Mercy On Me. A Sinner"