

GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



Renovation: Rebuilding for Purpose

Week 08 | **Fake News, Fake Prophets and Fake Friends (Nehemiah 6:1-19)**

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

In Nehemiah 6 we see a return to opposition from outside the wall, and this time it's personal. Nehemiah faces fake news, fake prophets and fake friends as Israel's enemies seek to bring down the leader of the rebuilding project. They falsely accuse him of elevating himself to be the King of Judah. But Nehemiah continues to trust in God and refuses to run, hide or be intimidated. His confidence is in the Lord and the task God has clearly appointed him to achieve and as a result, the wall was completed. Nehemiah's confidence and trust in God is in stark opposition to the surrounding nations, who end up losing their self-confidence and becoming afraid, because they see the swift repairs were done 'with the help of our God' (7:16).

Yet the issues that caused God to send Israel into exile still remain. Israel's disobedience, rejection of God and sinfulness continue, and we see that no wall, temple, or city can change the human heart. The accusation 'There is a King in Judah' (6:7) that was levelled against Nehemiah would not be truly fulfilled until King Jesus came. Only King Jesus can change the human heart and make a way for all people to live in peace with God. He is the one who can truly end the exile of the heart.

As a swiftly-completed wall was a signpost that God was the help and hope of Israel, those of us who trust in Jesus are also a signpost – pointing to the God who saves, through the saviour Jesus Christ.

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?

- Ephesians 2:10
- 1 Peter 2:4-10
- 2 Timothy 4:1-6
- Mark 1:1-3 and 14-15

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. Have you ever experienced what you would consider to be a personal attack like Nehemiah did? In what ways did it effect you? How did it effect your relationship with God? What can you learn from this experience?
2. The speedy construction of the wall was a signpost that God was the helper of Israel. Consider your life and identify ways God has helped you recently. What was that like? In what ways is this a signpost to others that God is your helper and strength?

Discipleship Exercise - Gratitude

We often know we are meant to have an 'attitude of gratitude' and to live lives of thankfulness for all God has given us, but so often our eyes are drawn to all that we want or long for or don't have yet. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 encourages us to 'give thanks in all circumstances' – but too often we only give thanks in good circumstances.

Gratitude is a spiritual discipline we would do well to cultivate, as it redirects our desires and longings back to God as we pay attention to the things He has already given us, and we thank Him for them.

Here are a few practices to begin cultivating an attitude of gratitude:

- Write a list of the abundant blessings God has given you in your life. Pray over them and thank God for each blessing
- Write a letter of thanks to someone who has touched your life in the past year, month or week
- Gratitude as a spiritual discipline is partnered with the discipline of simplicity. Write down the things that you want or think you need...or even the things to which you feel entitled or dissatisfied with. Notice them. Bring them before God and consider them as you thank God for what you already have, giving all your wants and needs etc to him to do with as He wishes. Humbly submit your lists to God and ask Him to open your eyes to what God wants to bless you with.
- Read the lyrics to the old Hymn "Count your blessings" as poetry and use these as a basis for a prayer of thankfulness to God.

1. When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Refrain:

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.

2. Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by. [Refrain]

3. When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high. [Refrain]

4. So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end. [Refrain]