

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

RESTORED

LESSONS IN NEHEMIAH

Lesson 8 – Defending the Defenseless

Nehemiah 5:1-13

All of a sudden here in Nehemiah chapter 5, there's no mention of any work being done on the wall. The work of God had come to a screeching halt and not a single arrow or sword was the cause of the delay. What happened? Personal problems had sidetracked the work. The greed of the wealthy, who loaned desperate families money at high interest, had put a stop to the wall building. Sadly, what the enemy couldn't accomplish from outside the walls, he was able to do from the inside. Nehemiah was angered and he moved into immediate action to defend the defenseless. He confronted those who were taking advantage of their brethren and reminded them it is wrong to prey on the poor. He challenged them to set things right by repaying what they had wrongly taken. As a result, they listened and the people were once again unified and ready to work. And all the assembly said, "Amen!" and praised the Lord.

Open your Bible and begin with a word of prayer

This Week's Scripture: Nehemiah 5:1-13

¹And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren. ²For there were those who said, "We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live." ³There were also some who said, "We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine." ⁴There were also those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our lands and vineyards. ⁵Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards." ⁶And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. ⁷After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, "Each of you is exacting usury from his brother." So I called a great assembly against them. ⁸And I said to them, "According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?" Then they were silenced and found nothing to say. ⁹Then I said, "What you are doing is not good. Should you not

walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?¹⁰I also, with my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury!¹¹Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them.”¹²So they said, “We will restore it, and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say.” Then I called the priests, and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise.¹³Then I shook out the fold of my garment and said, “So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not perform this promise. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.” And all the assembly said, “Amen!” and praised the Lord. Then the people did according to this promise.

This Week’s Memory Verse:

Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 82:3-4(NKJV)

1. This week, we find Nehemiah dealing with internal strife. There were Jews taking advantage of Jews and the poor were crying out for justice! Nehemiah, after great thought, decided to deal with the problem directly and concisely. Not only did he end the extortion practice, he lent his own money to help the situation! God’s Word has much to say about caring for the poor. In what ways do the following verses show us God’s heart toward the poor?

a. Proverbs 19:17: _____

b. Acts 20:35: _____

c. 1 John 3:17: _____

2. James 2:15-16 asks a rhetorical question regarding the poor. What is the question and how would you answer it? _____

Reflect and Respond – Matthew 25:34-46 tells the story of the King and how He

looks at the poor, the homeless and the lonely. What does Jesus say and how can you apply this passage to your views regarding those less fortunate than you? Share your thoughts.

Result – Consider today’s Bible study lecture and group time. What one lesson will you take away from this study and apply to your walk with the Lord? _____
