

# Help, My Nation is a 'Hot Mess'!

## Opening questions:

What do you do when your nation, community or family is a "hot mess?" Where do you even start? How can one person ever hope to make a difference?

There was a man in the Old Testament by the name of Nehemiah who had the same problem. This is a study about that man and **what God did** through him to make a difference.

## A little history:

Because Israel rejected God, and broke their covenant with Him, the Temple of God, and the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC, and the people were taken captive to Babylon. Later around 445BC, a Jew named Nehemiah was cupbearer to the Persian King Artaxerxes (to taste the wine in case it was ever poisoned). Nehemiah was sad because of the state of the protective wall around the suffering people of Jerusalem. After much prayer, he approached the king and requested that he be allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall and gates around the city. As there was with Zerubbabel (who earlier led the rebuilding of the Temple), there was also much opposition to Nehemiah and his efforts. With much prayer, and a commitment to do what was right, the wall was rebuilt. The King even appointed Nehemiah to be governor over the land. Opposition continued. Nehemiah never deviated from prayer to God for strength, and to overcome discouragement and intimidation. He also remained very committed to God's Law.

## There are some very important principles in the Book of Nehemiah:

- 1) **Care** - Nehemiah was attentive to the state of those around him (1:1-3) by questioning the people and staying informed of their needs. Also, chapter 5 describes his care for the poor and his generosity.
- 2) **Prayer** - When problems were evident, Nehemiah mourned, and immediately prayed for God to intervene (1:5, and again in 2:4).
- 3) **Confession** - In order to receive God's help, Nehemiah confessed the sins of his people, **and** those of his own and of his family (1:6-7; see also chapter 9)
- 4) **Supplication (Asking)** - Nehemiah asked God to hear his prayer for power and success (1:8-11).
- 5) **Evaluation** - Nehemiah went to Jerusalem and inspected the work that needed to be done (2:11-16).
- 6) **Action** - He coordinated the work needed, **and** participated in the work himself (3:1-32).
- 7) **Protection and Perseverance** - Nehemiah responded to opposition, and by prayer and wisdom, stayed focused and did what was needed to protect himself, his family and community (4:1-23).
- 8) **Maintenance** - In the final chapter, Nehemiah assured God and His Word would remain central to the culture, noting when the people went astray, and instituted necessary reforms leading the people back to obedience to receive God's continued grace, mercy and blessings (13:1-31).

## Questions:

- 1) As was with Nehemiah, what is heavy on your heart that urgently needs to be done before you leave this world?
- 2) What may your role be to restore and protect God's plan for you, your family, your church and community?
- 3) Compare the success **and** satisfaction of things done for God, and by His power, with things done for ourselves, and by our own power.
- 4) What **steps** will you take to grow in your knowledge of, and love for the Lord that He may work in your life according to His plans for you; that He prepared in advance for you to do? (Ephesians 2:10)
- 5) What would it look like to 'build a wall' to protect your family, church, community and nation from evil?

**What can one person do?  
I can do everything through Him who gives me strength!  
(Philippians 4:13 NIV)**