



WOMEN'S DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY

Rebuild

PART II

FEBRUARY 2022



SHORELINE.CHURCH



Rebuild, Part II

Last month in our study, we looked at the story of Nehemiah and his leadership as the Jews returned home from their displacement and started the hard work of rebuilding their fortress, the wall of Jerusalem. We looked at how Nehemiah used this time not only to rebuild physical protection from their surrounding enemies but how he helped the Jews in the refortification of their souls.

The markers of spiritual growth that we read about last month, Bible Engagement, Passionate Prayer, and Wholehearted Worship, are personal markers. They are time spent focusing on God and growing alongside Him. This month we'll learn how a deeply personal relationship with our Father propels us out to the world to love and disciple others.

As you read the book of Nehemiah you will notice that Nehemiah does not guide the Jewish people by working one spiritual marker at a time, but as they experience the joy of serving and being with their community they have even more reason to worship and to pray. As they return to their homeland and their traditions they are more inclined to sincerely listen to the Bible so they can make connections back to how God desired them to be different.

These markers are not meant to be practiced consecutively but concurrently. Yes, it is crucial to have an understanding of scripture and a daily relationship with Christ but we can not do that in a bubble. Being in the world and serving others gives us a greater perception of God's love and how it reaches further than our comprehension.

In this second part of our Nehemiah study, we will look at Humble Service, Joyful Generosity, Consistent Community, and Organic Outreach, and how the Jewish people stepped out of their comfort zones and worked together to rebuild the city that God appointed as theirs. These four markers are muscles that need exercise because they are not naturally occurring habits but when we go out in Jesus's name, as He has appointed, we are able to do much greater than we could even imagine.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

John 15:16



Humble Service



Read Nehemiah 3: 1-12

Did you notice anyone with the trade “carpenter” or “blacksmith” next to their name? No! All these men and women stepped out of their traditional roles and got their hands dirty. In the very first verse, Nehemiah lists the high priests as the workmen for the Sheep Gate. Traditionally, high priests were meant to supervise, not work alongside in this way. And yet, they humbled themselves and maybe got a callous or two in the process.

It is amazing to think of this being completed by people who knew very little about bolts and beams. Look back at Nehemiah 2:18. Journal your thoughts.

They had faith that Nehemiah had been in communication with God, and when they stepped out from their earthly position to do the work that needed to be done, God gave them the know-how and the strength to accomplish the mission.

There’s much more building to be done in chapter three, but let’s pause in verse 15. What’s the name of the pool in this verse?

Now, flip to the new testament and read John 9:1-11. What’s the pool in these verses?

Two slightly different names, but it’s the same pool! When Shallun stepped out of his high position and served humbly as God had called him to do, he set the stage for a miracle of the promised Messiah! All the bruises, drops of sweat, and sore muscles that went into this project were all to lay the foundation of the workings of Christ.

What we build now, in the strength of God, can be used for miracles long after we’re gone. What you build now in your family, in your marriage, in your community can be used for discipleship for generations. As long as we trust in the gracious hand of God upon us and not our skill, our service will never be in vain.

Take a moment to pray and ask God to strengthen you and lead you where He needs your service.

Joyful Generosity



We serve a God who supplies *more than enough*. However, too often, we can look at our circumstances and only see lack. And through that focus on lack or fear of not having enough, we risk falling into greed or even taking advantage of those around us.

Read Nehemiah 5:1-5. What are the people's complaints in this passage? How did the officials respond to the people's need for food?

Read verses 6-11. Contrary to the other officials, what has been Nehemiah's approach to the people in need?

Read verse 12. After Nehemiah challenges their actions, what is the response of the nobles?

Nehemiah first demonstrated faith in God's provision to us back in chapter 2 when he not only asked the King for permission to go rebuild the wall, but for supplies such as timber (see 2:8).

Read Nehemiah 5:14-19. Why was Nehemiah different? _____

In the space below, write down the differences and similarities you see between Nehemiah and the other officials. Underneath, write out how we are to be similar to and different from the world around us when it comes to generosity.

SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES

When God calls us and we accept His grace, we are made new. We are given new instincts, and a new nature (2 Cor 5:17). This new nature is often counter-cultural and offends our common sense. But, just like Nehemiah, we can fear God and trust in Him to provide all that we need. Imagine our generosity re-shaping a hurting nation the way Nehemiah's did!

Take a moment to pray and thank God for all His blessings on your life. Thank God for all He has given you that you have to share with others.

Consistent Community



Our culture equates independence with strength and asking for help with weakness. We will take care of ourselves, no matter how we might harm ourselves in the process. This is not Biblical. God, from the creation of Adam, knew we weren't good alone, that we weren't strong enough to face life's battles without backup. We were created to be in community with others.

Read Nehemiah 4:1-9

Sanballat and Tobiah were regional governors under the Persian King, who had authority over Jerusalem at this time. They had been picking at the Jews since they arrived back from their dispersion, but Nehemiah had stayed focused on the work, ignoring their harassment. This angered them even more, and Sanballat and Tobiah became even more determined to end this little construction project the Jews had started. What is their goal? **Read verse 8.**



Confusion is a consistent tool of our enemy. If you've ever had a miscommunication in a relationship you know it can take a minute to get back on track! Instead of getting scared and losing control, the Jews came together in prayer and made a plan!

Read verses 11-14. Write out Nehemiah's quote here.

We aren't meant to fight in vain. Nehemiah and the Jews were not building the wall or fighting for themselves. They built and fought to protect the people God had called His own for generations to come. This was the time to come shoulder to shoulder under the glory of the "awe-inspiring Lord" and fight for what God had created for them.

Read 15-23. Write out Nehemiah's quote in verses 19-20. Underline the last sentence.

"Fight" has a very aggressive emotion behind it, and the imagery of swords and spears from Nehemiah is fitting. So when we fight our quiet battles of uncertainty, grief, addiction, mental health, negative self-talk, doubt, or fear we can diminish it as being "petty" or "insignificant." Know that your battles matter and God has created us to be in community with each other because He knows we are not strong enough on our own. And when we fight together and see victory, the celebration is always better when we can celebrate together!

Are you currently in a Godly community where you can reach out for help if needed? Are you available for others to come to you when they are facing challenging times? Why or why not?



Prior to the destruction of the Temple and the Babylonian diaspora, the Israelites were on rocky ground with their God. A majority had lost the practices that God gave them and became like the pagan kingdoms around them. So for a man like Nehemiah, born in Persia, away from the Holy Land, how does he grow to listen, pray, and worship? Discipleship!

Read Daniel 1:1-7

The four young men listed were probably in their late teens. They were the most handsome and smartest from Judah and they were plopped in a new world where nothing was off-limits.
Continue in verses 8-21.

A group of young men don't just come to these conclusions on their own, they had parents and teachers who disciplined them. Because of this, even when no one was watching, they honored their faith and their God. Daniel became a high-ranking official under four kings during his lifetime and did not falter in his dedication to his God, we all remember the lions' den, right? (Daniel 6)

These stories would have been passed down and encouraged others to keep to the commandments. Nearly fifty years after Daniel died Nehemiah was born. We don't know about his upbringing, but we can infer that he was brought up by parents that loved and obeyed God because they produced at least two sons that had a heart for God's holy city and His people. (Neh 1:2, 7:2) His family disciplined Nehemiah so beautifully that even when he was brought to serve in the pagan royal court, he still listened and obeyed God.

The Jews that followed God knew their faith was not just a personal mission, they did it for the promise. The promise that the Messiah was coming from their people. No matter how ugly their history, they would always have that golden thread through their story. The Savior was brought up through their line. Nehemiah's obedience and discipleship, and that of others like Ezra and Zerubbabel, made way for the coming Messiah. Their physical reconstruction of Jerusalem made a way for the spiritual restoration of all mankind.

Read Nehemiah 6:15-16. When we live our lives abiding in God, in Jesus, it will be noticed by neighbors, co-workers, and even those that wish us harm. We will be set apart as different and they will see what a mighty God we serve.

We can easily scoff at the choices of the Jews, but never let it be forgotten that because of all they suffered in the name of God, we now live in the freedom of Christ. We can learn from them that our relationship with God, with Jesus, is not a personal mission, we do it for the promise of all people. We are to live and serve in a way that brings glory to God and people to Jesus. We are not simply called to be disciples of Jesus but to disciple for Jesus. As Nehemiah, and countless others in the Old Testament, this is not about us, it's for the generations to come.

Take a moment and write down the names of those that took time to disciple you in your lifetime. If possible, call them or send them a note, thanking them for pouring into you the love of Jesus.

And the things you have heard me [Paul] say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2

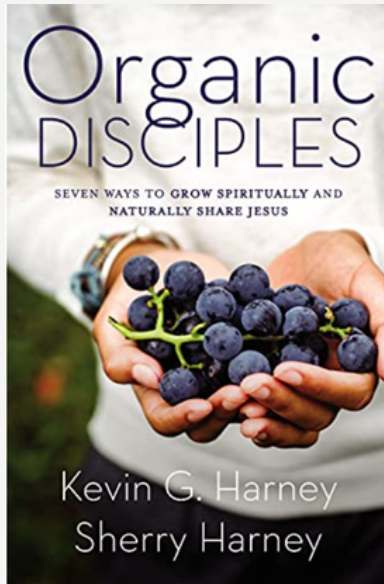


Suggested questions to ponder:

- What have I learned?
- Do I feel stuck in any area?
- How has God grown me in these areas throughout my life?
- Who is God laying on my heart to disciple or be discipled by?
- Which area frustrates me the most? Why?
- What are the main themes God is highlighting to me?

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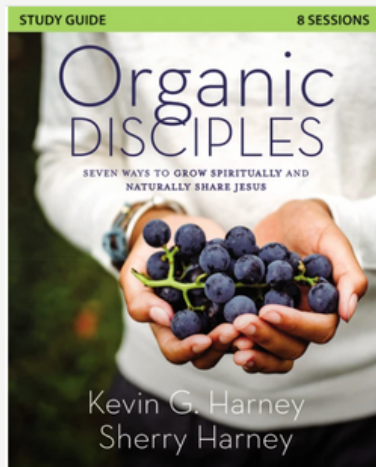
Resources



The theme for January and February 2022 Women's Discipleship Community is "Rebuild," a look at the 7 Markers of Spiritual Growth through the lens of Nehemiah.

The 7 Markers of Spiritual Growth are outlined in Organic Disciples: *Seven ways to grow spiritually and naturally share Jesus.*

Copies are available at the Shoreline bookstore.



Want to go deeper?
For ways to grow in any of the 7 Markers with others at Shoreline, visit our website and hover over "Get Involved"
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Spiritual Growth

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