



WOMEN'S DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY

Rebuild

PART I

JANUARY 2022



SHORELINE.CHURCH

Rebuild, Part I - Introduction

This month's Women's Discipleship Community resource is Part I of a 2-part series. We're focusing on the 7 Markers of Spiritual Growth and how they propel us outward to love and share Jesus with the people in our lives.

At Shoreline this January and February, our sermon series, *Organic Disciples*, will cover these 7 ways to grow spiritually and naturally share Jesus. This month's Women's Discipleship Community will be looking at Nehemiah and how he modeled life with God and changed an entire nation.

Let's take a look together at how Scripture guides us toward the first 3 markers:

- Bible Engagement
- Passionate Prayer
- Wholehearted Worship

Next month, we'll learn about the remaining 4 markers (stay tuned!). We encourage you to begin this month by reading through the book of Nehemiah on your own or listening to it using your Bible app. This will give you more literary context to the pages that follow.

With love,

Shoreline Women's Discipleship Community Team



Learning from Nehemiah

The telling of the 70-year exile of the Jews to Babylon is spread through a third of the books in the Old Testament. That's 70 years out of the total 1500 that comprise the writings of the Old Testament. All those years encompassed the tumultuous history of the Israelites that had led them to this turning point- they were now faced with the choice to follow God or the world around them.

In these portions of scripture, we see God as a loving parent. He has done all He could for his child and finally has to release him to his own choices. God used this time in Jewish history as a time of refinement for His people. He let them experience life away from His presence and, through grace, allowed them to choose whether to return to Him or not.

God had warned the Israelites, through earlier prophets, they needed to trust Him and not worldly ideas. God desired them to be spiritually mature so they could disciple the generations that would follow. By following God's law to the best of their ability, the Jews would organically show those around them that God had set them apart for something greater.

When they continued to move further away from God's plan, He gave them over to the pagan empire, Babylon. The enemy destroyed their temple, their city, and the walls that had kept them safe for hundreds of years. High-ranking Jews were deported to Babylon. There, they found positions and trades and made a new life. For some, the traditions from Judah continued, while others assimilated into the Babylonian culture and brought up their children without considering God's law.

When the Jews in Babylon were released to travel back to Jerusalem, not all followed. Many had made a prosperous life in Babylon and did not see the appeal of going back to a broken-down city. As they entered Jerusalem, their religious epicenter, seeing their homeland as nothing more than rubble was a physical reminder of that status of their spiritual life. The walls of the city collapsed. They had no defense against any enemy, spiritual or physical. They needed to rebuild their defense around their faith and their land.

For the next two months, we will focus on the story of Nehemiah and how one man led a group of exiles back to their homeland to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem while also rebuilding their trust in God. Nehemiah was a spiritually mature example to those he led. Through his time in Babylon, he did not forget the word of God, he kept in conversation with God, and he worshiped God even while separated from his homeland.

As we come to this study, we, like the Jews in the book of Nehemiah, are at different levels of faith and spiritual maturity, however, none of us will ever be complete in our faith; we all have rebuilding to do in some area of our life. Simultaneously, we are given the choice to do the hard work of rebuilding or settle for sitting in our ruin. At the beginning of this new year let us choose to grow in our relationship with God, trusting that as we grow in spiritual maturity He will use us to disciple others around us for His glory.



Bible Engagement



Bible Engagement is important to our spiritual growth. We need to know the character of God to see Him rightly. This will influence how we pray and worship Him. We can better walk a Christ-like life if we understand how Christ lived and what He taught. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, Scripture teaches us about God so we can grow as godly women.

Open your Bible and read Nehemiah chapter one. Underline or make note of where Nehemiah reminds God of His character. Nehemiah is a man that knows God's character because he knows God's word. Now underline or make note of where Nehemiah confesses sin and wrongdoing. Nehemiah was aware of his sin and the sin of his people because he knew the law.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16 What does this verse teach us about scripture?



Nehemiah was practicing that verse in this first chapter. He knew that God's Word was to be their only guide on how to live, and Nehemiah also knew they were not living according to the law.

Let's read Nehemiah 8:1-6 How long did they gather to listen to God's Word?



The Jews gathered around their teachers as thirsty people around a fountain. It had been decades since some had heard the teachings of the law. They had forgotten the beautiful faithfulness of God because they were no longer familiar with His story which in turn was their story.

Continue reading verses 7-12.

It was not expected for the people to hear the Word and immediately understand everything they were being told. They listened to the teachers as God's law was explained and was given meaning. Nehemiah did not simply want the Jews to hear the Word, he wanted them to understand it.

What do they do in verse 12 after their Bible lesson?



When we are engaged in God's truth we can have confidence in His grace and can celebrate in His truth. Be encouraged to know that you do not need to be a Bible scholar before you can have a rich relationship with Christ. Also, we're not meant to understand it all on our own.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 14:26

Passionate Prayer



In Chapter one Nehemiah discovers that the walls of Jerusalem have been left burned and crumbled. The people had no defense, and he felt called to leave his royal position, travel back, and rebuild the walls. The first obstacle he faced was asking permission from the king to leave and to provide supplies.

Read Chapter 2:1-8

This is not a time for Nehemiah to go off into a corner and have a personal prayer time with God. Nehemiah did not stop his conversation with the king, look up to the heavens, and openly pray. He prays in the moment, in his heart, and God gives him direction.

Have you ever hesitated to pray because you didn't feel you had enough time to properly pray? How does this example from Nehemiah help you see that the impact of a prayer does not involve length but faith?



Like Nehemiah, Paul writes in Ephesians that we should be praying consistently in all seasons.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

The idea of *passionate prayer* can feel intimidating, and there can be hesitancy to pursue a passionate prayer life because we feel we don't have the vocabulary or time to be considered "passionate." The truth is there is no formula for a passionate prayer life. Passionate prayer is not about the words, it's about the faith we bring with our prayers.

What Nehemiah showed to the people around him was that we learn about God from the scriptures but we get to know God through time spent with Him in prayer. When we pray consistently we are inviting Him into every detail of our life and we learn *that's where He really wants to be*. He wants us to come to Him in faith that He has the details, and even if we can't see the answer in the moment that doesn't mean there isn't one.

Look at Nehemiah 4:9. Is Nehemiah alone? No! He's praying with his people, with his community. We also need to be in prayer with others around us. When we join in prayer with our family and our community of believers it is an example of our faith and our relationship with God. We disciple each other when we join together in faith and pray.

Reflect: Prayer is not about being self-confident in your words, it's about being God-confident in His love for you. Does reading that change your perspective on prayer, if so, how?



Wholehearted Worship



In chapter eight of Nehemiah, Ezra came before the people and read the Word to them. As Ezra read, the people stood, lifted their hands and cried “Amen! Amen!” Not with the beat of a drum, not following a melody, but at the acknowledgement of God’s Word, the people worshiped. As the people began to grow in their understanding of God, worship freely flowed from them. It was a spiritual reaction to the goodness of God.

After the Jews are reminded of God’s greatness, their reaction is to weep because of how the Jewish people have sinned, but Nehemiah stops them. Read Nehemiah 8:8-18.

God doesn’t always want us to mourn over the things that we cannot change. The Jews could not change their history, but they could begin to worship the God that, through grace and His promises, brought them back. We serve a God that loves celebrations and when we celebrate God and the goodness of His nature we are worshiping in a biblical manner.

When you hear “wholehearted worship” what are your initial thoughts?



Look up John 4:23-24 What does Jesus say about worship?

Worship comes from the Spirit that fills us when we put our trust in Jesus. It is not a singular activity of singing, it is anything that brings acknowledgment of the majesty of our Savior and our God. Worship can be exclaiming at God’s creation, holding a new born baby and giving thanks for a new life, or sharing a walk with your spouse and giving thanks for the covenant of marriage. Worship is only limited by our understanding of the greatness of God.

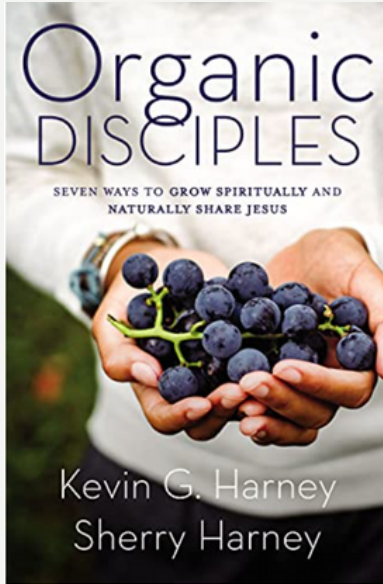
Read this Psalm. Pray and ask God to use His Spirit, which dwells in you, to lead you in wholehearted and consistent worship, recognizing the truth of who He is and what He has done.

*My mouth is filled with your praise,
declaring your splendor all day long.
Psalm 71:8*

When we are engaged in wholehearted worship throughout our day it’s hard for others not to notice. When we eagerly point out the awesomeness of God in the ordinary moments of our day it will gain our Savior the acknowledgment He so rightly deserves.

Challenge: Go take a walk anywhere you like and let the Holy Spirit point out things that you can worship Him for: His creation, a sweet family playing, the breath in your lungs... whatever it is, be filled with the truth that God is always worthy of our worship.

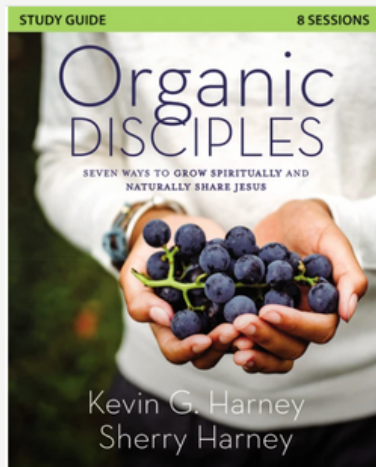
Resources



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 will be available at the Shoreline bookstore.



Small Groups at Shoreline
Want to study Organic Disciples with others? Small Groups kick-off the week of January 9th, 2022. Sign up here: <https://shoreline.church/small-groups-2/>

Post a prayer on our Prayer Wall!

<https://shoreline.church/prayer-wall/>



Spiritual Growth

Learn more about growing spiritually.
<https://shoreline.church/spiritual-markers/>

Spiritual Growth Self-Assessment

Take the Spiritual Growth Self-Assessment here
<https://shoreline.church/spiritual-growth-self-assessment/>

January 9th at Shoreline

We are also offering a Spiritual Growth Self-Assessment at Shoreline on January 9th, led by Sherry Harney.

50-Day Bible Reading Plan & Bible Book Overviews

Want to read the Bible but don't know where to start? Try this 50-day Bible reading plan.
<http://shoreline.church/wp-content/uploads/50-Day-Reading-Plan-1.pdf>

Bible Book Overviews
<https://shoreline.church/bible-book-overviews/>
