

AWAKE THE CALL TO A RENEWED LIFE

Lesson 3: Return to Prayer Nehemiah 1:1-10 (NASB)

Icebreaker Question: *How do you typically respond to bad news?*

Definitions:

- **Exile (v.3)** In 586 B.C. The Southern Kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonian armies. As a result, the Jews were deported, or exiled, to Babylon.
- **Remnant (v.3)** This term refers to the Jews who survived the Babylonian captivity and returned at the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. reestablish life in n Judah and Jerusalem.
- **Redeemed (v.10)** To redeem involves paying a price to release a person from slavery. The reference here may denote God's bringing His people out of slavery in Egypt during the time of Moses; it also indicates the return of the Jews of Judah following the Babylonian exile.

Nehemiah 1:1-3

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, **2** that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. **3** They said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire."

Discussion Question #1

- What are some symptoms of spiritual trouble in today's culture?

Nehemiah 1:4-6a

4 When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. **5** I said, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, **6** let Your ear now be attentive

and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants,

Discussion Question #2

Nehemiah responded with mourning, praying, and fasting. When should we incorporate these practices in our lives?

Nehemiah 1:6b-10

confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father's house have sinned. **7** "We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. **8** "Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; **9** but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.' **10** "They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand.

Discussion Question #3-4

- What role should confession play in our lives?
- What's one step you could take to improve your prayer life?

Live It Out

- **Pray every day.** Stop trying to fix your problems on your own and take your problems to the only One who can really solve them.
- **Schedule time for uninterrupted prayer.** Block out at least 15-30 minutes for longer experiences with prayer. Guard that time and use it to focus on God as you pray for revival for yourself, your family, your church, and your community.
- **Fast.** Fasting can take your prayer life to a new level. Consider fasting as a group on a particular day.