

Bible Class Notes – Studies in the Old Testament – Lesson 167

Character Studies from Daniel and Nehemiah

This week – How fickle (changeable) we are even when saved but how ready God is to forgive.

“Ye have transgressed (sinned) ... Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers and do His pleasure.” *Ezra 10 v 10-11*

Bible Readings for this week:

(Choose a regular time each day to read the Bible and pray whether it be when you first wake up or just before you go to sleep)

Day	Bible Reading	Tick When Read
Sunday	Matthew 21v28-32 (Who obeyed?)	
Monday	Ezra 9v1-15 (The sin of marrying unsaved people)	
Tuesday	Ezra 10v1-17 (The people’s repentance)	
Wednesday	Nehemiah 13v1-9 (The people fall back into sin)	
Thursday	Nehemiah 13v10-22 (The Sabbath day broken)	
Friday	Nehemiah 13v23-31 (Old sins repeated)	
Saturday	1 Kings 11v1-23 (Had not learnt from Solomon’s sin)	

Important Thought for us Today: Why can we be fickle (changeable) even when a believer? Our spiritual fervour can vary by the day; one day hot for the Lord, desiring to read his word, pray and be readily obedient; then the next, cold and indifferent, easily absorbed with this world’s sinful pleasures. It will be very helpful for us to consider:

- 1) **Are we seeking?** The Devil will actively make sin attractive to keep us from the Lord, so you must expect things to vary from day to day. **Keep seeking and pray for forgiveness.**
- 2) **Mistaken about our salvation?** If we can sin without concern and have no hatred of the sin we are committing we need to ask whether we are truly saved. **Pray for help.**
- 3) **Backslidden?** Even when saved our war with the Devil and the old person in us continues, fighting with us to return to our old sinful self. **Take comfort.** If we hate our sin this shows we are the Lord’s, but we need to **come back to God in sincere repentance.**

How did Nehemiah stay firm? Nehemiah 8v10 gives his secret: **“for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”** If God alone is our source of joy, then we too will remain strong in Him.

A Hymn confessing our sin but showing how ready the Lord is to forgive. (379)

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| 1. LORD, I confess to Thee
Sadly my sin; | 2. Faithful and kind art Thou,
Forgiving all; | 3. All is then peace and light
This soul within: |
| All I have done and said,
All I have been. | Low at Thy pierced feet,
Saviour, I fall. | Thus shall I walk with Thee,
Saviour unseen; |
| Purge Thou my sin away,
Wash Thou my soul this day,
Lord, make me clean. | O, let the cleansing blood,
Blood of the Lamb of God,
Wash o’er my soul! | Leaning on Thee, my God,
Guided along the road,
Nothing between. |

EDT Bible/College Class Take Home Sheet

This sheet is given to remind you of the lesson and to encourage you to read your Bible.

Fickleness - The People of Jerusalem go back on their Vows.

• Disappointment!

The people had initially been so enthusiastic at the dedication of the rebuilt wall. They had readily made vows to serve the Lord and keep from sin. Yet on Nehemiah’s return he found that the people had slipped back into old sins which they had previously repented of, and by so doing they were offending their God again.

Nehemiah dealt swiftly with them for they had:

- **Invited the enemy in.** Tobiah, the Ammonite, had been given spacious rooms in the temple by his relative, Eliashib the priest! **What an insult to the Lord!** Nehemiah threw out all his possessions from the temple, returning all the Lord’s things.
- **Neglected God’s work.** The people had stopped paying the Levites to work in the temple; meaning they had to work for their food - unable to serve the Lord. Nehemiah reminded the people of their need to give money to support the Lord’s work.
- **Neglected the Sabbath.** Nehemiah awoke on the Lord’s Sabbath to the noise of market trade - breaking the commandment - **‘To Keep the Sabbath Day holy.’** Nehemiah took strong measures to prevent this, closing the gates on the Sabbath Day.
- **Married unbelievers.** Men had married women who could not speak the Jewish language, having no love for the one true God, causing their husbands, and children to worship their idols. Solomon, many years earlier, had sinned this sin. Nehemiah chased from him the Priest’s son because he had married Sanballat’s daughter.

• Setting our lives in order.

- **Never invite Satan in.** He wants to rule all our lives, even believers - so beware! He is so quick to control our aims and desires; removing any zeal or love for the Lord. *Occupy your mind with things of the Lord and His Word; read the Bible and biographies of godly Christians. Follow God’s advice in James 4; Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.*
- **Remember the Lord’s work.** The church cannot function unless Christians give their time, energy and gifts to the Lord. A responsibility to attend all the services we can. *It is surprising how blessed they are who set aside time, gifts and energy for His service.*
- **Remember the Lord’s Day.** Avoid the temptation to treat the Lord’s Day for our own relaxation and entertainment; lying in, and following our own selfish pleasure. *The Lord only asks for 1 day in 7 to be used for worship and to serve Him. (Isaiah 58 13-14)*
- **Be careful in friendships.** The values and aims of those we mix with **do** rub off on us. If our friends hold to this world’s values and scorn those of the Lord, we will be weakened and fall more easily into sin. Even wise King Solomon became foolish in marrying worldly wives losing much spiritual blessing and was judged by the Lord. *Find your help and close friendship from the Lord’s family whilst witnessing to all unsaved.*

Blessings of putting the Lord first: **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”.**

Romans 12 v1-2