

## “Rebuilding a Broken Culture”

*Nehemiah 1:1-11*

### Introduction

As we turn on the news, swipe through our phones, stream the latest shows or step out the front door, we often see and experience unrest. We see a nation whose individual citizens and families consistently reflect the fraying political, educational, financial and economic systems around them. Among the people in our nation are Christian citizens; Christians living in spiritual distress, endorsing or turning a blind eye to sacred rejection and contributing to a time of social decay.

God’s Word reminds us that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl 1:9). Just as God’s people live and contribute to a broken culture today, so it was for Nehemiah and the Jewish people in 445 BC. While Nehemiah’s brother and friends were visiting him in Persia, they came with the word that God’s people—the great people who escaped and survived captivity—were now living in great distress and disgrace. This burdened Nehemiah. He was saddened and anguished by the state of his people. Not only was he saddened about his people being distressed and disgraced, but he was also hurt to know they had been in this state for so long – almost 150 years.

When we turn on our devices and relive the daily traumas plaguing society, it can bring sadness to our souls and much like Nehemiah, we are and should be prompted as God’s people to take action. Nehemiah prayed based on God’s person, purity and promises. He recognized the problem of his day was a spiritual matter, and his appeal to God would be the only sufficient intervention for a decaying society. Upon prayerful consideration, we each can begin to cultivate a process to repair a broken culture based on God’s Word and with His help. Nehemiah knew he had to get in the right position for God to respond. He confessed the sin of the nation so that the problem of the country could be addressed. He was intentional in dealing with the corporate sin of the Jewish people and the individual sin in his own life.

The friends of Nehemiah’s brother may have brought up the news of the Jews to mock them and shame them for their current state. However, they did not count on communicating the information to a person in the right position and with the right posture to do something about the trouble facing God’s people. Unknown to the visitors, Nehemiah was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. This placed him in the right position to appeal to the king. Most importantly, he had the proper posture to take his appeal to God first, to move him at the right time and to put him in the right place to make a difference.

Much like Nehemiah, when we are burdened by the woes of the world, the key to healing a broken culture is to proceed with intentionality. Be intentional about your repentance and prayer, and make a plan for how you will proceed. Consider your spheres of influence and ask God to show you ways in which He can use you in the secular world for sacred assistance.

### Getting Started

1. What problems of our culture burden you most?
2. How should your prayers change in light of this message?

### Let’s Get Personal

1. What promises of God can you stand on when the state of God’s people looks uncertain?
  2. What resources do you have at your disposal to make a difference in your life and the lives of others?
  3. In what ways are you willing to use your position to make an influential impact?
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**Take the Next Step**

1. Think about your skills and gifts. How has God cultivated these in your life to use them for His glory?
2. Share the one step you will commit to take to move you toward action in the areas of culture that burden you.
3. How can you pray to position yourself to make a change in the culture?
4. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at the following passages: 2 Chronicles 15:3-6 and Nehemiah 2:12, 17-20.

**Renew Your Mind**

*“Please, Lord, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and please make Your servant successful today and grant him mercy before this man.”*

*Nehemiah 1:11*

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