

Nehemiah 8:1-12

“The Impact of God’s Word” – Part 1

I. Nehemiah 8 – Responding to God’s word

- A. V.1 – a hunger/desire for the word.
- B. V.2 – hearing of the word; hearing with understanding – Deut. 31:10-13; Is. 5:13; **Hos. 4:6** – “*My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge.*” – **Ignorance is NOT bliss!!!**
- C. V.3 – the reading of the word.
- 1) *Read it in the open square in front of the water gate = most public place where everyone could hear = where God’s word belongs: the public hearing of society, homes & churches!*
 - a) Water for washing = the Word of God – John 15:3; Eph. 5:26
 - b) Water for drinking = Spirit of God – John 4:13-14; 7:37-39; Rev. 21:6; 22:17
 - 2) Morning to midday (Heb. = from the light until **noon** = half or middle) = 6 hours!
 - a) *Wondrous part of this not just that Ezra read/taught for 6 hours, **but that the people listened!** A result of having a heart for God’s word (v.1)...*
 - 3) Ears of **all** the people were **attentive** = thoughtful & courteous observation; to listen carefully = diff. b/w hearing & heeding.
- D. V.5 – Respect for the word = **all** the people stood up – 1 Thess. 2:13.
- 1) *Their hearts were sensitive & respectful. They weren’t just ready to receive the word intellectually, but with sensitivity.*
 - a) *The seed of the word in our mind is meaningless if it doesn’t take root in our heart.*

2) *Does the word of God move us? If it doesn't move us in our heart it will never move us in our body = produce fruit/action.*

E. V.6 – Response to the word: they worshiped! A posture of praise.

1) Amen! Amen! = in agreement with the word.

2) Lifted up their hands = surrendered to the word.

3) Bowed their heads = humbled by the word.

4) Worshiped w/their faces to the ground = in awe of the word.

a) *The hearing of God's word preceded the people's worship.*

b) *Book of the law of Moses would have reminded the people of who God was, what He had done, where He had brought them = gave them reason to worship. So it is with us!!!*

i) Worship has become stagnant for many b/c they're not mindful of who they're worshiping & why.

ii) It's become a mundane ritual = why we aren't in agreement with the word, surrendered to the word, humbled by the word and in awe of the word.

F. V.7 – Still (fixed) in the presence of the word.

1) *There's a reason God tells us to be still & know that He is God (Ps. 46:10): the more we're moving the less we listen!*

a) We have short attention spans as people; entertainment, busyness, etc. has robbed us of our ability/the discipline to sit and listen for any extended period of time.

i) 1 hour = 4.17% of our day

ii) 2.4 hours (a tenth) = 10% of our day

iii) Household chores = 6.25% of our day

iv) Avg. movie time is 2 hours = 8.33% of our day

- v) Avg. ball game is 3 hours = 12.5% of our day
- vi) Avg. screen time (Phone only) is 3 hours
 - 1) Phone = 3.45 hours
 - 2) TV = 4 hours
 - 3) Online = 3.45 hours
 - 4) Total online = 10-11 hours a day = 42-46% of our day

b) *We can sit still for hours at a ball game, watching movies, in front of a screen, cleaning/repairing/upgrading the house...**b/c that's what entertains, interests & excites us.***

c) *So if we can't sit still for 1 hour to listen to the word of God, what does that tell us??? God's word just isn't that interesting, intriguing or exciting to us – **Matt. 6:21; Luke 12:34.***

i) ***1 hour = 4% of our day***

ii) ***30 min. = 2 %***

iii) ***15 min. = 1%***

1) ***How long is your quiet time each day???***

2) ***If we're only giving God 1-4% of our day, what's filling the other 96-99%???***

3) ***It's like trying to be healthy by only taking a vitamin once a day!!!***

G. V.9 – wept b/c of the word. **Why???**

1) *They were reminded of who they were, where they had come from, what they had /hadn't done & what they weren't doing.*

2) *They were reminded of Who God was/is, what God had done & commanded.*

3) *In short, they realized what they deserved! – **Rom. 3:20***

H. V.10-12 – they rejoiced at the word.

1) *They understood what they had been forgiven of; who they were – Jer. 15:16; Ps. 119:162.*

a) ***“The sinner has no reason for rejoicing and the forgiven child of God has no reason for mourning.” – Warren Wiersbe***

b) *A major reason so many Christians lack a true sense of joy in their life is b/c they don't spend time in God's word which reminds them who they are, what they've been given and by Whom. The result is we're left to focus on the turmoil of this life rather than the joy God supplies!*