



From rubble to restoration

HEALING STRONG DEVOTIONS FROM
THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH





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DAY 1

TAKING YOUR PROBLEMS TO GOD

“O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man. I was cupbearer to the king.”

Nehemiah 1:11

READING: NEHEMIAH 1

Rebuilding from the rubble. That’s the core of the book of Nehemiah. You see, Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The Jewish people who survived the attack were taken to Babylon, becoming strangers in a strange land. Over the course of more than 140 years, they returned to their home city, yet the walls remained in shambles until God pricked the heart of one man, Nehemiah.

Have you had something happen in your life that left you picking up the pieces? Was it a cancer diagnosis? A divorce? The death of a loved one? The loss of a job? People handle their problems in many different ways. Some ignore. Some get depressed. Some get angry. And some seek God. That’s what Nehemiah did.

God had placed Nehemiah in a unique position. He was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia, and he had to taste test the king’s drinks for poison. Talk about a nerve-racking job!

Although he worked in the king’s court, his mind was on the affairs of his Jewish homeland. He received word from some friends who had returned from Jerusalem that

the city's wall was broken down and its gates had been burned. This caused Nehemiah great distress and sadness. He could have responded to this bad news by saying:

"I don't live there, so it's not my responsibility."

"What can I do? I'm just a cupbearer in Persia. Surely God wouldn't want me to do something from here."

NEHEMIAH'S ACTUAL RESPONSE WAS QUITE DIFFERENT. HERE'S A LITTLE OF WHAT HE SAID...

"Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.

Nehemiah 1: 5 – 6

See how Nehemiah tackled his problem? First of all, he fasted. He knew that he could do nothing without God fighting his battles for him. He needed God, so he used fasting as a means of drawing close to His Heavenly Father to seek His help.

He also had a very big request of his boss, the King of Persia. He needed an extended leave of absence from work so he could take on this building project. Since he wasn't asking a Jewish king but a Persian, it would only be by the Lord's direction if his request was granted.

As you read Nehemiah's prayer, we have a great example of how to pray when we have a problem:

- 1. PRAISE GOD AND RECALL HIS GREAT CHARACTERISTICS**
- 2. CONFESS YOUR SINS**
- 3. REMIND HIM OF HIS WORD AND PROMISES**
- 4. ASK BIG THINGS!**

As we read in tomorrow's lesson, we'll see what happened when Nehemiah went before the king with his request. Just a hint, it has a good ending.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. When you have a challenge, how do you typically handle it?
2. What can you learn from Nehemiah's example as he tackled his problem?
3. Is there any difficulty too big or small in your life that God can't help?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, Thank you that you care about what troubles me. You tell me to cast my yoke upon you, so I'm giving you this problem today. Please help me. Please give me wisdom how to handle this. If I have any unforgiveness in my heart or unconfessed sins, please bring them to my mind. I thank you that you will fight my battles for me. I surrender this problem to you today. Amen.

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“And because the
gracious hand of my
God was upon me,
the king granted my
requests.”

DAY 2 - NEHEMIAH 2:8

DAY 2

ASK BIG

READING: NEHEMIAH 2

Remember those childhood days of sitting on Santa's lap? He asked what we wanted for Christmas, and the sky was the limit. As kids, we never considered limits on what we asked because we knew he would deliver. We'd ask for expensive things, big or small things, practical or not. We asked because we could. We never doubted we would receive what we asked. But how often do we ever ask big of God?

Today's reading from Nehemiah takes place when he is serving in the king's court. Nehemiah is troubled that Jerusalem lies in ruin. It appears he couldn't hide his feelings because the king noticed his sad countenance.

So, the King of Persia, his boss, throws the door wide open for Nehemiah to walk right through to bring him his concern - the broken walls of Jerusalem. This prompted the king to ask, *"What is it you want?"*

See what Nehemiah did next.

"Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I



answered the king, 'If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.'”

Nehemiah 2:5 “

I love that he stopped for a moment, no matter how brief, and prayed. We don't know what he prayed this time, but you can bet that it was for favor as he was about to make his request. And the king was happy to grant it. But Nehemiah didn't stop there. He continued to ask for more – to ask BIG!

HE REQUESTED:

1. Letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates asking for safe passage.
2. A letter to Asaph for timber for the gates of the citadel by the temple, city wall and his residence there in Jerusalem.

No matter what the problem, no matter who stands in the way, there is no request too big for our God. He delights when his children reach out to Him with their needs. He wants to heal us. He wants to encourage us. He wants us to seek Him for everything. Jesus even reminds us to ask big:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Matthew 7:7



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. If you could ask God for anything, what would you ask?
2. Do you think God is able to help you with your challenge? Is he able to heal you from your sickness?
3. There's the saying "*God helps those who help themselves.*" Do you find yourself trying to take care of your obstacles on your own and not trusting them to God?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, nothing is impossible with you. Help me to give every single challenge and problem I have over to you. When you find me trying to do things in my own strength, please remind me that you will be the one who delivers me. I give you this problem today. Please help me to never limit your ability to win my battles. Amen.

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DAY 3

ATTITUDE

“Next to him, Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired another section, from the angle to the entrance of the house of Eliashib the high priest.”

Nehemiah 3:20

READING: NEHEMIAH 3

Healing your body from any major disease, sickness or illness seems like a herculean task. It may take every ounce of energy you have to get yourself dressed for work, not to mention actually working. You may be depriving yourself of sweet indulgences like your favorite bowl of ice cream to make wiser food choices. Your body feels depleted and tired as it detoxes and begins to heal.

Healing isn't something that takes a day or two and then you're done. Lots of energy, determination and strength from the Lord can make or break this time as you heal. Have you considered that while you are on your healing journey, you have an audience, watching how you handle your sickness? Your attitude has an effect on those around you. Like it or not, people are observing your every move. It may be your boss, a coworker, a friend or even your child.

Attitude is at the center of our story today in Nehemiah. You see, Israel had a big problem. They needed to rebuild the wall and gates around Jerusalem that had been utterly destroyed. Without them, the city would be vulnerable to attacks

by neighboring invaders. This was no easy task, yet they needed some “can do” people who would work around the clock.

Nehemiah lists a “who’s who in the zoo” for those who worked on the rebuilding project. People like Meremoth, Zadok, Joiada and Jadon were all given by-name shout outs on what they did and what section of the wall/gate they worked. (Fun fact, there was the Dung gate. No kidding. That would have stunk to have repaired that one.) As you read the long list of workers, only one person from the list was noted as doing his repairs “zealously.” That was Baruch, son of Zabbai.

Surely the other laborers were hard working, but it makes one wonder what Baruch did that was so out of the ordinary to mention his attitude about the work?

- **WAS HE EXCITED TO SERVE THE LORD IN ANY MANNER?**
- **DID HE GET PEOPLE FIRED UP FOR THE MOST MENIAL OF TASKS?**
- **DID HE CHOOSE NOT TO COMPLAIN NO MATTER HOW TIRED HE WAS?**
- **WAS HE SO JOYFUL THAT EVERYONE NOTICED HIS GOOD ATTITUDE?**

Baruch was a great example of Colossians 3:23, “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.*” This lesson can be applied to your attitude with any task or work God gives you, but let’s focus on your actual healing journey. It’s hard. It’s time consuming. It can be extremely difficult, and there are days you may want to throw in the towel. But you have a great opportunity to be a light to the world as you depend on God for your healing.

On those days where you question if any of this is making a difference, your attitude alone can make a difference in the lives of those around you. You, too, can be zealous in the hardest journey of your life. You can be a Baruch!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

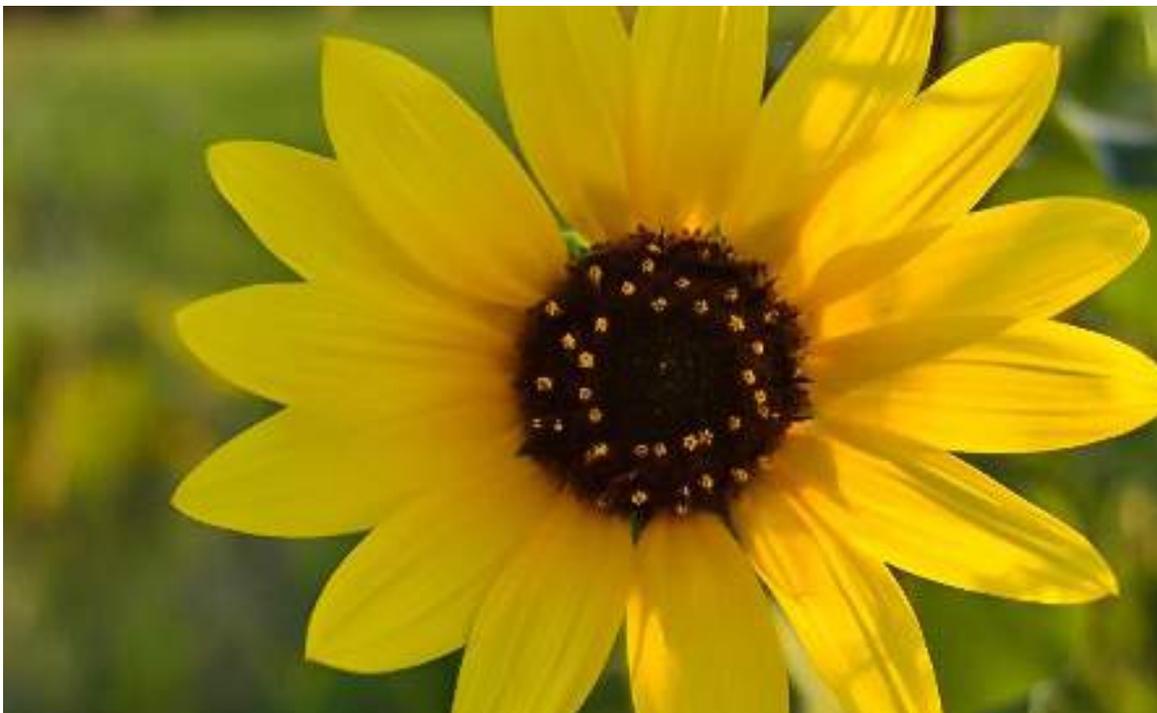
1. What is your attitude about your healing journey?
2. Write about a time where you were zealous about a project, task or job. What made you feel that way? Did others notice?
3. What are ways you can impact those around you as they watch you heal?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you that you are walking with me in this healing journey and you will never leave or forsake me. If I ever lose perspective of that, will you please prick my heart and get me back on course? Please use my attitude during my healing to impact those around me and use it to give you glory. Amen.

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“Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

DAY 4 - NEHEMIAH 4:14



DAY 4

THE NAYSAYERS

READING: NEHEMIAH 4

Ever had a naysayer? Someone who heard about your natural path to healing and wanted to poo poo on it? What about a friend that worries your form of natural therapy may have no medicinal value? It can take everything you've got to be on a path to healing, but if you start adding in doubts that come from critics, that's one more thing that can hinder your healing.

Our story in Nehemiah is full of naysayers. You see, the Jewish remnant started the enormous task of rebuilding the burned and decimated wall and gates around Jerusalem. As word got out about what they were doing, then entered the naysayers.

The chief critic was Sanballot, the Samaritan governor, a man angry and incensed over this rebuilding project. *“Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble – burned as they are?”* (Nehemiah 4:2) He egged on some of his associates to become critics of the builders, as well.



“Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side said, ‘What they are building – if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!’ (Nehemiah 4:3) Talk about some smack talk! But when Sanballot, Tobiah and others heard that Nehemiah and his team continued to build despite their insults and opposition, they upped the ante by plotting together to fight against Jerusalem.

SO WHAT DID NEHEMIAH DO WHEN HE HEARD ABOUT THIS THREAT?

He sought God and prayed! Take a moment and let that sink in. The Bible never said that Nehemiah went and complained to friends about others insulting him. He didn’t dish it back to his critics. He faced an enormous threat and went straight to our all-powerful, all-knowing God.

After praying, Nehemiah instructed the workers to post guards day and night at the lowest points of the wall where it was exposed. The workers would literally have their trowels in one hand and a spear or sword in the other. We have our own weapon to use when the lies of the enemy are whispered in our ears. It’s the sword of the Spirit – the Word of God.

So if you find yourself battling your naysayers, you have our awesome Heavenly Father who wants to fight your battles for you. Seek Him when you hear that criticism, when you feel the doubts of getting well, or when you are discouraged and don’t think you can go another day. He will silence those naysayers



with His truth. He will fight your battles for you, if you seek Him.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Have you had someone critique your path to healing? How did you feel? What was your response?
2. When you have experienced criticism, what has been your typical response?
3. What are some lies you have believed about your healing journey? What are some biblical truths or promises you can use to combat those lies?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you for always being my biggest supporter and champion. You love me with an unfathomable, unconditional love. When I have critics that want to bring me down or simply may not understand the healing path you are taking me on, please give me the courage to stand firm and rest in your truth. Thank you that you are my Healer. Amen.

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DAY 5

INJUSTICE

“So I continued, ‘What you are doing is not right. Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?’”

Nehemiah 5:9

READING: NEHEMIAH 5

Social change starts with an injustice or a need. Oskar Schindler helped save Jewish people from concentration camps during the Holocaust by employing them at his factory. Rosa Parks decided to not sit in the back of a bus during the times of segregation. Nelson Mandela was jailed 27 years working to end apartheid in his native South Africa. Each of these people saw a problem and did something about it.

Nehemiah saw a major injustice too. You see, he found out that many of his fellow Jews were being unfairly taxed by their Jewish brothers. The king and nobles had been charging their countrymen interest, and a lot of it. Remember, these were people living in a decimated city and region who had returned from being exiled. They were making a fresh start, and yet the people governing them were taking advantage of them and lining their own pockets. It got so bad that many of these people were selling their own children into slavery just to make ends meet.

Nehemiah was not having it! When he heard what was going on, he went straight

to the source of the problem – the nobles and officials. He called them out, and the nobles remained quiet. They had been caught red-handed.

When Nehemiah challenged them, they agreed to give back what they took, and they kept their promise to not do it again. Sometimes it takes someone having the courage to call out an injustice or a wrong. It takes strength to do something when you hear the voices in your head saying, *What will they think? Who are you to say something? You are no expert!*

YOU ARE READING THIS DEVOTION BECAUSE SOMEONE SAW A NEED AND HAD TO ACT.

Suzy Griswold, founder of HealingStrong, was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in 2009. As she was seeking guidance on treatment options for her thyroid cancer, she was told by doctors that taking a natural, holistic approach to her treatment was not medically sound and flat out dangerous. She felt God was calling her to take a different approach than conventional medicine, but she felt alone in her journey and desired community during her healing process.

Although she did not challenge the doctors as Nehemiah challenged the nobles, she saw the need to connect life-giving hope and empower patients with healing truths. Now there are groups around the world, sharing and praying with one another, while traveling this healing journey together. It all started with God moving one woman, who saw a need and had the courage to move forward.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Have you ever seen an injustice or need and felt compelled to do something about it?
2. How have you handled conflict when you've had to confront someone in sin?
3. Is there something God is stirring in your heart to do that you haven't begun yet?



PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, please give me your perspective and eyes to see the world around me. If there is a need in my immediate sphere of influence, please give me the courage to do something about it. Please stir in my heart a compassion to help others where you lead. Amen.

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DAY 6

GOD'S HELP

“When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.”

Nehemiah 6:16

READING: NEHEMIAH 6

The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven New Wonders of the World. It's more than 13,000 miles long and some estimates say it took more than 2000 years to build! By all means, it is an astounding architectural accomplishment. Our story today is also about an important wall, the wall protecting the ancient city of Jerusalem. And when it was rebuilt and repaired after its destruction, it took Nehemiah and his fellow Jews just 52 days to rebuild. Why? Because the work was done with the help of God!

This record time of rebuilding wasn't without struggle. As you read in the chapter,



Nehemiah faced enemy after enemy. He had threats against his life, people lying to him, and constant plots to see that this would never come to fruition. But Nehemiah was a man of conviction. He didn't let his enemies scare him or bring him down. He wasn't talked out of doing the project when the threats mounted against him. He knew God had given him the mission to do this, and he knew that He would help him throughout the process.

What has God asked you to do lately that seems too hard to do? Is it your healing journey? Is he asking you to radically change the way you live your life so that you can give your body the best care possible to heal? Is he asking you to scale back all of your commitments in order to focus on yourself and your healing?

GOD WILL NEVER ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING THAT HE WILL NOT EQUIP YOU TO DO.

Noah had to build an ark when it had never rained. Joseph led the nation of Egypt during a horrible famine by practicing good stewardship. Moses led his people out of slavery through the Red Sea. And Joshua defeated Jericho by simply obeying God's strange request to march around the city for seven days.

Each person was ill equipped to do God's task on his own, but as it says in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." When God has a mission for you, He will help you accomplish it!



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What do you need God's help with today?
2. Are you trying to handle your life without His help? How is that going?
3. Is there anyone in your life that you feel God has put there to help you?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you for being my Helper. I can do all things through you who gives me strength. Help me to recognize when I am doing things with my own power. I want you to receive the glory for what you accomplish in me. Amen.

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DAY 7

INTEGRITY

“I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most people do.”

Nehemiah 7:2



READING: NEHEMIAH 7

Integrity. Back in the day, it used to be easy to find people with integrity. People did what they said, told the truth, and had a moral compass. But our society has changed. Many people think it's alright to tell a lie if it keeps from hurting someone else's feelings. Others may not give 100% at work because they see their coworkers getting away with minimum effort. Or still others may only hold to their faith if people are watching. When the audience goes away, they do what pleases their fleshly desires.

But God is looking for people with integrity. In fact, in this passage in Nehemiah, Hananiah is specifically chosen to be the commander of the citadel in Jerusalem because he is a man of integrity. I love that it also says he feared God more than most. Hananiah stood above everyone else and God noticed.

WE SEE INTEGRITY IN SOME EXAMPLES HERE:

- Not going out to eat alone with someone from the opposite sex out of respect for your spouse.
- Telling the truth in love, even when it is easier to lie.
- Seeking God for everything to do, making sure you are in His will.
- Being a good steward of the money you make.
- Giving your all at work, even if you may not like your boss or your job.

WHEN WE LIVE A LIFE FULL OF INTEGRITY, WE ARE EXERCISING THE FEAR OF GOD.

We know we are honoring Him and treating others the way He would want us to treat them. And when people obey God -- when they seek Him and honor Him with their lives, He gives them favor, just like he did Hananiah.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Are you a person of integrity? Why or why not?
2. What do you think it means to fear God? Do you?
3. Is there any area of your life that is lacking integrity? If so, do you feel God is asking you to do something about it?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you that you notice people of integrity. Please show me your perspective on how I can live a life of integrity and your favor. If I've allowed any deception that's keeping me from living my best life, please show me. Help me to be a person of integrity so that others may see my good works and praise you. Amen.



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DAY 8

JOY

“Nehemiah Said, Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10

READING: NEHEMIAH 8

The wall was completed and the Israelites had begun settling into their towns. As with any big project that comes an end, it was time to gather and celebrate. But the subject of this celebration wasn't the wall or that accomplishment. You see, although the wall was completed, there were still lives that were broken and needed to be rebuilt. So the leaders decided to assemble everyone into the square before the Water Gate and no, this isn't that famous hotel in D.C.

Picture this scene. Ezra the prophet (who has a book in the Bible named after him) was standing on a wooden pulpit in front of the former exiles. They all gathered to hear



something they hadn't heard in a very long time, feasting on every line Ezra read. So what was he reading from? It was the Book of the Law of Moses, which was most likely the first five books of what now makes up our Bible.

“He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.”

Nehemiah 8:3

CAN YOU IMAGINE IF YOU HADN'T HEARD A WORD FROM THE BIBLE IN YEARS?

Have you ever had a thirst to hear like these people did? As they listened in their broken state, the words pierced their hearts. Nehemiah 8:9 says, *“For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.”* But for every tear that was shed, Nehemiah encouraged them by saying, *“Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”* They celebrated with great joy because they now understood the words that had been made known to them!

As you go down this road of healing, have you made it a priority to stop daily to quench your thirst with the Word of the Lord? Are you like the Israelites, and it's been weeks, months or even years since you dove deeply into the Bible?



The result of their time spent listening to the Book of the Law was a joy like none other!

God's word is a healing balm that can give people joy in what seems to be the hardest of trials. As you soak in the words of the Lord, allow them to restore some of the joy that may have been robbed by your illness.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What drives you to read your Bible?
2. Have you read a Bible verse that renewed your hope during a tough time?
3. What is a Bible story or passage that has given you encouragement in the past? Take some time to read that again today.

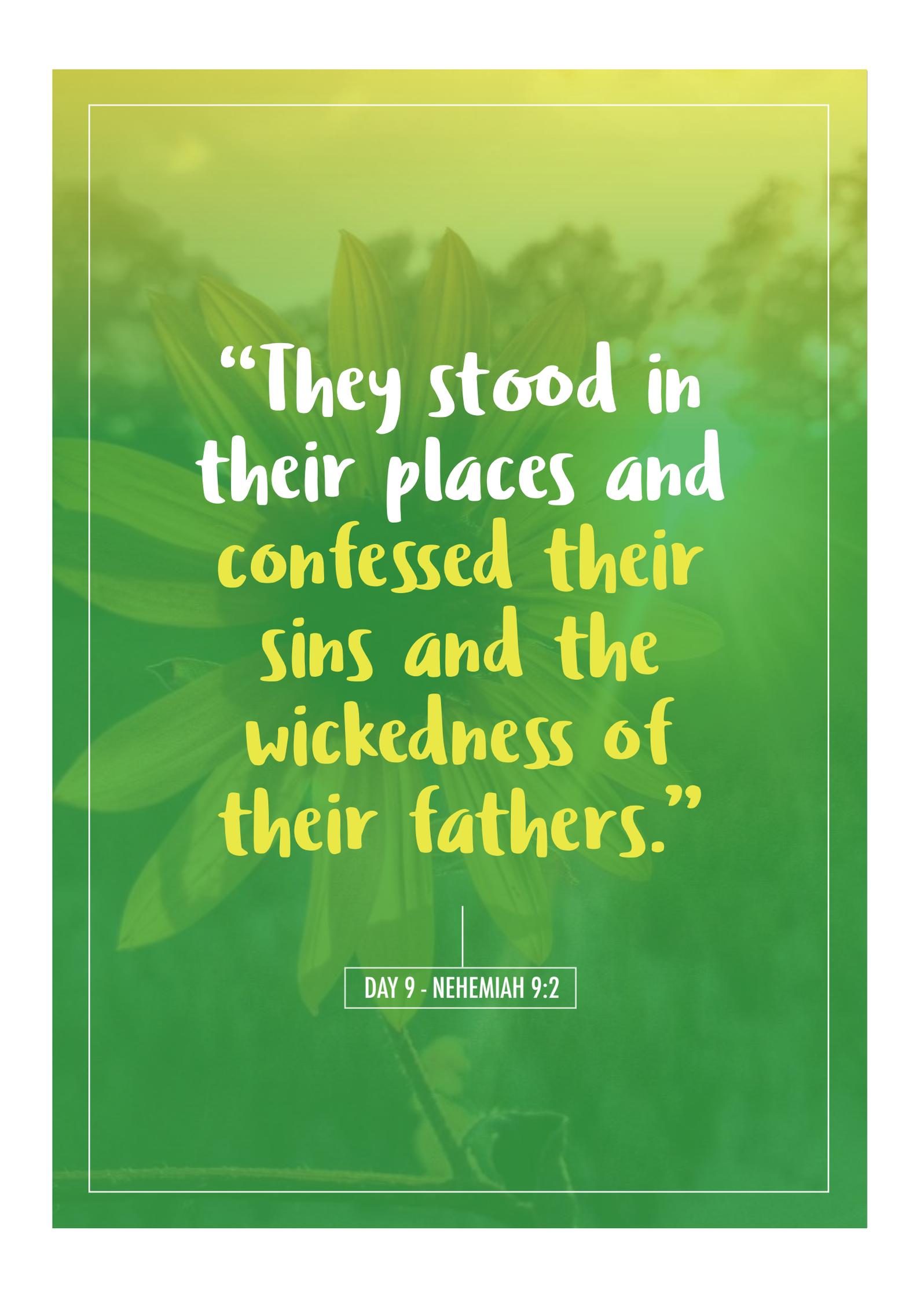
PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you for being the source of my joy and happiness. When I walk through this valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because you are with me. Thank you that your word is sharper than a two-edged sword. Please use it to pierce my soul and draw me closer to you. Amen.

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“They stood in
their places and
confessed their
sins and the
wickedness of
their fathers.”

DAY 9 - NEHEMIAH 9:2

DAY 9

CONFESSION TIME



READING: NEHEMIAH 9

Sometimes the beginning of healing starts with confession. You see, we all have done bad things in our lives. We've made sinful choices that we shouldn't have and may still be living with the consequences. When we sin, shame keeps us holding onto that sin. We hide it in the deepest recesses of our hearts in hopes that no one will see it, but it still has its effect on us.

CONFESSION IS THE MEANS OF RELEASE, ADMITTING THAT WE ARE WRONG AND ASKING GOD TO FORGIVE US.

We may have hurt people and need to confess what we did to them and ask for their forgiveness. It's very hard and humbling to do, but holding onto the sin and shame can actually hinder your healing.

The Israelites in this chapter had gathered again, but this time they weren't in the joyful mood that we read about in the last chapter. They replaced their joy with fasting and wearing of sackcloth, an external sign of sorrow and repentance. Their purpose in gathering was to confess to the Lord how they and their forefathers had rebelled against Him.

We see a great summary of the cycle of rebellion and forgiveness in this chapter. The priests recalled all the good things the Lord did for His people, from the parting of the Red Sea to conquering their enemies. Yet, sadly, when things were going well, the people drifted away from God and chased other idols and pleasures. They left their first love, the love of the Lord.

“But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in your sight. Then you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them. And when they cried out to you again, you heard from heaven, and in your compassion you delivered them time after time.”

Nehemiah 9:28

BUT, OH, TO SEE THE COMPASSION AND FAITHFULNESS OF GOD!

Time after time, He delivered His people. Why? Because He loved them just like He loves you and me. Nothing you have done will ever separate you from the love of God. So, it's confession time.

“In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong.”

Nehemiah 9:33

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

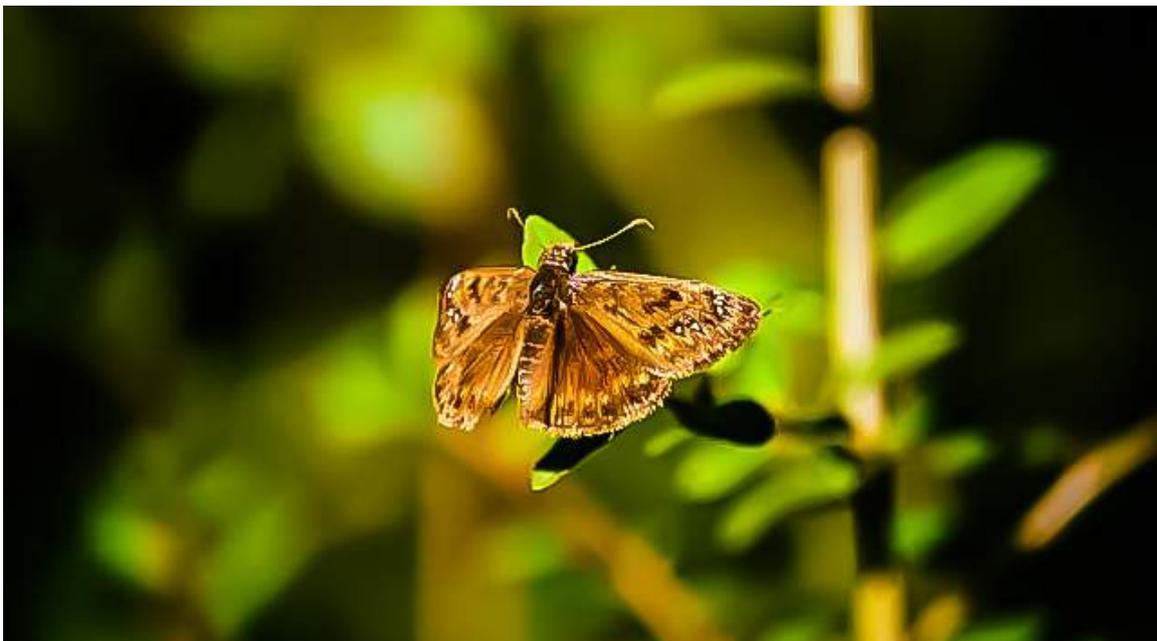
1. Is there something weighing on your heart that you need to confess to God?
2. What is the correlation between holding onto hidden sin and your body's health?
3. Is there someone to whom you need to ask for forgiveness?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you that you love me even when I feel unlovable. Thank you that time after time you deliver me when I cry out to you. Please reveal to me any hidden sins that I may have, which are keeping me from living my best life. Please give me the courage to confess them. Amen.

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DAY 10

OBEDIENCE

“All these now join their fellow Israelites the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our Lord.”

Nehemiah 8:10

READING: NEHEMIAH 10

Diets. No one likes them. Who wants to feel like there is something you want to eat but aren't allowed? You may be eating a piece of celery and dreaming of that big bowl of ice cream. But when you carefully adhere to a specific diet, you will get results. The key is to not cheat. When you start making small exceptions, a few potato chips here or there, or a can of soda, then you can kiss those results goodbye. Sayonara, chiseled abs, hello, love handles!

At this point in our story from Nehemiah, the Israelites had been reintroduced to the Book of the Law. They came to realize that their fathers



and forefathers had started making little exceptions. Just wee ones. But slowly over time, those little cheats became flat out rebellion and idol worship. What once was a people who had seen such awesome miracles of God on their behalf became a people who were enslaved by their enemies due to their rebellion.

So under some God-fearing leadership, the people turned back to God to carefully obey all the commands of the Lord. They knew what could happen if they didn't obey completely. This meant they had to know what the commandments were and to follow them to a "t". The laws weren't arbitrary. They were for their own good.

As you are on your healing journey, you may have made some significant changes to your diet. You may have given up sugar altogether. You may be juicing raw vegetables. Whatever the case, your hard work has the biggest dividends when you carefully adhere to your eating plan. Your healing may very well depend on it. It may be hard, and there will be days you'd give anything for a big, greasy burger, but stop and think of how tiny cheats can lead to setbacks on your journey. Is it worth it?

When you are getting tired or discouraged with your eating limitations on this healing journey, remember this...

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

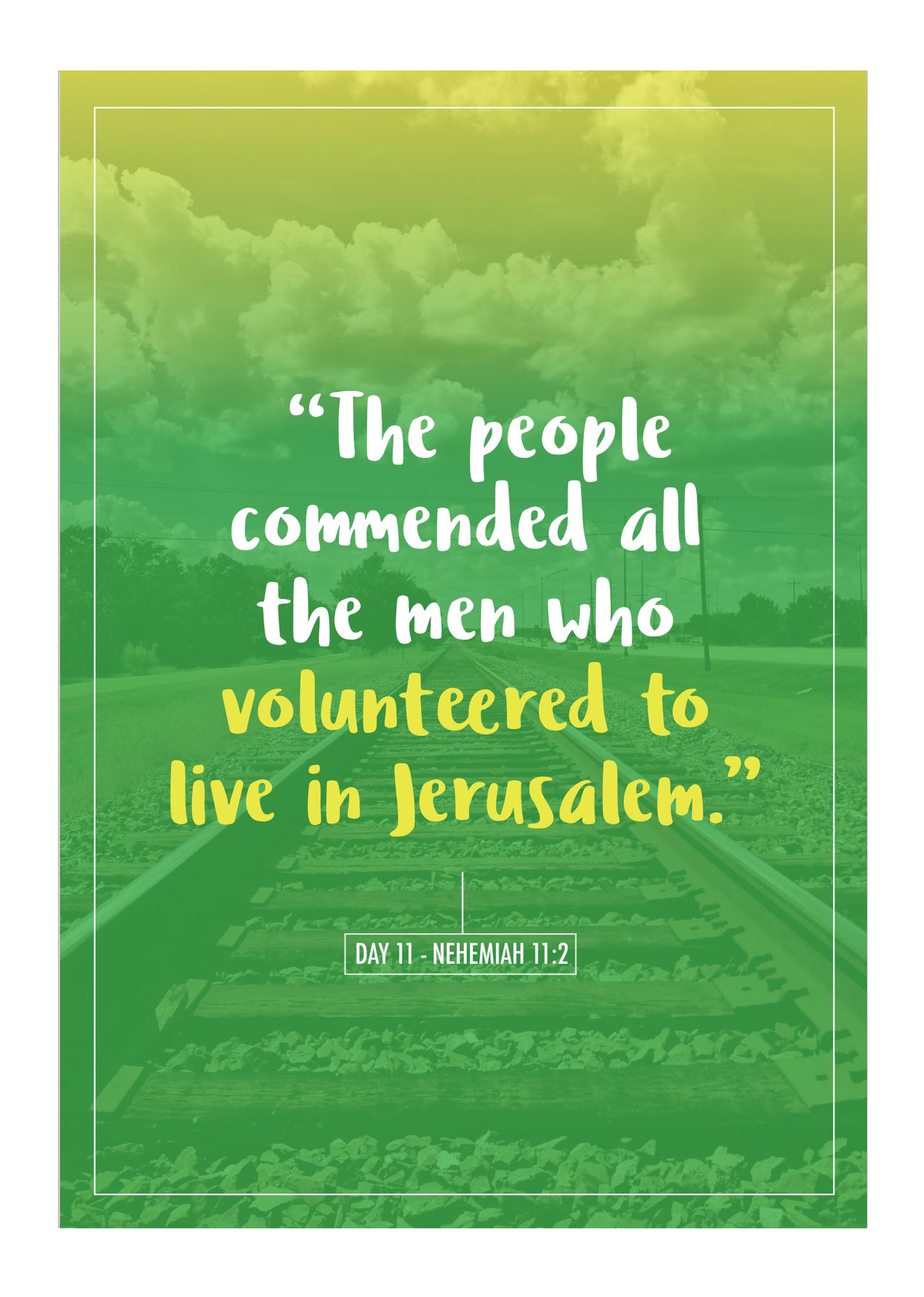
1. Have you ever been on a successful diet? What contributed to your success?
2. How do you think making little exceptions impacts your healing?
3. Is there any exception you are making in your spiritual walk you need to confess?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you that I can do anything through the strength you give me. I need your help in making wise choices with what I eat. Please give me the willpower and desire to eat what is good for my body. I can't do this alone. I need your help. Amen.

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“The people
commended all
the men who
volunteered to
live in Jerusalem.”

DAY 11 - NEHEMIAH 11:2

DAY 11

VOLUNTOLD

READING: NEHEMIAH 11

The military has a great term that is used quite frequently... voluntold. Essentially, the term is used when a service member is asked to volunteer to do something they don't want to do. It's one step before being ordered to do it.

Today's chapter in Nehemiah features men who were voluntold to live in Jerusalem. You see, the Israelites lived in Judean towns that were part of their heritage, their ancestral property. They wanted to live there and not in a city that had most recently been decimated. Think about it. They just finished rebuilding the walls and gates to protect the city, but Jerusalem itself still needed rebuilding. Vineyards and gardens needed to be sown. Homes had to be rebuilt. People were required to work in the temple. The only way to get these volunteers was for the leadership to cast lots, an ancient way of rolling dice to see who got picked for a task.

“Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast



lots to bring one out of every man to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns.”

Nehemiah 11:1

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN VOLUNTOLD TO DO SOMETHING?

Was it a project at work that you really didn't want to do? What about a spouse needing help with a project at home? Or have you been voluntold to change what you eat in order to facilitate healing? Being told what to do is hard, especially if you aren't willing. Has God ever asked you to do something that you don't find necessary? You can always bet that if He asks you to do something, no matter how small, it has great importance to Him. The great preacher Dr. Charles Stanley has said when it comes to God, obedience brings blessing. Are there blessings you are missing out on because you don't want to do something? Maybe you need to be voluntold!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Have you ever been asked to volunteer for a project or ministry? How did you handle that?
2. What are some blessings that come from obedience?
3. What might God be asking you to do that you haven't done?



PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you that you know what is best for me. When you ask me to do something, you have great purpose in it. Please give me the courage to step forth when you ask me. Help me to see opportunities where I can be obedient. May I see the blessings that follow. Amen.

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DAY 12

PRAISE PARTY

READING: NEHEMIAH 12

“At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres.”

Nehemiah 12:27



READING: NEHEMIAH 12

Celebration time! The wall repairs were done. It only took 52 days to complete, and with any good building project, there had to be a dedication. After all, the Israelites wanted to celebrate what God did in making this all happen!

Picture the scene for the dedication. All the leaders of Judah got on top of the wall. There was not one, but two large choirs assigned to sing and give thanks. Even the choir director, Jezrahiah was there to lead them all.

“And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.”

Nehemiah 12:43

When was the last college football game you attended where the home team won? Now think of how loud things were at the end of the game. The band is playing, the fans are cheering and jumping up and down. I’m thinking that’s similar to this big praise party on the wall -- so loud the rejoicing was heard from far away.

They had a lot to celebrate! They overcame attackers, naysayers, building delays, and accidents. God was the only one who could have made this happen, and they wanted him to get the glory.

WE, TOO, CAN HAVE A PRAISE PARTY EVEN BEFORE THAT FINAL BRICK IS LAID.

In fact, bringing praise in the middle of our struggles is what the Lord desires of us. It’s putting Him first and relying on Him to fight our battles for us. As you walk in your healing journey, let the praise begin right now. Thank Him for the healing that is to come. Give a shout of hallelujah for the extra energy and strength He will provide. Thank Him that He will never leave or forsake you in this journey. Speak aloud in joy that He is El Roi, the God who sees your afflic-

tion, hears your cries and is there for you.

You can start the party early before your healing is complete. Songs of praise are what can encourage your day. Praise changes our mindset from our illness to Jehovah Rapha, our Healer. So, pull out that smart phone and pick an awesome worship song to sing praise to our King. The choir is warming up in the distance, but you can start your singing now.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are some things that you can say to God right now to praise Him?
2. How can singing praises in the midst of your struggles help change your focus?
3. What are some worship songs that minister to your heart? Go ahead and play them and sing along to your Heavenly Father.

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you for your amazing love, grace and compassion for me. Thank you that you have already won this battle for me. Jehovah Rapha is the God, who Heals, and I want to thank you all you are doing to heal me. Help me to focus on you and give you praise daily for everything you are doing in my life. Amen.

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DAY 13

ACCOUNTABILITY

“So I rebuked the officials and asked them, “Why is the house of God neglected?” Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.”

Nehemiah 13:11

READING: NEHEMIAH 13

There’s an old saying, “When the cat is away, the mice do play.” This is what happened with the people in Jerusalem once Nehemiah left to go back to Babylon and work for King Artaxerxes. Before he left, the people had confessed their sins, made God their number one priority, and were adhering to His commandments, as laid out in the Book of the Law of Moses.

When Nehemiah returned, he was dumbfounded at what he saw. First of all, one of the priests had let some guy keep his household goods in a storeroom of the temple. That would be like you storing your furniture and clothes in the baptismal at church. Seriously, who would do that? Temple workers stopped manning their posts



and neglected their work. Merchants began selling fish and items on the Sabbath, a day that was to be holy. And finally, men were marrying foreign wives, something strictly forbidden.

Nehemiah came back to chaos and was furious! He knew that making small exceptions would become bigger ones later. The Israelites had a past full of backsliding all the way into full-on rebellion. Nehemiah said to them in verse 18:

“Didn’t your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city?”

The problem was that no one was keeping them accountable. People thought that slacking off wasn’t a big deal. No one was telling them what they couldn’t do any more, so they figured they could get away with it.

Do you have areas in your life for which you are making exceptions? Could it be you are cheating by eating things that really aren’t helping your healing? Are you fully adhering to your treatment plan, or are you taking days off?

ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT ARE CORE REASONS WE HAVE CREATED HEALING STRONG GROUPS.

Each group has people who are either on a healing journey, or are supporting someone on a journey. These are the people that you can rely on to encourage you, keep you



accountable and to help you along the way if you stumble. You aren't meant to heal your body alone. Look at the Lone Ranger. Even he had Tonto. Think about how you can plug in even more and surround yourself with cheerleaders and accountability partners in this healing journey.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Are you fully adhering to your healing plan? If so, why or why not?
2. What do you think God thinks about making little exceptions? How does it matter in the grand scheme of things?
3. Are you allowing yourself to be accountable to anyone in this healing process? If no, why not?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank you that you only want what is best for me. There are people you have put in my life who will support me in this journey if I allow them. Please help me be authentic with them. Help keep me accountable as I heal. Amen.

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