

**Focus passage: Nehemiah 1:1-11a**

**1** The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.

Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel, **2** that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. **3** And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire."

**4** As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. **5** And I said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **6** let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. **7** We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. **8** Remember the word that 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 your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' **10** They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. **11** O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

*What stands out to you from this passage?*

*What causes Nehemiah such distress? Do you think the news he hears indicative of bigger issues among the remnant?*

*The walls and gates of Jerusalem weren't the only construction project needing attention in the Old Testament. **Read Haggai 1:1-9.***

*Are there many circumstances that cause you to mourn the way that Nehemiah does? What is a result of his mourning?*

*When something upsets you greatly, are you more likely to pray about it or complain? Why do you think it is so easy to complain without doing anything further?*

*Instead of complaining about the exile or the people who broke down the walls what does Nehemiah do within his prayer?*

*Nehemiah remembers God's faithfulness and his promises and repents at his own sins. **Read 2 and discuss Corinthians 7:8-10**, another example at grief (sorrow in other translations) leading to repentance.*

*How can you apply this Scripture to your life?*

