



## **“When The Problem Is You: Fighting Injustice”**

### **Nehemiah 5:1-13**

#### *Icebreaker:*

Can you remember a time when something happened to you that you would consider *unjust*?

#### *The Study:*

In chapter 4, Nehemiah dealt with enemies from the outside that were threatening to undo the work of rebuilding the walls. But in chapter 5, Nehemiah has to face enemies from within, as he discovers that wealthy Jews are preying upon the poor Jews. And so it continues to our day, as the powerful prey about the weak. This study explores the call God places on his people to advocate for justice in this broken world.



1. Read through the entire story, Nehemiah 5:1-13. Pretend it's a 3-Act play, and summarize what happens in each act.

#### **Act 1:**

#### **Act 2:**

#### **Act 3:**

2. What exactly is “justice”? Write out your best 1-sentence definition. Then share with others in the group.

3. The Bible often links “justice” to the care of the weak, defenseless or oppressed. Summarize the following verses.

*Deuteronomy 27:19*

*Psalms 82:3-4*

*Isaiah 58:6-8*

*Jeremiah 22:3*

4. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would execute justice when he came. Summarize the following verses.

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

*Isaiah 11:1-4*

*Isaiah 42:1-4*

*Isaiah 61:1; cf. Luke 4:18-19*

5. The Bible links “*righteousness*” and “*justice*” over and over again in Scripture. Pick a verse – any verse – and read it at random.

*Psalms 33:5; 89:14; 103:6; 106:3; Proverbs 21:3; Isaiah 1:16-17; 1:27; 9:7; 56:1; Jeremiah 4:2; 9:24; 22:3; 23:5; Hosea 2:19; Amos 5:15; 5:24; Micah 6:8; James 1:27*

How would you distinguish between “*righteousness*” and “*justice*”?

6. In the teaching, we made the observation that “liberal/mainline” churches tend to emphasize “*justice*” issues while muting “*righteousness*” issues, while “conservative/evangelical” church tend to do the opposite. If you agree with this, or see these tendencies, why do you think this is? If you don't agree, then proceed to the next question!

So how do we promote justice in our community and in our world. We drew four ideas from Nehemiah 5:6-7, 13.

**Allow yourself to feel anger at the injustice you see.** *“I was very angry.”*

7. Psalm 7:11 says, *“God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.”* Why is strong emotion a necessary component in fighting injustice?

8. Discuss the following quote by Gary Haugen, founder of *International Justice Mission* (ijm.org), in his book, *Good News About Injustice*.

*“For Christians living in a relatively affluent and orderly civil society, this act of remembering the injustice and abuse in the world is not an easy one...I can move from torture on the evening news to touchdowns on Monday Night Football with almost the same mental and emotional ease as my channel changer.”*

Do you agree with this? And how do we overcome it?

**Learn about the injustice that’s troubling your heart.** *“I took counsel with myself.”*

9. Whether it’s William Wilberforce investigating the atrocities of slavery in England – or Nicholas Kristof uncovering the dark underbelly of the pornography industry, we have to be willing to dig deeper into the causes of the pain we see around us, if we truly want to change things for the better. Why?

Is there an area of injustice and hurt in our world which you would be willing to think and study more deeply about?

**Roll up your sleeves. Lower your head. And push back at the injustice you see.**

*“I brought charges against the nobles and officials.”*

10. Discuss the following quote by Gary Haugen. What is he saying?  
*“Evil and injustice thrive on moral ambiguity, equivocation, confusion and the failure to commit. Injustice is strong, forceful, committed. In every case, it will prevail against the uncertain, the unsure and the uncommitted.”*

**Remember that the pursuit of justice is anchored in the hope of the Gospel.**

*“And all the assembly said, ‘Amen’ and praised the Lord. And the people did as they promised.”* (vs.13)

11. The story in Nehemiah 5 begins in anger and hurt, but ends in joy. It begins with a legal assembly, but ends in a worship service.

How is the hope which the death and resurrection of Christ gives us a powerful help in our fight against evil in our world? What happens to those who don’t have this hope?

**Prayer Requests:**

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