*** “When The Problem Is You:***

***Fighting My Sin”***

 ***Nehemiah 5***

*Icebreaker:*

You’ve no doubt heard the phrase, *‘the best version of you’*. What’s one thing the ‘best version of you’ would have done last week that the current version didn’t get done?

*The Study:*

Nehemiah 5 tells the story of how the rich Jews begin to take advantage of the poor Jews. Israel is her own worst enemy. The Bible tells us that we also have an enemy that resides within us called our *sin nature.* Left unchecked, it will sabotage all the good things God would do in our lives. In this study we examine 3 steps for fighting back against our sin.



1. Let’s play the game, “So You Wanna Be A Theologian?” In the space below, write out your own simple 1-sentence definition of “sin”, then compare it to the 1 sentence definition provided by Wayne Grudem on the next page (from his book ‘Systematic Theology’).

**Sin is…**

 “Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.” – Wayne Grudem

2. Look up the following verses then write out some truths about sin that the Bible teaches.

*Psalm 51:5*

*Psalm 14:1-3 (cf. Romans 3:10-11)*

*Romans 3:23*

*Romans 6:23*

Do you think the Bible’s being a bit tough on human nature? Or is it spot-on? How does the Bible’s perspective compare with cultural ideas of human goodness that are circulating today? Discuss your thoughts.

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*The story in Nehemiah 5 provides a template for how a follower of Christ can combat his or her sin nature. In vss.6-11, Nehemiah confronts the rich nobles for their injustice, exposing their sin. This points to the first step:*

*Recognition: I must recognize the sin problem I have.*

3. John 16:8 tells us that the Holy Spirit is the one who *convicts* us of our sins. What do you think this means, to be ‘convicted’ of sin? And why do you think it takes God’s Spirit to do this?

4. What are some things that the Spirit of God uses to show us our sin?

*Proverbs 27:6 (cf. 2 Samuel 12:7-9)*

*Proverbs 24:30-34*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

Can you think of examples when God used any of these things (or something else) to open your eyes to a sinful practice that you needed to stop?

5. Why is it important when we read our Bibles to get in the habit of asking God to reveal our own sin? Read Psalm 19:7-8, 11-13, then discuss your thoughts.

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*In vss.12-13, the nobles confess their wrong-doing and promise to change things. This points to step two in how we fight sin:*

*Repentance: I admit where I’ve gone wrong, then change it.*

6. Time to again play, “So You Wanna Be A Theologian?” Write out a simple, 1-sentence definition of repentance, then compare it with Dr. Grudem’s definition.

“Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.” – Wayne Grudem

7. Look up the following verses and write out some truths about repentance.

*2 Corinthians 7:10-11*

*Acts 3:19*

*Luke 3:7-14*

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*In vss.14-19, Nehemiah describes how his behavior as governor differs from other worldly rulers because of his ‘fear of God’. What’s more, his servants and those who work around him end up imitating his example because of his teaching and mentoring. This points to the third step in fighting our sin nature:*

*Renewing: I learn from Jesus how to live rightly.*

8. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Why is “teaching” necessary to help me overcome my sin nature?

9. We observe in Nehemiah’s story how he *mentors* those around him. Think about mentoring. What is it? Why is it important? Have you had mentors help you in your spiritual journey? Do you see yourself as a mentor? What can a healthy church do to raise up mentors?

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