

# SERVING GOD WITH DETERMINED FAITH - 8

## Willingly Determine to Serve

"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

### **Bible Truth:**

*It takes an army of servants to accomplish God's work on earth.*

### **Life Impact:**

*Opportunities to serve God abound, and all of God's people are to seek ways they can serve.*

This concluding lesson focuses on being willing and determined to serve. It calls for us to identify opportunities we have to serve God and determine to serve willingly in all opportunities He gives us. We will find encouragement in the people's willingness to relocate themselves to repopulate Jerusalem (11:1-12:26) and join with their leaders to celebrate and dedicate Jerusalem's rebuilt wall (12:27-47).

## Welcome

In your "growing up years," what did "confession" mean to you? What was involved?

## Word

### **Read Nehemiah 11:1-4**

1. Why do you think many people were reluctant to settle in Jerusalem (see 7:4)? Put yourself in the place of those living in the neighboring areas outside of Jerusalem. What values and commitments would be needed to accept this call to relocate and live in the city of Jerusalem?
2. What was Nehemiah's three-fold strategy for repopulating the city? Although we may skip through the long list of names in Nehemiah 11 and 12, what reasons might there be for recording the specific names of those who returned to serve?
3. How willing are you to set aside your own preferences for the sake of the church and God's kingdom? Have you ever considered whether God might want you to relocate? What are some of the other sacrifices you've made—large or small—because you believed that was what God called you to do?

### **Read Nehemiah 12:27-47**

4. How did the people celebrate the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem? What specific actions did the priests, Levites and singers take?
5. What happens off-camera in the "house of God" (verses 40-43)? How well do we celebrate (in our lives and in our churches) the victories that God grants us? What can we learn from this dedication service that would help us to worship the Lord with joy?

## Worship

"God is not unjust. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." (Hebrews 6:10). Spend time praising and thanking God for working in your life and the joy you've received as a result.

## Works

This lesson is an encouragement to be involved in ministry and not just activity. It's also an encouragement to care more about service than notice. Nehemiah 11 and 12 is basically a list of willing unknowns. Are you willing to serve that way? The most obscure task is important if done willingly for God's glory. There is nothing wrong with being a wall flower, as long as you bloom!

## Leader's Notes – Willingly Determine to Serve God (Lesson Eight)

Question 1: There are several reasons why more people would want to live elsewhere than in Jerusalem itself. First, the city had been without walls for 150 years. As such, it had been largely defenseless and therefore a dangerous place to live. Second, much of the city was still in rubble (7:4). Many of those who had helped to rebuild the city had moved back temporarily, and still owned houses and lands in the surrounding towns.

Question 2: Nehemiah had a three-fold strategy for re-populating the city. First, the leaders of the people would move back and set the example. After all, you cannot expect the people to do what the leaders are not willing to do. Second, one out of ten families would be chosen by lot to move back into the city. Essentially, Nehemiah set up a draft. This might not sound very democratic to our ears, but they believed the hand of God was involved in the process (notice Proverbs 16:33; and numerous examples, earlier in Neh. 10:34; Numbers 26:55; Lev. 16:7-10; Joshua 14-19). Third, anyone could voluntarily move back. Literally the word “volunteered” in verse 2 means “to impel or to incite from within.” In other words, these people were stirred deep inside by God to respond to a real need.

Some might wonder why Nehemiah would “waste” so much valuable space listing the names of those who returned. Of course, genealogical records were important for any number of reasons. But beyond that, Nehemiah was simply giving credit where credit was due. He knew their names. He knew their contributions deserved recognition. In so many words Nehemiah was saying, “Rebuilding required an army of servants, and let me tell you who they were.” These lists are a reminder to God’s people that God’s work isn’t accomplished casually by a few. In fact, sometimes the largest contributions are made by people that others might view as having little to give. Nehemiah specifically mentions those who voluntarily moved (11:2), those who worked within the temple (11:12), those who worked outside the temple (11:16), those who devoted themselves to prayer (11:17), and the singers responsible for the worship (11:22).