

1. Taking advantage of those in need

- a) Nehemiah 5:1-5 What crisis were the returned Jewish exiles experiencing as a result of a famine in the land?
- b) Which king was taxing the people? (350 talents of silver each year)
- c) How were the local nobles and rulers making the hardship of the people even worse? Nehemiah 5:7
- d) What counsel was given through Moses about charging interest on loans? Exodus 22:25-27; Leviticus 25:35-37; Deuteronomy 23:19-20
- e) Why is it so common to see people exploiting others in time of need?
- f) Sometimes people are tempted to exploit others in legal ways. According to Jesus, what two great commandments should guide all of our actions? Matthew 22:37-39
- g) What appeal would Jesus give to people who are taking advantage of the poor in their midst?

2. Nehemiah's response and appeal

- a) Nehemiah 5:6-9 How did Nehemiah react to those who were taking advantage of poor in their midst?
- b) Nehemiah 5:10b-11 What solution did Nehemiah propose?
- c) Nehemiah 5:12a How did the nobles and rulers respond?
- d) Why did Nehemiah require these nobles and rulers to make an

oath before the priests that they would keep the promise they had made? Nehemiah 5:12b (see also Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)

- e) What counsel did Jesus give regarding the practice of making oaths? Matthew 5:33-37
- f) Why was there such a compliant response from the nobles and rulers, with no apparent resistance to Nehemiah's appeal?

3. Nehemiah's example

- a) Nehemiah 5:10 Nehemiah admitted he was part of the problem. Was he? (see Daniel 9:4-6)
- b) Nehemiah 5:14-19 What else did Nehemiah do to care for those in need?
- c) Why did Nehemiah manifest such a generous spirit?
- d) Why is our personal example so important? Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Corinthians 11:1
- e) Share a time when you witnessed someone caring in a sacrificial way for those in need.
- f) When did God give you an opportunity to care for someone in need? How did that experience impact your life?

