

Small Group Guide: Marks of a Spiritual Awakening

Key Scripture: Nehemiah 8

Opening Question/Icebreaker: Nehemiah 8:10 mentions enjoying choice food and sweet drinks. What would be your ideal “feast” menu for celebrating a joyful occasion?

Opening Prayer: Begin your session with a prayer, asking God to open your hearts and minds to His Word and to guide your discussion.

Key Takeaways:

1. A spiritual awakening is characterized by a renewed desire for God's Word.
2. Hearing, honoring, and properly handling God's Word are crucial elements of spiritual growth.
3. True engagement with Scripture leads to transformation, including mourning, joy, and obedience.

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon mentions five marks of spiritual awakening based on Nehemiah 8:
 - **Desire for the Word of God**
 - **Hearing the Word of God**
 - **Honor given to the Word of God**
 - **Handling the Word of God**
 - **Transformed by the Word of God**

Which of these resonates with you the most and why?

Now, let's spend some time together as a Group unpacking each of these principles:

2. **Desire for the Word of God:** Read Nehemiah 8:1 and Psalm 119:162. These verses highlight the people's eagerness for Scripture. How can we cultivate a similar desire for God's Word in our own lives and church community? What practical steps can you take to prioritize Scripture in your daily routines?
3. **Hearing and Honoring the Word of God:** Read Nehemiah 8:2-6 and Isaiah 40:8. In both these passages, we see the people's attentive listening and respect for Scripture. How does our posture, both physically and spiritually, demonstrate reverence for God's Word? How can we improve our listening and response to Scripture during our worship gatherings?
4. **Handling the Word of God:** Read Nehemiah 8:7-8. Nehemiah describes how the leaders made Scripture clear and understandable for the people. Discuss the importance of not just reading, but also explaining and applying God's Word in our own lives and within the context of Christian community. How can we incorporate this practice into our personal Bible study and as a Community Group?

5. **Transformation through the Word of God: Read Nehemiah 8:9-12 and John 15:11.** Reflecting on these passages, consider the impact of Scripture in transforming sorrow into joy. Can you share an experience where Scripture has provided strength and joy in your life? How can we, as a community, encourage and uplift one another through God's promises?
6. The sermon mentions that “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). How have you experienced this in your own life?
7. **Obedience to the Word of God: Read Nehemiah 8:13-15.** Here, Nehemiah emphasizes the response of obedience as the people rediscover God's commands. How does obedience to God's Word demonstrate spiritual growth? Share an example of how obeying Scripture has impacted your life. How can our Community Group help each other to follow through with what we've learned from Scripture?

Practical Applications:

1. Commit to a daily Scripture reading plan for the next week. Share your experiences with the group next time you meet.
2. Practice explaining a Bible passage to a friend or family member, focusing on making it clear and giving meaning as the Levites did in Nehemiah 8:7-8.
3. Identify one area in your life where you need to respond to God's Word with obedience. Make a plan to take action this week.
4. Organize a time of joyful celebration with your small group or church community, centered around thanksgiving for God's Word.

Closing Prayer: End your session by thanking God for His Word and asking for His help in applying what you've learned to your daily lives.