



Nehemiah Seeks God's Forgiveness for Israel

Nehemiah 1:1–2:9



Bible Point: When we turn to God, he restores us.



Key Verse: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Use the following activities to further the application of this week's lesson in the lives of your family members.

Discussion Starters

Preschoolers

- Why does God want us to trust him?
- What happens when we pray and ask God for help?

Elementary Students

- When you hear the phrase "humble yourself before God," what do you think of? Why?
- How does God help us when we confess our sins to him?

Youth

- How do you think God restores us when we turn to him humbly and confess our sins?
- Why do you think so many people don't take time to pray to God? When people don't pray, what are they revealing about their views of God? their views of themselves?

Talk Topics

- Discuss why God wants us to humble ourselves before him.
- Talk about why two people—only one of whom is a Christian—might disagree on whether or not sin is real and whether or not it's important to turn to God.
- Talk about why many people today don't think they need to repent of their sins and turn to God. Why is repentance so important in the Christian life? What happens if God's people sin and don't repent?
- Share stories about times when God has restored you.
- Nehemiah asked God to prepare the king to respond favorably to his requests. What are some things we could ask God to do for us today?

Through the Week

During devotional times, use the following passages to read and discover additional biblical insights about forgiveness.

Monday—Nehemiah 9:16-17

Tuesday—Psalm 27:7-11

Wednesday—Romans 5:6-8

Thursday—Acts 3:19

Friday—Philippians 2:9-11

Saturday—Isaiah 1:18

Daily Challenges®

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week:

- What's one area of your life where you need to seek God's restoration? Commit to seeking God's grace in that area this week, and to obeying God no matter what it takes.
- Make a list of all the ways you know you've disobeyed God. Then pray over that list, asking God's forgiveness, and then throw that list of sins away—just like God has.
- Has someone hurt you in the past? Extend God's forgiveness to that person. Write a letter to that person, or speak to him or her in person. Let God speak to that person's heart from there.
- After a family meal, try this simple activity to help children understand the meaning of the word *repentance*. Have everyone stand and face the same direction and begin walking. As they walk, have people call out sinful things they sometimes do, such as lie, pick on siblings, or disobey parents. After family members continue for a few steps, call "stop." Have everyone turn around and face the other way. Explain that to repent means to turn around—to change direction from what is wrong and head in the right direction. Use this time to pray together and humbly ask God for forgiveness and the strength to walk in the right direction in family relationships and other areas of life.