



THE WORD OF GOD.

A survey from American Bible Society in 2013 showed the average American household has 4.4 Bibles. Of the people who read it at all, a mere 57% open it four times a year or less.

We all have 'em.
And a lot of us aren't reading them.

And let's face it: Many parts of the Bible are hard to swallow, confusing to understand, unpopular, or just plain boring.

But we believe that Scripture is the Word of God. It's inspired by the Holy Spirit, "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword," (Hebrews 4:12). It's worth opening up consistently. It's worth digging into and hanging onto every word. In Nehemiah, we see the Israelites saw it was worth listening to while standing for hours. It was worth weeping through and partying over.

We've been given a gift through the Bible - direct access to the heart of God Himself. All we have to do is open it.

IN THE BIBLE.

Nehemiah 8:1-3

All the people assembled with a unified purpose at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had given for Israel to obey.

2 So on October 8 Ezra the priest brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand. 3 He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand. All the people listened closely to the Book of the Law.

Nehemiah 8:5-10

Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet.

6 Then Ezra praised the Lord, the great God, and all the people chanted, “Amen! Amen!” as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

7 The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah—then instructed the people in the Law while everyone remained in their places. 8 They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were interpreting for the people said to them, “Don’t mourn or weep on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the Lord your God.” For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

10 And Nehemiah continued, “Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!”

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

QUESTIONS.

Feel free to talk through some or all of these questions

- 1.) What's something that sticks out to you in the verses above?
- 2.) What are some characteristics of their gathering? How does it mirror or differ from your own time in the Word?
- 3.) How do you deal with confusing or difficult parts of Scripture?
- 4.) What is something that has impacted you from your time in the Word lately? Why was it impactful?

TAKE TEN:

- How did you see God work in your life this week?
- What has God been teaching you in His Word?
- What kind of conversations are you having with your pre-Christian friends?
- What good can you do around here? (in your life/circumstance)
- How can we help you in prayer and what do you want us to ask you about next week?

Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?