

A Man's Man or God's Man? Nehemiah 13

Introduction:

1. Have you ever heard the expression, "When the cat's away, the mice will play"? Never was this truer than here in our text.
2. Nehemiah had to leave Jerusalem where he had led a major rebuilding project. The Jews that had returned there had experienced an incredible revival under Nehemiah's leadership.
3. Nehemiah had to go back to Babylon to report to the king of Persia. This chapter records what Nehemiah found when he returned to Jerusalem. He was shocked. He couldn't believe his eyes. Things had fallen apart while he was gone.
4. But once again Nehemiah proved to be a man of God and a true leader in every sense of the word. We desperately need some men who will rise up and be godly leaders today.
5. You've heard the expression, "He's a man's man." In other words, he is tough, rugged, and cool. He fits the profile of the guys they try to portray on the beer commercials.
6. I submit to you today that it takes more guts, more strength, more courage, and more backbone to be **God's** man than to be a man's man.
7. How can a man be God's man? We are going to learn from one of the greatest leaders in God's Word - Nehemiah.

God's man perceives sin and is grieved by it. vs. 4-9

1. While Nehemiah was gone, the priest over the temple, Eliashib, had taken a room of the temple that was reserved for temple needs and had made a living chamber for Tobiah. vs. 4-5
2. Tobiah was an Ammonite Gentile that had opposed Nehemiah greatly. He mocked, ridiculed, and tried to hinder the rebuilding of God's wall in Jerusalem.
3. While Nehemiah was gone, Eliashib had prepared living quarters in the temple for this rebel. What did Nehemiah do when he got to town (vs. 7-9)? Nehemiah understood of the evil (vs. 7), and it grieved him sore (vs. 8).
4. Here is the lesson: God's man perceives when something is sinful and wrong, and it bothers him. Paul said to abhor evil, cleave to good. **Romans 12:9; cf. Amos 5:15a**
5. A man's man goes along with the crowd (**Isaiah 5:20-23**), but sin grieves God's man.

God's man is passionate about God's work. vs. 10-14

1. The Levites were God's appointed servants that were to work full-time in their oversight of the temple and all of its various aspects. They were to be completely devoted to God's work, and the people of Israel were to provide for their physical needs.
2. When Nehemiah arrives, the Levites aren't at the temple; they are out in the fields working (vs.10)! The people hadn't been giving to provide their needs and the house of God was forsaken (vs. 11). Nehemiah quickly gets things back in order. vs. 11b-13

3. Notice Nehemiah's prayer in verse 14. Nehemiah was God's man because he was passionate about God's work. The progress of God's work was important to him.
Romans 12:11
4. Men, may our families and friends see in us a burning passion for God's work on this earth. What are you passionate about? How would those closest to you answer that?

God's man makes God's Word his absolute guide. vs. 15-22

1. The Sabbath day rolls around and once again Nehemiah can't believe his eyes. vs. 15-16
2. God's law to Israel was very clear. On the Sabbath day (Saturday), they were not to do any kind of work, nor were they to buy or sell. It was a holy day of rest.
3. While Nehemiah was gone, the Jews were openly profaning God's Sabbath. Why would they do this? Take one guess. It padded their pocketbook. It was fiscally advantageous.
4. This is how a man's man decides things. Will it help me? Will it make me look good? Will it make me come out on top? If the answer is "yes," then go for it.
5. But what does God's man do? Does Nehemiah figure out how he can get in on the action? Does Nehemiah overlook it? Does Nehemiah try to get them to cut him in a percentage?
6. Nehemiah takes a strong stand against these people. vs. 17-19
 - A few people decide to push Nehemiah (vs. 20), but Nehemiah will not be intimidated (vs. 21). What a man - God's man!
7. Here is the issue: God's man has God's Word and that is his guide as he makes daily decisions. It isn't a matter of what is popular or what is expedient or what is most beneficial. The issue is, "What does the Bible say?" **Titus 1:9** is insightful.
 - "Holding fast" means you have a solid grip and won't let go.

God's man sets up boundaries for spiritual protection. vs. 23-27

1. Israel's law was clear. They were not to give their sons and daughters in marriage to the heathen nations around them. God knew that this would lead to Israel partaking in the heathen, sinful practices of those nations.
2. During the revival, Israel had recommitted themselves to this principle in God's Word (vs. 1-3), but when Nehemiah was away, Israel once again did wrong. vs. 23-24
 - Nehemiah stood against them, and told them that they must put back up these spiritual boundaries that were there for their protection. vs. 25-27
3. Men, we need to set the example to our families in setting up spiritual boundaries of protection. The Bible is clear about this. **Ephesians 4:27; 2 Timothy 2:22a; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 13:14**
4. Men, it needs to start with your computer (stats). You say, "I don't have a problem." Then you shouldn't mind being held accountable and putting up boundaries.
5. A man's man can be untrue to his wife and be full of carnal, sinful lust, and be acceptable. God's man simply cannot. It will molest, rape, and steal from you everything good, right, and holy in your life.

- **Illustration:** church - every computer is protected with Covenant Eyes.

In Conclusion:

1. You have to decide. Do I want to be a man's man or God's man? Nobody can decide for you. The choice is yours. It takes guts to be God's man, but oh, the blessings.
2. Guys, can I leave you with a verse? **Ephesians 6:10** - *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."* God's man has strength and power, but it comes from God, not his own fleshly effort.
3. Do you want to be able to look yourself in the mirror and like what you see? Become God's man!