

The Naked Truth Part 3: Dedication

- Review:**
- Why we are talking about this subject?
 - To address the tensions for believers and unbelievers—between telling the truth to follows of Jesus and showing God’s love to those who have failed or have never heard the truth.
 - To identify God’s design for sex, marriage, and gender. (**Genesis 1-2, Matthew 19:3**)
 - Last week was the Deterioration. **Romans 1:18-32** says the truth is that all have sinned and specifies what sin is.

Nehemiah’s Story

- Context: David was king ~1,000 BC.
- They were conquered by the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, then the Persians. Artaxerxes was the Persian King.
- Nehemiah’s entire story reveals God means what He says, but He is willing to forgive and help us rebuild when there is repentance.

Jeremiah 2:1–13 A New Start: Nehemiah 1:1–8

- **Notice the wall is down.**
 - The wall represented a distinction from other peoples, safety, and power.
 - As an outer physical wall creates safety within, so God’s spiritual laws create boundaries to play in where there is safety.
 - Not having that safety would be humiliating as a nation.
 - This city represented the Lord. He would be seen as less powerful than the gods of the surrounding nations.
- **Notice the problem: why the wall had fallen. (vs 6)**
 - **The physical wall was down because the spiritual wall was down.**
 - The wall was not the primary problem. It is the result of the real problem.
 - When we face trouble, we often act before coming before the Lord. We work to fix what we see rather than the spiritual issue.
 - Nehemiah acknowledges why Israel was in this state. They had become like the nations around them.

Exodus 34:15–17 Deuteronomy 4:5–8

- **Notice Nehemiah prayed before he acted.**
 - He confessed his country’s sin and his own.
 - He asked God to help Israel.
 - He asked God to help him do his part.
- **He stepped out in faith. He was willing to give up his position, wealth, and comfort.**
 - It was dangerous for him to go to a country with external and internal enemies.

Nehemiah 2:1–5

- **Notice Nehemiah had to tell the people the wall was down. The obvious had escaped them.**
 - They were so used to the lack of safety and disgrace that they didn’t even notice it anymore.
 - They had no vision of something better.
 - Nehemiah called them to notice and to work.
 - Remember your purpose, who you are—every one of you.

Nehemiah 2:17–18

- **As soon as they began to rebuild, the enemy came, and he keeps on coming.**
 - He first says they are politically incorrect—they are rebelling against the human king.
 - He tries to join them through infiltration and deception.
 - He then uses fear. He seeks to divide. He deceives and schemes.
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Nehemiah 2:19–20 Nehemiah 4:1–3

- **When it gets hard and scary (the grind), Nehemiah reminds them to fight for their families, their homes, and their people.**
 - Some complain about the country, or others, but they don't take responsibility in their own houses.
 - Not everyone was a builder, so they had to learn a new skill, but it was worth it.

Nehemiah 3:10 Nehemiah 3:28 Nehemiah 4:13–14 Nehemiah 4:19–23

- **The real turning point: Repentance and dedication to the Lord and His word.**
 - Remember the reason the Lord had abandoned Jerusalem and Israel was they had rejected the Lord.

Nehemiah 8:1–3 Nehemiah 8:9–10

- **Persistent dedication leads to a changed community.**

Nehemiah 13:4–5

- **What does dedication look like? Acknowledge God will not bless sin; rather, He will oppose it. (1 Peter 5:5-6)**
 - Why do we choose the short cut? Why do we choose to disobey?
 - ◇ It's because we don't believe God. We don't trust Him to do things in His time that will be for our good.
- 1. I will choose not to be conformed to the world's way of seeing things. (**Romans 12:1-2**)
- 2. Personal repentance: I will do what God's Word commands sexually in my life. (**2 Corinthians 7:8-11**)
 - Marriage, gender, sex before marriage, dating, as a married person, as a single person...
 - He means what He says about blessings and curses. (**Deuteronomy 30:15**)
- 3. I will start in my own house but also be a part of the community of faith. (**Deuteronomy 6:4-9**)
 - I am a child of God, and I have brothers and sisters.
 - If I have children, I will lead.
- 4. If I am single, I will be faithful to the Lord. I will be Holy, and I will be part of God's family. (**1 Peter 2:11, Hebrews 3:12-13**)
- 5. If I see a brother and sister struggling, I will minister to them. I remind them who they are! (**Galatians 6:1-3, Jude 22-23**)

Discussion questions for home, or Life Group:

Choose a passage from the sermon or consider using one of these: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Romans 6:15- 23

1. What did you hear about a dedicated life that stood out to you?
2. As you examine your world, what concerns do you have? A) How are those concerns impacting your prayer life, your habits, or your compassion for others?
3. Dedication includes dealing with areas that haven't been under God's authority. What areas of repentance, commitment, and action is God showing you? (Think about personally, for your family, for your friendships, for your workplace, or your online activities.)
4. What would a dedicated life, particularly in the area of sexuality, look like for you in this season of your life? A) What is your plan of action and your next step?
5. As we conclude the Naked Truth series, what has God shown you, and how are you responding?