"Put It In Writing"

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Date: 01 November 2026

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[0:00] Let's go to Nehemiah chapter 10.

We are getting close to the end of our study through Nehemiah.! Allow me a few minutes here just of history and review.
You're a sunny night crowd. I don't feel any pressure to have to entice you to listen. You're here. It gets dark as of today at about 3 p.m. And so it's going to be dark when you leave.
So it doesn't really matter. If you come tonight, you're here to learn, I know. So let me just give you some history reminder, history review, because I want this stage to be set in your mind as we come to chapter 10.
Remember in 538, the first wave of those that were going to return from exile, Cyrus has decreed they can go back. They go back in three waves. As the people go back, something that begins to take place is this intermarriage between the Jewish people and outsiders.
[1:12] It's not a racial issue. It's a spiritual issue. It's those who were worshipers of the one true God, and they would intermarry with those who did not worship the one true God.

And in time, that begins to create all kinds of issues, as you might imagine. Around 444, Nehemiah leads his group.
Ezra and Zerubbabel, Nehemiah lead these returns back. And the people hear the law, and the people respond in worship, as we've studied here in Nehemiah.
When you get to these latter chapters, so much of this is happening that references the seventh month. We've looked at this the last couple of Sundays. The first day of the seventh month is the Feast of Trumpets.
The tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. The fifteenth day of the seventh month, through the twenty-second, is the Feast of Booze.
[2:13] It's a time of remembrance and celebrating God's provision of His people. The eighth day of the Feast of Booze, or the twenty-third day of the month, is the Day of Holiness.

And when we got to Nehemiah 9 last week, it was the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month. All that happening there within those three and a half weeks.
And the interesting thing is, as the people hear the Word, they are broken. They are contrite. They begin to weep and mourn and grieve. But in the reading of the Word that breaks their heart, they see and they come to understand that this is actually to be a time of celebration.
So it's as if, in submission to the Word of God, that they grieve over their sin, over their forefather's sin. But, even in their emotion, they want to honor the Word of God.
So it's as if they set aside their brokenness in order to celebrate the goodness and deliverance of God, to rightly use the days of the seventh month to worship and honor Him.
[3:22] And once those festivities are over, Nehemiah 9, the twenty-fourth day, they go back to pick up, so to speak, their grieving and their mourning over their sin.

So in chapter 8, the people heard the Word and they responded to it. In chapter 9, there's repentance. When you come to chapter 10 tonight, the people are going to make a public commitment to honor the Lord.
Or as one teacher put it, they make a covenant to keep the covenant. There's a commitment here to lead their families to obey the Lord.
Eighty-four names are mentioned in verses 1 to 27. I would feel bad taking the joy away from you reading those on your own, so I'm going to not read them. I'll let you do that tonight.
Eighty-four names are mentioned. These are the names of people who signed their names to the covenant. The men lead the way. That's important because we see in their day and in our day of how meaningful it is when husbands and fathers lead the way in their families.

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[4:41] Not every family has a husband. Not every family has a father. And where there are exceptions to that norm, then I thank the Lord for single moms, even in our church, who are faithful to teach their children.

I thank the Lord for widows in our church who don't have a husband, who continue to serve the Lord and to joyfully worship and honor the Lord. And where there's not a husband or not a father in the home, we need godly moms and wives, godly ladies to pursue the Lord with all their heart.
And we've got some good examples of faithful ladies just like that in our church, and I honor them and respect them greatly. But where there is a family where you have a father and a mother and children, there's just no getting around this of how significant it is for the father or the husband to lead the way in the worship of God.
That's not just in Nehemiah 10. That's true in our day. Some of the most recent research I could find on this even gives it an even more eye-opening vision of how true it is.
According to surveys done a few years ago, if the father does not go to church, but the wife does, only one in 50 children will grow up to be a regular worshiper.
[6:15] If the father attends church regularly, three-quarters of their children will as adults. That is in no way at all to downplay the role of godly, faithful moms and wives.

They are great gifts to the church and great gifts to the home. But there is no substitute for a father or a husband who leads his family. A different study that focused on Sunday school, not worship attendance, found that when both parents attend Sunday school in addition to morning service, 72% of their children will attend Sunday school when they are grown.
Families ideally have a husband and a wife, a mother and a father who are walking together, not only bringing their children to church while that's important, but living these things out as well.
If only the mother attends Sunday school and church and the father does neither, only 15% of the children attend church when they are grown.
There is no substitute for the influence that a father has on his children. Again, that is not in any way to diminish the importance of mom. But there is something to be said for faithful leadership in the family.
[7:45] That's true in our day today. That was true in Nehemiah's day as well. The story of chapter 10 really begins in the end of chapter 9, verse 38, where it says, Because of all this, we make a firm covenant in writing on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.

What I want to show you is how the fathers and the husbands, the leaders, pave the way here to say we are going to honor the Lord.
And you see in verses 1 to 8, I'll just ask you to kind of let your eyes scan through this long list of names here. We find Nehemiah the governor and his genealogy. The priests are listed, 22 of them. Verses 9 to 13, you see the Levites, 17 of them, and their brothers are mentioned there. Verses 14 down to 27, another long list of names.
And these are the list of names of people who are here signing on saying, we are going to follow the Lord. We are going to follow the Lord.
[9:04] You remember back in a couple of chapters ago where the law was read and the people began to weep and began to repent and they spent hours reading the Word, they spent hours in prayer, the leaders went throughout the crowd and broke them into smaller groups to give the sense of the meaning, make sure they understood what was going on.

The next day, the men went back and said, teach us more, train us more, so that they would be able in turn to train their families and train their households.
And what happens now in chapter 10 from verses 28 to the end of the chapter in verse 39 is a public ceremony of their commitment that says, we want to follow God.
Nehemiah, most people think of the book as just rebuilding the wall, and that's a big part of the book, but there's so much more than that. The wall has been rebuilt, but now we've got to bring not just rebuilding to the wall, we've got to bring a renewal in the hearts of the people.
There needs to be a revival of a love for the Lord. This isn't just about construction. This is about what happens when the people of God obey the Lord, have faithful leadership, trust the Lord to provide, respond to the Word, repent, build their lives upon the obedience of the Word, and then in chapter 10, go public with their commitment led by the men of their society to say, we will honor God.

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[10:52] A few commitments they make, if you want to take note of these. Number one, they commit to the priority of the Word of God and obedience. They commit to the priority of the Word of God and obedience. Look at verse 28. The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, and all who have knowledge and understanding. This isn't an exhaustive list, but this showing that they kept track of the people who were there. They knew who was committed. They knew who was a part of the work they were doing. This isn't exactly like a New Testament church or church membership, but there is something for us to learn from this. As we looked at church membership on Sunday mornings a couple of weeks ago, you need to know who is in, who is committed, who is committed to the Lord, and who is committing their lives to each other. That's what, in part, what membership does in the local church. It helps us know who is accountable to do what we say we're going to do. In a similar way in EMI at 10, they know who is committing, who is saying we are going to live by the priority of the Word of God. It mentions those who had separated themselves. These were non-Israelites. These are people who had left their pagan ways to follow the Lord. That's worth noting, it was always in the heart of God that Israel would be a light unto the world. Not that salvation would belong only to the Jewish people, but they would be a light to the Gentiles for them to come and follow their God. Verse 29, we join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law that was given by Moses, the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord, our Lord, and His rules and statutes.

This commitment they're making in EMI at 10 is a commitment to be different from the rest of the world. They are saying we commit with each other, to each other, to live different from the world, to be separate from the world. Now, that same idea exists in the New Testament with the church.
2 Corinthians 6, 17, Therefore go out from their midst and be separate from them, says the Lord.
The people of God have always been called to be a people who are separate from the world.
We're to live differently. We don't blend in. They were serious about their commitment. You see back in verse 29 that we will observe and do all the commandments of the Lord and follow His rules and His statutes. They were serious about their worship of God.
It reminds me of Ecclesiastes 5, guard your steps as you draw near the house of God. As they have heard the word read and repented of their sin and repented of their forefathers' sin, they recognize the God they serve is a holy God worthy of their love, their devotion, and their obedience.
[14:37] And it is with reverence and seriousness that they commit to the priority of the Word of God and their obedience. We will do what the Word says.

Second, they commit to purity in their homes and marriages. They commit to purity in their homes and their marriages. Verse 30, We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land, or take their daughters for our sons.
This is where the men make this commitment to each other that they are going to take serious the priority of protecting their children and teaching their children the importance of marrying only those who love and worship the one true God.
It's amazing to me, sometimes just so disheartening to see parents, and particularly fathers, who will be so involved in their children's lives, teaching them how to throw a baseball and how to catch a football and how to play an instrument, and moms and dads who will drive their children all over the world, basically, for practice and tournaments and games and events and recitals.
And yet, when it comes to the spiritual training of their children, just completely ignore it, hand it off to somebody else, or neglect it altogether.
[16:14] One of the things that's happening in Nehemiah 10 is they are saying, We will take a renewed interest in the purity of our families and the way we train our children.

We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land, and we will not take their daughters for our sons. We are not going to be marrying people who do not love the one true God.
You see it all the time, too. I know. Moms and dads who do everything they can for their children and go through an amazing sacrifice, but do not take seriously the work of training their children in the Lord.
One of the remarks of revival is the return of moms and dads caring about the purity of their children, and they follow the Lord.
Never neglect the spiritual formation of your children. They're separating themselves from those who refuse to be separated from the world.

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[17:21] And so the dads, the husbands, the men of the town are leading out here in Nehemiah 10, saying, We are going to renew our focus on the purity of our children, and we're going to teach and train them what marriage is supposed to be, and we're not going to let them, we're not going to give our daughters away in marriage to those who do not serve God, and we're not going to let our sons take wives among those who do not serve God.

You see this in the New Testament for us as well. 2 Corinthians 6.14, Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
New Testament Christians, that's us today, we marry only in the Lord. There's a purity here.
And one of the real remarkable things that takes place in Nehemiah 10 is their commitment to purity in their homes and marriages to be different from the world.
To be different. Number three, they commit to promises in the culture and their work. They commit to promises in the culture and their work.
[18:46] They're not only going to read the Bible and do what it says, they're not only going to protect their family and obey the Lord, but they're even going to let their commitment to the Lord penetrate into the way they do business.

It's going to get down in the heart of how they conduct business in the culture and the work. Look at verse 31. And if the peoples of the land bring in goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day, and we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt.
What they're saying is, as we have had a return to the Word, we recognize not only have we not been obeying the Word, not only have we not been faithful to the Lord in raising our children and our view of marriage, but we have not been trusting the Lord in terms of our finances and trusting the Lord in our businesses.
The weekly Sabbath, they are going to say, we're going to honor the Sabbath as we were supposed to do. The reason why they were to honor the Lord on the Sabbath was for their good.
For their ability to rest. And yet, out of a lack of trust of the Lord, they put that aside, and they're buying and selling anytime they possibly can, because mathematically, it just makes sense that seven days of work for them is better than six.
[20:23] But not if the Lord has called you to work six days and to rest one. It really is a matter of trust for them. The people had not been doing what the Lord had instructed them to do in His Word, and now they say, we're going to commit to live by these promises in the culture and with our work.

We're going to trust the Lord and we're going to use the Sabbath as the Lord intended it to be for us. Dale Ralph Davis said this about this commitment.
He said, they were refusing to let the world squeeze them into its mold. Now, we're not Sabbatarians, but there is something to learn from this.
The world is going to try to squeeze you into its mold, and it's going to try over and over and over and over. And yet, we say this is the Lord's Day.
And so we give of our Sunday mornings to be in worship and in Bible study. And many return back on Sunday evenings.
[21:37] We've got our Passion Choir, our Kids Choir, our Kinder Praise Choir, You're in Here, all of it, so that our day begins and ends as often as it can with worship and training and study and discipleship and fellowship.

But, you could ignore that and just work all day Sunday and just catch up listening to our service as you drive to church tomorrow on your phone.
Or you could say, Sunday is the day that we need to do housework and laundry and mow the yard. And you could just do all of that all day Sunday and forget spending hours here at church.
And you can just watch service on YouTube Tuesday night. But there's always been something about the people of God saying, we trust the Lord's wisdom even down to the details of how we would order our week.
That worship on the Lord's Day for us is not something we have to do. It is a gift for the people of God. And that in the day of Nehemiah, they had begun to see the Lord's gift of the Sabbath as something merely as a restriction on them and then as a suggestion to them and then pretty soon as completely irrelevant for them.

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[23:17] But here in this commitment, they say, we're going to trust the Lord. We're going to trust Him with the weekly Sabbath. Verse 31 mentions the seventh year where they were to let their fields rest every seven years.

That's an exercise in faith and in trust. Do we trust the Lord with that? The exaction of debt. They were to set people free from their debt in another display of faith. Here's the application. Don't lose your distinction from the world.
Don't lose your distinction from the world. That's true in Nehemiah. That's true in 2 Timothy. That's true in 2026. Christian, don't lose your distinction from the world.
We're set apart. For you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people set apart for the praises of God.
[24:28] Don't lose your distinction. As Christ followers today, we don't go through our week and wait to see, I wonder what will happen Sunday morning.

I wonder how we'll feel. I wonder if we're going to go to church. I wonder if we're going to serve. I wonder if we're going to do this. We'll see how we feel. No, the people of God order their week around the priority of worship.
The people of God order their life around the will of God knowing it is for our good.
But all of that really does come down to trust and faith. Do you really believe that God's ways are best? Do you really believe that His commandments for you are for your good?
To teach you, to train you, to spare you from disaster, to help you to honor the Lord. If you don't understand the heart of God, then following the Lord's commands will always be burdensome to you.
[25:44] But if you understand the heart of God is for the good of His people, then with faith and trust you joyfully obey and honor what He has given us to do.

That's true for us in the church. That was true for the people of God in Nehemiah 10. Don't lose your distinction. Be different from the world.
They commit to the priority of the Word of God and obedience. They commit to purity in their homes and marriages. They commit to promises in the culture and their work.
And then one last one. Verses 32-39. They commit to a pledge in their worship and giving. They commit to a pledge in their worship and giving.
Verse 32. We also take on ourselves the obligation to give yearly a third part of a shekel for the service of the house of God.
[26:48] In this paragraph verses 32-39 you see the phrase house of God or house of our God nine different times. And they're going to speak to their commitment to provide funds for the maintenance of the temple for the materials needed for worship and to provide for the men who lead temple worship.

I'm going to read this and I'm just going to emphasize it when the phrase comes. Follow along in verse 33. For the show bread the regular grain offering the regular burnt offering the Sabbaths the new moons the appointed feasts the holy things and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel and for all the work of the house of our God.
We the priests the Levites and the people have likewise cast lots for the wood offering to bring it into the house of our God. According to our fathers houses at times appointed year by year to burn on the altar of the Lord our God as it has been written in the law.
We obligate ourselves to bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of all fruit of every tree year by year to the house of the Lord. Verse 36.
Also to bring to the house of our God to the priests who minister in the house of our God the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle as it is written in the law and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks and to bring the first of our dough and our contributions the fruit of every tree the wine and the oil to the priests to the chambers of the house of our God and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our ground for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all of our towns where we labor and the priests the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God to the chambers of the storehouse verse 39 for the people of Israel the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain wine and oil to the chambers where the vessels of the sanctuary are as well as the priests who minister and the gatekeepers and the singers now this last sentence here chapter 10 verse 39 the last sentence sums up all of this fourth commitment look at the last sentence we will not neglect the

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house of our
[29:20] God this is their public commitment to do this and they sign their names and they say we are committing to God we are committing to each other we are going to live different from the world we are going to trust God it's going to change the way that we live it's going to change the way that we raise our children it's going to change the way we work and conduct business and it's going to change the way we worship and the way that we provide for those who lead us in worship we will not neglect the house of our God and they sign their names as they remind themselves that for the people of God there is always personal responsibility and a reminder we are part of something bigger than us both of those things are true that's true for you you have a personal responsibility to read the word you have a personal responsibility to train your children you have a personal responsibility to be honorable and trustworthy in your business and a personal responsibility to give to the Lord but you don't do it by yourself we remind ourselves all throughout the week that those commitments while they are individual they are also collective we are a group of people who individually are saying we will honor the

Lord but we commit to do that together as a church family so in one sense as the old hymn says though none go with me I still will follow yes but here's the good news of the local church you're not alone and by yourself our mentality is we'll do what honors the Lord even if nobody else does here's the joyful truth you're surrounded by people who also are committing their lives to honor the Lord with all that they do the people of God have always been purposed to give God first place in their life but to be strengthened and encouraged by other people who live the same commitment so when you get to the end of chapter 10 what they are saying publicly they will do is we obey God we will be distinct from the world we will protect our families and homes and we will be serious about worship and supporting the worship of
God what do we do with this in our life let me give you a couple of very quick implications here number one you take God with you everywhere you go you take God with you everywhere you go in chapter 10 they are saying our commitment to the Lord is going to be in total private life in the home public life in worship business life as we buy and sell and the same is true for us friends we take the Lord with us everywhere we go here's the second thing serious thought is necessary for serious change to come about in your life people don't stumble into holiness they don't stumble into godliness it takes serious thought with the work of the spirit in your life to bring about serious change and if there's one thing that's clear in
Nehemiah 10 this is really serious I mean they are committing to live a certain way they are putting their name on the document they know who has signed they are keeping track of who has said we are in they are serious about saying we're going to live different and this is not just to put in our vernacular today this is not saying we're going to be Sunday morning Christians only this is saying we're going to let!
this influence and shape every part of our life family worship business the way you treat others serious thought is necessary for serious change let me just leave you with the final question here as we think about how to live this truth out in our life is your commitment to God plain and public for others to see is your commitment to God plain it's clear it's public people know you're a Christ follower not only because of where you spend your time on the!
[34:35] Lord's day but also because of how you treat them also because of ways that you talk also because of things you refuse to be a part of your commitment to the Lord should be plain and it should be public one of the things we need every single generation are the leaders of those households to step forward and say as Joshua said in the Old Testament as for me and my house we will serve the Lord choose you this day who you will serve you want to serve the God of the Amorites you want to serve the gods that others serve beyond the river but as for me and my house we serve the Lord Nehemiah 10 as for me in my house we're going to have a new commitment to a priority of the word of

God as for me in my house we're going to have a renewed commitment to purity in our homes and marriages as for me in my house we're going to have renewed commitment to the promises of how we're going to live in the culture with our work and as for me in my house we're going to commit to a pledge of we're going to be faithful to worship and faithful to give as we remind ourselves that while our worship is always personally directed to God it is done in community with others who are like minded who pledge their lives together to say let's follow God together that's how the people of God are to live and so as for you and your house lead the way for some of you you are single unmarried

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as for you and your house and if that's you that's you be abandoned to
God others of you are married without kids at home it's you and your spouse as for you and your house you serve the Lord some of you got little ones at home as for you and your house serve the Lord train them in the things of God teach your children that we marry in the Lord teach your children that we conduct our business in a way that honors God we're not there to make the most dollars we can in every scenario we're there to honor God with what he has entrusted to us some of you your kids are grown and gone and now it's back to you and your spouse again as for you and your house you serve the Lord some of you are single parents doing your best to teach and train your children you don't have the help and support of the spouse that others have but as for you and your house you serve the
Lord some of you are widows and widowers and you had years and years of being with your mate but today your mate has gone to be with the Lord and now it's just you as for you and your house you serve the Lord through all the seasons through all the stages through all the iterations of what home life and family life may be let it be said of us like the!
Nehemiah 10 that we chose to declare that as for our houses we serve the Lord we refuse to be squeezed into the mold of the world we refuse to lose our distinction and we will strive in our obedience in our families in our work and in our worship to honor God in all that we do Nehemiah 10 leaves us in a good place it won't last but how true is it for us that often with good intentions we make commitments and they fall by the wayside maybe that's been true for you maybe you're playing to read the
[39:38] Bible through in a year got hijacked somewhere around Leviticus maybe you're playing to do something else in ministry fell by the wayside as life and work got busy maybe time you're making for your spouse has become more and more rare because of the chaotic nature of life maybe you made promises to your children that you've not kept this year our God is a God of grace and our God is a God of a new beginning and even if your commitment you made before did not last let it be said of us this day as for me and my house we serve the Lord God we thank you for your word today it's been such a rich and full week for our church so many great opportunities for worship and for fellowship and we give you thanks and praise for all of it

Lord our desire would be to honor you and to be found faithful to walk joyfully with each other as we do may you give us the grace and the help and the strength to do so for the glory of your son we pray amen to to do to do and to do you do pozw pozw pozw to pozw

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