

These questions are for the October 26, 2025, message, “How joy makes us strong,” from the series entitled, “Seeking Him.” Please read the sermon passage (Neh 8:1-12) out loud.

Passage Outline

We become strong as we . . .

1. Hunger for God’s Word (1)
 - a. The people had a history of hungering for
 - i. The approval of people.
 - ii. Fractional loyalty to God, always making room for idols.
 - b. In response to Nehemiah’s 6-months of praying (Neh 1:4-11), the people now asked for the Law of the Lord to be read to them.
2. Understand God’s Word (2-8).
 - a. The effort of the scribes and priests is to
 - i. read the Law, explaining it paragraph-by-paragraph.
 - ii. “give the sense” of exactly what it means (8).
 - b. The effort of the people is to listen and understand.
3. Consciously trust God’s Word (9-12).
 - a. When we read the law we see our rebellion, departure and guiltiness.
 - i. Yet God is a God who loves us and forgives those who repent.
 - ii. We can stop weeping when we trust God’s Word about forgiveness.
 - b. Note how social relationships are transformed by joy and sharing.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: How does a steady diet of wanting the approval of others (more than the approval of God) make you weak? How can you get better at becoming aware of your own desire for human approval?
2. Based on #1, above: When we are hungry for God’s Word, our voice is joined with others in asking for the Word, listening to the Word, and enduring personal inconveniences in order to prioritize the Word of God in our lives. How are you doing with that?
3. Based on #2, above: When we understand the Word, it clicks. We see how it fits together. We study it “paragraph-by-paragraph” (v. 8, “clearly”), and we grow in understanding the “sense” of what it means. Are there any portions of God’s Word which you don’t understand, at least generally? How much of a priority is it for you understand God’s Word? How can we, your Life Group friends, help you?
4. Based on #3, above: Joy makes us strong through confidence in God over time. As we know God, we believe that we have broken His Law, but He has forgiven us (joy upon joy!). This forgiveness brings freedom from the power of sin and an assurance of life everlasting in God’s presence. How has joy changed you? How has it strengthened you?