



- iii. Many of them had to change vocations as they moved from the countryside to the city. It was unsettling for many of them.
- iv. They also bore the risk of being attacked because the enemies would target the capital first; Jerusalem is the capital of Judah.
- The people commended those who resettled, and God honoured them by recording their names in Scriptures, thus remembering them forever. When God calls us to make sacrifices, it is an invitation to walk closer with Him!
- God rewards all who make sacrifices for Him. In 2 Timothy 4:6-8, Apostle Paul fought the good fight and ran the race well because he knew that he will be rewarded by God at the end.

## 2. We must be quick to give thanks to God (Nehemiah 12:27)

- Nehemiah and the people worked hard for five months to rebuild the wall despite the difficult circumstances. Nehemiah knew that their accomplishment was from God. God supplied all that they needed and protected them from their enemies. Nehemiah was quick to give thanks to God. He dedicated the wall to God (Nehemiah 12:27) and got the people together to celebrate and give thanks to God (Nehemiah 12:43). God had given them cause for great joy and their celebrations were heard far away.
- When we give thanks to God, it makes glad the heart of God. In return, He puts great joy in our hearts. If we want to have a strong, passionate, joyful life with God, be quick to give thanks.
- It is easy to give thanks in good times, but how can we be joyful and grateful in difficult and uncertain times? 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – Apostle Paul teaches us to give thanks in all circumstances. We can give thanks to God in both good and bad situations. When we are quick to thank Him, it gives us a deep sense of joy in our hearts. Start to give thanks to the Lord today in all circumstances, and you will begin to see a big difference in the way you respond to God's Word.
- *"In happy moments, praise God. In difficult moments, seek God. In painful moments, trust God. In every moment, thank God."* – Rick Warren.

## 3. We must be ready to change our life priorities (Nehemiah 12:44-47)

- Nehemiah understood that the Temple was central to the spiritual and political health of the nation. If there was healthy Temple worship, there would be strong spiritual passion in the people, which would lead to a strong godly nation. Therefore, priority was given to reform the system of Temple worship.
- Although we do not practice Temple worship anymore, the spiritual principles still apply today. If you want to be passionate for God, you need to have a strong spiritual core. You need to make priorities in your life to build up this spiritual core.
- Matthew 6:33 says "to seek God and His kingdom first in everything." You need to put God first in your life.
  - i. Spend time with God daily.
  - ii. Allow the Word of God to transform you.
  - iii. Listen and obey the promptings of God. Many times, because we fail to obey God, God does not speak anymore.
  - iv. Give generously to God's work. Our pocket is a reflection of our spiritual life.

- Follow the example of Jesus – a man fully led by the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:35). He is free from legalism and encumbrances, but He spends every morning with the Lord before the sun rises.
- If we want a strong inner core and to be passionate for God, we must make it our priority to spend time with God and allow His Word to touch us. When we put God first, we would have a strong spiritual vitality, which will lead us to an abundant and fruitful life.

### Summary

Therefore, to keep our spiritual passion going, we have to: (1) be willing to make sacrifices, (2) be quick to give thanks, and (3) be ready to change life priorities. This was what the people and Nehemiah did. Put God first on a day-to-day basis, spend time intentionally, give thanks to Him in whatever situation you are in, and when God prompts you, be prepared to obey and make sacrifices. When you do these three things, your passion for God and the things of God will grow and continue all the days of your life.

### Discussion Questions

1. **Once the walls were rebuilt, Nehemiah gathered everyone together to dedicate the wall to God and to give thanks and rejoice in Him – see Nehemiah 12:27-47. Share with the group one thing or someone in your life that you can thank God for and rejoice in? (Recap) [10 min]**

#### Leader's Notes:

*Get members to think about something/someone in their lives that they can thank the Lord for and to rejoice in. It need not necessarily be a good thing, but can be something bad or difficult (e.g., a cancer that was cured, a full life despite a disability, a job loss that opened the opportunities for other ventures, etc.). This is to reinforce what Paul taught: to give thanks to God in all situations, so that your faith can be strengthened, and you will develop a deep-seated joy in you that cannot be shaken.*

#### Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to The Next Question)

It is important to be able to give thanks in all circumstances to grow our faith in God and to walk closer to Him. When we practice being thankful, we will experience profound contentment in Him, and our spiritual fire will grow. In this season of COVID-19, there are many challenges that we face. If our eyes are only on our challenges, we may miss out on the good things that God is still doing in us, through us and for us. So, let us not forget to celebrate the little blessings that we encounter during this season.

2. **We must be prepared to change life priorities to draw nearer to God and seek Him and His Kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). Examine your life priorities. What can you sacrifice or do less of in order to create a daily rhythm of spending time with God? (Relate, Reflect) [15 min]**

#### Leader's Notes:

*This is for members to examine their priorities in life and to make changes so that God will be their ultimate priority. As a believer, we should make God our priority before everything else and daily seek Him and His Kingdom. This helps us to draw near to Him, strengthen our spiritual core and keep the spiritual fire aflame.*

### Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to The Next Question)

Once we have set up and kept to a daily rhythm of seeking God and His Kingdom daily, we will begin to see a transformation in our hearts and mindset as we continuously draw near to Him. Next to come would be a change in our lifestyles as we seek to please God and worship Him with our lives.

3. **Our life purpose is to please God by being obedient to Him and living for His glory. This can only happen if we choose to live with a certain lifestyle. Identify areas in our lifestyles that needs to change (or maybe, to be eliminated) to please God and live for His glory. (Response) [15 min]**

#### **Leader's Notes:**

*When we love God, we want to do right in His sight and live a life that is pleasing to Him. People often mistakenly think that spiritual passion comes naturally into their lives without much effort on their part. We need to encourage our people to live a more structured life and do their part to keep their spiritual fire going.*

*Read about living a life that pleases God in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. In view of this passage, get members to examine their lifestyles and pick out areas of their lives that need to be changed so as to be pleasing to God.*

### Transition (Wrapping Up, Vision Casting to Cell & Closing the Discussion)

When we have spiritual passion that is continuously burning, we will desire to please God. That means making sacrifices and reforming our lives so that we walk the straight and narrow path, and aim to finish the race well.

---

## **WORKS** [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. For God to help us keep our spiritual fire alive:
  - that the Holy Spirit will show us where in our lives that need to change;
  - that we will commit a daily rhythm in spending time seeking the Lord and reading His Word; and
  - that we will be willing to obey God's promptings.
2. Pray for Singapore's new Cabinet line-up:
  - that God will grant them wisdom as they lead the nation; and
  - that they will help make this nation a godly nation that honours God.

---

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **1. We Belong**

Riverlife E-Gathering And 29th Anniversary  
22-23 Aug 2020  
Registration opens next week.

**2. Alpha Online**

Starting 5 Aug, Wednesdays, 8pm – 9.30pm

Find out more: [rlc.sg/alphaonline](https://rlc.sg/alphaonline)

Register at [rlc.sg/ao-reg](https://rlc.sg/ao-reg) by Sun, 2 Aug

**3. RiverLife Weekly**

Issue 15: “Intimacy With Jesus”

Read the full note at <https://rlc.sg/wkly15>

**4. RiverLife Stories**

A special 4-part series of #RiverLifeStories that focuses on Disciple Making

Read the full story at <https://rlc.sg/fb>

**Church Vision**

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

**Mission**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.