

# Nehemiah Cared

It has been said that “The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them; that’s the essence of inhumanity.” That statement is the lesson Jesus taught in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Have you ever felt as though no one seemed to care? Have you ever been sick, and no one ever called to see how you were feeling? Have you ever been down and lonely, and hardly anyone ever glanced in your direction? Have you ever been discouraged to the point of missing the services of the church, and no one called to tell you they had been missing you, and wanted to know what they could do to help?

I’m sure that most of us have wondered at times — “does anybody really care?” A friend once told me of his attending a local church for three months before one particular elder of the congregation ever made an effort to introduce himself. I know of a person who repeatedly requested of a preacher that he visit her dying mother in the hospital, but he refused because that was not a part of his “job” as an evangelist. As Christians, we need to constantly examine our hearts to see if we really care for people. We need to ask ourselves if we are doing the things necessary to let others know that we care about them. Or, do we care about certain ones, while being indifferent toward others? We all must be careful, lest we become so “wrapped up” in our own lives, we become totally insensitive and oblivious to the needs and concerns of others (Philippians 2:3-4).

Nehemiah was the kind of person who cared. Let’s notice four ways in which he cared:

1. Nehemiah cared enough to ask (Nehemiah 1:1-3). He was the cupbearer to the Persian king, Artaxerxes. He was concerned for the struggling remnant of Jews who lived hundreds of miles away. He asked about Jerusalem and the ones living there because he had a caring heart. When we truly care about people, we want the facts, no matter how painful they may be. Three words summarize the bad news Nehemiah received: survivors, distress, and reproach. Are we like Nehemiah, anxious to know the truth even about the worst situations? Are we the kind of people who care enough to ask?
2. Nehemiah cared enough to weep (Nehemiah 1:4). What makes people laugh or weep is often an indication of their character. People who laugh at another’s mistakes or misfortunes, or who weep over trivial, insignificant personal disappointments are lacking in character. Sometimes weeping is a sign of weakness; but with Nehemiah, it was a sign of strength and deep concern, as it was with Jeremiah, “the weeping prophet” (Jeremiah 9:1). The Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul wept over sad situations (Luke 19:41; Acts 20:19).
3. Nehemiah cared enough to pray (Nehemiah 1:5-10). This prayer is the first of twelve recorded prayers in the book of Nehemiah. In fact, the book opens and closes with prayer. It is obvious that Nehemiah was a man of faith who depended wholly upon

the Lord to help him accomplish his work. Nehemiah succeeded because he depended upon God. The same holds true for us today.

4. Nehemiah cared enough to volunteer (Nehemiah 1:11). It has well been said that “prayer is not getting man’s will done in heaven, but getting God’s will done on earth.” But for God’s will to be done on earth, He needs people who are readily available for Him to use them in His service. What about the times when volunteers are needed to teach a class, prepare the communion trays, prepare a meal, make a visit, write a letter, send a card, make a phone call, etc.? Do we make ourselves available?

God is still looking for people who care, people like Nehemiah, who cared enough to ask for the facts, weep over the needs, pray for God’s help, and then volunteer to get the job done. Nehemiah cared! Or, as another prophet once said to the Lord, “Here am I, send me!” (Isaiah 6:8).

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