

"Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind." – Brene Brown

REFORM = cleansing from relational compromise

Nehemiah 13:4-5

4 Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, 5 and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

Nehemiah 13:6-7

6 But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission 7 and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God.

Nehemiah 13:8-9

8 I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. 9 I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

"Nehemiah did that because he was determined he would not live with *wrong* (Tobiah's evil) in a place that was built for *right*." – Chuck Swindoll

Failure to give approval of a person's actions does not equal a failure to extend love.

REFORM = restoring the practice of first fruits giving

rebuked = *rub* (Hebrew) = to reprimand, to contend, to vigorously grapple

Nehemiah 13:10

I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields.

Nehemiah 13:11-13

11 So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. 12 All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms. 13 I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because these men were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their brothers.

When we bring an offering to God, we're saying something like this...

"The joy that I pursue is not the hope of getting rich with things from you. I have not come to you for your things but for yourself. And this desire I now intensify and demonstrate by giving up things in the hope of enjoying you more, not the things. By giving to you what you do not need and what I might enjoy, I am saying more earnestly and more authentically, 'You are my treasure, not these things.'" – John Piper



REFORM = honoring the Sabbath day

Nehemiah 13:15-17

15 In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. 16 Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. 17 I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day?"

Nehemiah 13:23-25

23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. 25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves."

REFORM = renovating the home-front

"called down curses" = spoke sharply, to despise, a sanctified indignation

Deuteronomy 25:2-3 – if a man is found guilty then he deserves to be beaten

Ezra 9:3 – Ezra learned the Israelites were intermarrying with foreign women so he pulled hair from his head and his beard as an expression of condemnation.

"Any embarrassment we might feel at Nehemiah's forthrightness could be a sign of our own spiritual and moral limitations rather than his. Was it weakness that in Nehemiah's code of conduct the modern *shibboleth* (cultural principle), "thou shalt be *nice*" seems to have had no place, while 'thou shalt be *faithful to God* and *zealous for God*' was evidently basic to it? Would Moses, David, Jesus, or Paul ever have qualified as 'Mr. Nice Guy'? The assumption, so common today, that niceness is of the essence of goodness needs to be exploded. Nehemiah should not be criticized for thinking that there are more important things in life than being nice."

– J.I. Packer

Nehemiah 13:31

Remember me with favor, O my God.

"To hear God's 'well done' is the most...cleansing of ambitions." – Derek Kidner