

Getting to Worship

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn with me, if you would, to Nehemiah 9, Nehemiah 9 and verse 2. Our goal is to worship our God. That ought to be one of the reasons we're in church.

That ought to be one of the reasons that we exist, is to worship our God, our Savior, the one who has done everything for us. And in Nehemiah 9, they're going to get to worship. They're going to, by the end of this chapter, it starts really at the beginning of the chapter, it goes all the way through the chapter, they are worshipping God.

I think there are three things that stand out in the chapter about how they get from where they are to real worship. So take your Bible with me and start in Nehemiah 9 and verse 2.

The first step was they separated from strangers. They separated from strangers. Look at Nehemiah 9 and verse 2. The Bible said, And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer just a minute. And then we will dive into Nehemiah 9. Father, I love you. I thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I pray, God, that you will bring worship from our hearts towards you.

[1 : 09] You would help us to stand and magnify you and glorify you. That we'll understand who you are and what your character's like today. I pray, God, that you'd speak now and that you would work in the midst of your people.

And we'll give you honor and glory for all you do. In Jesus' name, amen. Look, if you would, at verse 2 and underline separated themselves. Their first step towards getting to where they're going to worship God was they needed to separate themselves from all strangers.

Now, when you read that, you're like, what in the world? All strangers? That's all foreigners. That's all the people that don't worship the God of Israel. So all around them, every city or every country has a territorial God.

They all worship Dagon or they worship Baal or they worship another God, Esheroth. They worship all these gods. And so the people of God had over the years begun to mix with people who didn't worship God.

And so that diluted their worship. I mean, it was like our God is one of the gods. He's like, there are a lot of gods and we have one of the gods. And so you don't really worship when you think that.

[2 : 18] You've got to get to a place where you realize, as one of the men in our Sunday school class today said, he's not a God. He is the God. He's not one of the gods. He is the God. Amen? And so you didn't say amen there.

Y'all aren't too sure about that, I gather. All right. Now he's God. He's God. And he's the only God. And so they need to separate from foreign gods. They need to separate from non-gods. They need to separate from demons and idols.

Look in your Bible at Nehemiah chapter 13 and verse 26. This will help you get that picture of what they're doing. Nehemiah chapter 13. Strangers refer to people that worshiped other gods.

Nehemiah chapter 13 verse 26. Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like him who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel.

Nevertheless, even him did outlandish women cause to sin. That word outlandish, foreigners. Again, strangers. People that don't worship our God.

[3 : 18] And what happened was, Solomon, you know the story. The first king is Saul, and he's not a good king. And then God puts David in his king, and David's a great king over Israel. And then when David passes on, God puts Solomon in charge.

And Solomon's the wisest man. He just is a genius of a man, wise, walking with God, writing scripture, being used of God. But as he got older, he started. Everybody came to see him, and he liked the popularity.

And then they would come to see him, and they would offer to marry with him and make alliances with other countries so Israel would rise in status. So you need the NATO agreement. You need other types of political agreements with other countries.

And the way they did that back then was you married them. So Solomon ends up married to a whole bunch of women. And since he's married to them, he falls in love with them. But he ends up with 1,000 wives.

I think that's a little overkill. Amen? I mean, y'all can't even amen that. I mean, 1,000 wives? Come on. Some of the guys are like, I don't know. I might like try that.

[4 : 19] Put them all to work. I don't know. But anyway, he's got 1,000 wives. And so what happens? These wives come in. They worship other gods. You know what he does? He goes and builds a temple to their god. So he goes over here in the city of Jerusalem, and he builds a temple to a demon god.

And all of a sudden now you're coming into Jerusalem, the city of God, and there's a temple to Dagon. There's a temple to Baal. There's a temple to all these wicked gods. And Solomon messed up big time because of that.

Now their city's been destroyed. They've been going into Babylonian captivity. They're returning from the captivity. And Nehemiah tried to say, we need to get back to what the Bible says here.

And what the Bible says here is you only worship one god. And you get away from people that would influence you to worship another god. That is not a strange thing for the New Testament.

I'd like you to look, if you would, at 2 Corinthians 6 and verse 14. 2 Corinthians 6 and verse 14. I want you to realize it is a New Testament principle to separate from people.

[5 : 20] It is a New Testament teaching that you will pick who you marry and who your friends are based on very important truth.

What's their opinion of Jesus? Look, if you would, at 2 Corinthians 6 and verse 14. Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. Don't marry a person.

Don't get yoked up with a person who doesn't believe in Jesus Christ. Could I get an amen right there? Now listen to me. You know why you don't do that? Because it says very clearly. And if you've got your Bible open, just read your Bible and follow with me.

You'll notice this. It says, for what fellowship? Fellowship. Underline the word fellowship. How in the world do right and wrong get along? How in the world do right and wrong get along?

That's the first word, fellowship. Second word, communion. That's another word for fellowship. That's sweet, intimate relationship. That's the word we even use for the Lord's Supper. And he says to them, he says, does light and darkness, do they have sweet, intimate relationship?

[6 : 23] No, you get one or the other. Amen? You get one or the other. He says, so you got what communion? And in verse 15, use it in another word. What concord? What peace? Has Christ with Balao?

Balao, another word for the devil. So you really think there's a peace accord between God and the devil? He said, absolutely not. And then look at verse 15. What part, underline part, what part hath he that believes with an infidel?

How in the world can you get along with a person that doesn't believe in Jesus? How long do you get along with a person that doesn't believe in Jesus? To be honest with you, if I were walking around with somebody who was mocking my wife and making fun of my wife, I would either have to be a real good Christian and walk away or just punch them.

Say, man, as old as I am now, I think I'll just walk away because I might punch back. But the truth is you don't put up with people not liking your wife and saying ugly things about your wife. Can I get an amen? How in the world are you running around with people saying ugly things about your God?

How in the world are you walking around with people that don't love Jesus? How in the world are you walking around with people that don't think Jesus is God? So he says, separate from them. Now look down here, verse 16, he uses the word agreement.

[7 : 27] All the same words. I don't know if you're paying attention to what you got. You got fellowship. You got communion, concord, part, agreement with the temple of God with idols. The temple of God and idols don't get along.

God said, don't make any graven images. And here's the temple of God. I was like, you ought to know better than that. And you are the temple of the living God in verse 16. And he said, I'll dwell in you.

And if you'll trust me, I'll dwell in you and walk in you. I'll be your God. You'll be my people. So be separate. Now, we're getting to worship. I got married 45 years ago.

And I'll just be honest with you. Marriage requires separation. How many of you would agree with that? Say amen. I mean, when I moved in with Betty, I didn't bring any other girls with me.

Did you ever consider that? I didn't walk in and say, honey, glad to get married. You think these are my other girlfriends? I just thought I'd bring them with me. I promise you, I'll put them in other rooms. I'll sleep in the main room with you. But I just have these girls here just when we fight.

[8 : 29] When we fuss, I've got these extra girls here. You say, what are you being dumb for? No, I'm not the dumb one here. You are. Because you say, I'd never do that. I'd respect my wife more than that.

I just wouldn't respect my God more than that. You see, to get to worship, you got to say no to all those gods and yes to the one God. To get to worship, you got to say nothing else works and no one else is out on the cross.

And so I'm putting the saints don't interest me and the icons don't interest me and other things don't interest me. Only Jesus interests me. There's some things you should be separating from.

So real quickly, let me give you a few things you should separate from. Any false worship or admiration for a false god. I'm always shocked, by the way. It's like you, I think Christians got a Buddha in their house.

I'm like, what in the world are you doing? Why would you bring one of the devil's junk into your house? Because we'd send missionaries to tell people that ain't right. That was a weak one.

[9 : 29] I'd expect to be stoned after the church. I wouldn't put up with anybody that mocked the word of God and God's truths. I wouldn't let anyone that would lead me to rebel against the word of God. You see, the first step to worship is to decide that you will seek God and God alone.

No other gods, nothing or no one that distracts from God. How many of you want to worship God? Step one towards worshiping God is to walk away from all other gods. Step one to worshiping God is to say there's only one God.

Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me. Acts chapter 4 verse 12 says, there's no other name given among men whereby you must be saved. It's only Jesus.

That's who we believe in. That's who we worship. That's how you get to that. So 45 years ago, I looked around. All these girls that liked me. There weren't any, but I looked around. And then I said, well, Betty will take me and I'm going to marry her.

And I married her, but I couldn't bring any others. There was separation required. Yesterday, there was a wedding right here on this platform. And when that wedding took place, there wasn't any mention of separation really, but there was.

[10 : 32] Because when you get married, you're saying, to thee and to thee only do I commit myself. I'm giving my promise to you. How do y'all expect to worship God if you don't take that step? So they separated.

Second thing they did. Look at Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 2. Underline it. You should have separated themselves. Underline it. Now you're Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 2. Underline the word confession. They made confession.

They made confession. This is a very interesting point in Nehemiah chapter 9. You really need to keep your Bible open and look at it. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

Now how do you get to confessing the sins of yourself and your father? Look at Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 3. Nehemiah 9.3.

And they stood up in their place and they read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day and another fourth part. They confessed and worshipped the Lord their God.

[11 : 31] I want you to know the fourth part of the day. That's three hours. Day is 12 hours. Nights, 12 hours in their calendar. After three hours of the day they had a service and all the people out there standing there and they're just reading in the book.

And when you get in the book it's amazing what the book does to you. When you get in the book it's the first time you realize I really shouldn't be doing that. I really shouldn't be thinking that. I really shouldn't be living that way. This book starts to affect me if I get into the book.

Can I get an amen? That's why it's the most carefully guarded book in your house. It's put away, covered up and hidden and you don't read it because you wouldn't want it to get hurt. But if you really want it to hurt, read it.

It'll get into you and do a little hurting. Can I get an amen there? It'll say I don't like what you're doing and that's what ends up happening. They read the Bible. The Bible shows them their sin and their failure. And then they start admitting it.

They're confessing. Go with me to Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 16 if you would. Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 16. They admit that their parents had dealt proudly and stubbornly against God. They admit that their parents.

[12 : 31] You see, if you try to protect your mama and your daddy and say, my mama and my daddy were right. Their mama and their daddy did wrong. That's why they were in the Babylonian captivity. Their mama and their daddy did wrong and they needed to realize I can't use my parents as an excuse.

Read the verse. But they and our fathers dealt proudly. You need to underline that. Our fathers dealt proudly and hardened their necks and hearkened not to thy commandments.

Their parents would not admit their need for God. Their parents stubbornly refused to obey God. They were not willing to humble themselves. They refused to listen to the word of God.

How often do we use what we saw our parents do as an excuse for what we do? Well, my parents didn't go to church. My parents didn't read the Bible. My parents didn't seem to have this problem. And we use our parents.

Just because your parents did something doesn't make it right. Just because your parents do something doesn't make it right. We choose right and wrong for what the word says, not from what we saw our parents do. Amen.

[13 : 34] If not, every person that's a Buddhist could say, well, my parents. And every person that's a Hindu could say, well, my parents. And every person that's a Muslim could say, well, my parents. But we need a measure for truth.

And the measure is the word of God. But they recognize their parents had done wrong. That's a big step. The day you step up and say, Mama and Daddy didn't obey God. They're on their way.

Look at chapter 9 and verse 17. And refused to obey. We're still talking about the same people, our parents. They refused to obey. Neither were mindful of the wonders that you did among them.

But they hardened their necks and in rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage. But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and forsook us if not.

So see, if you read Nehemiah chapter 9, Nehemiah and the boys are taking them back through their history. And they're saying, we need, see, because there's this thing about being American and accepting whatever America's taught us.

[14 : 29] There's this thing about being an American, a citizen of the United States of America. And almost we think like America's right no matter what the Bible says. And we think whatever our country agrees with, that's what's right and wrong.

And so basically what's going on here is they're going back through the Old Testament. They've been reading the book of Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. And when they get to reading the Bible, they're all going, wow, our parents didn't do right.

They're even going to name what they did wrong. It's a major step. It's funny how if I don't divorce myself from everybody else and say I want what God wants, I'm going to stay where everybody else is.

They wouldn't admit their need. I want you to look at chapter 9 and verse 16. They dealt proudly. Now look at verse 17. They refused to obey. The parents knew what God's word said, but they said, I don't want it like that.

And they were not mindful of the wonders. They saw all God did. They saw how God worked among the people, but they were like, eh, not a big deal. So what? God's feeding us. So what? Manna's falling down.

[15 : 34] So what? Our shoes aren't getting old. So what? God's being good. I don't care. I'm not paying attention to any of that. They hardened their necks. They had preachers.

They had preachers standing out, Moses and Aaron and Levites and other people, standing out and preaching the word to them. And they were like, I don't care what you say. I don't like you, Moses. I don't like what God's got to say.

I don't like it. They hardened their necks. And in their rebellion, they even appointed them a captain. You know what they said? No, Moses. They said, look, Moses, we don't like what you say. We'll pick our own man. That's where we live today, isn't it?

We would now seek out churches that say what we want them to say. We now seek out churches that say to us, whatever it is we feel like people, we ought to hear. I want to hear this and this and this. And this is my political stance and this.

And hardly anyone takes the Bible anymore and just says, this is what the Bible says. That's where we need to get. We boast in our history and our past. We refuse to admit that our country, our parents did anything wrong.

[16 : 30] Real confession is not defending ourselves, but being honest and comparing our obedience to what God wants. Look at Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 18. Their parents set up false gods, idols.

The Bible said, yea, when they had made them a molten calf, they said, this is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt and had wrought great provocations. You realize what happened?

You know, this is a story when Moses is up in a mountain and Aaron's down there and they make the golden calf and they set up the golden calf. They're dancing around the golden calf and they're worshiping the golden calf. Moses is up in the mountain right now with God getting the tent.

Nehemiah is getting the word of God, bringing the word of God down and the people have chosen to disobey God. Now, when they tell their history, you know, I hear people all the time make statements like, well, bless God, nobody won World War II.

It wasn't for us. Glory to God. It's everything about me, me, me, me, me, me, my, my, my, my country. Never. What does God want here? And they said, we realize they made them a molten calf.

[17 : 28] They made a calf. They made an idol. And look what they said. Aaron walks out and says, ta-da, this is your God. This is your God. He's the one that got you out of Egypt.

And then they started worshiping God like a bunch of dingbats. A bunch of idiots worshiping God. Great provocations. They credited the idol, the demons in their salvation, their rescue.

They were worshiping a false God. Their love for the false God had greatly angered God. They enjoyed God's blessings without giving him honor and credit. You do realize, if you look at the verse here, God is so good and so kind.

He is so patient. I'll show you that in just a minute. Go down to chapter 9 and verse 25. I'm afraid this is us. We look back at our failures and we don't call them sin anymore. We call them mistakes. We look back at stuff.

We won't admit that a person's a drunkard. They're an alcoholic. We won't accept sin. We don't like anything that makes us feel bad. We don't want anything that would hurt our self-image. But to get to God, you separate from those that don't love God.

[18 : 31] And then you start waking up. Wait a minute. Let me show you where I'm wrong. I need to get wrong so I can get right. I need to get to a place where I'll look at myself. Look at chapter 9 and verse 25. Last part.

They were filled and became fat. God gave them a great place. They took a strong city. They took a fat land. They took houses full of all goods.

Whales dig, vineyards, olive yards, and fruit trees. And they ate. And they were filled. And they became fat. And they delighted themselves in God's goodness. You know what ends up happening, don't you?

They get all God does for them. And instead of worshiping God, it's kind of like us, isn't it? We have accepted what we want. We have accepted the goodness that God gives.

But they are forgetting that God gave it to them. They are not praising God. Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 25. Even though God had been so good to them, in verse 26, excuse me, they were disobedient.

[19 : 27] Underline that. They rebelled against God who had done such great things for them. They took the word of God and threw it behind their backs and said, we don't want to know what the word of God has to say.

They slew the preachers, the prophets that testified against them. And they did a lot of stuff that God didn't like. If you read Nehemiah chapter 9, they're going to end up worshipping.

That's where we're going now. But let me just tell you what ends up happening. To really worship God, you got to say, you know, I'm going to have to choose God here. And it might mean I lose a friendship with you, but I'm choosing God over Baal.

I'm choosing God over some false doctrine you believe. I'm choosing God and I'm walking with God. And if you don't like God, I probably won't like you. If you don't want to serve God, I probably don't want to hang around with you too much because I want God.

By the way, I used to tell the Peruvians when I worked in Peru, you don't have to get rid of your friends. They'll get rid of you. If you talk enough about Jesus, you talk about serving God, you talk about doing right, they'll walk away from you real quick. You don't have to be ugly.

[20 : 23] Just love Jesus. And don't let them slow you down on that. To really get to worship, we'll have to see our sin, our failure, and our rebellion. That's what leads us to see our need for God.

If we continue justifying our actions, we never really get to victory. We have to stop making excuses and choose God and His Word over our pride, our family, and our past.

They had to see that the captivity and everything was because of sin, not just bad luck. God wasn't being mean to them. They brought the consequences of sin upon themselves, and they needed to stop justifying and excusing their past.

That's the confession. And then, finally, once they said, man, my parents messed up, and I messed up, I've separated myself from my friends, and now I realize I messed up.

I need God. Now they can get to worship. As long as you're running down to the Temple of Baal and checking out how pretty the idol is, as long as you're looking at the great Buddha laying there, a Buddha, he wouldn't even fit in this building, and you're looking at him and thinking how beautiful he is and how sweet the smell of incense is and how all the people are doing all the sweet little things to worship their false God.

[21 : 32] You've got to get to a point where you say, no, no, no, no, there is only one God, and the only way to Him is through Jesus. Separate. Then confess and say, man, just to be honest, I haven't really been seeking God.

Just to be honest, my parents got me kind of lazy and fat about this stuff and enjoying all God does, but never getting in the Word and never seeking God and never doing what's right, and I don't want to be that person anymore.

God, I'm tired of who I've been. I'm tired of my lack of heart for you. I'm tired of liking the material goods more than I like you. I want you. And so that brought them to worship. Go to Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 3.

I love this verse. They stood up in their place and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one-fourth part of the day, and then the fourth part they confessed and worshiped. Underline they worshiped. They separated.

They confessed. And now they're worshipping. Verse 6. They do that by recognizing there's only one true God. You have to understand that. Now, listen to me.

[22 : 31] You live in tolerant coexist-ville. You live in, well, everybody's all right, and everybody's good, and we're fine with everything, but God's people have never been able to think that.

God's people don't look and say, well, you have a nice God. I have a nice God. I like your God. I like my God. God's people have got to say, no, no, no, no, no. There's only one God. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. I know this offends you, but Buddha can't get you anywhere, and Muhammad can't do you any good.

There's only one way, and the exclusivity of Christ makes everybody upset with us. But they recognize he was God alone. Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 6. You there? Look at it. Thou, you God, even you are Lord alone.

Underline that in your Bible. You are God and God alone, and you have made the heaven and the heaven of the heavens with all the angels and all the stuff up there and the earth and all the things there and the seas and everything that's in the sea, and you preserve them.

And even all the unseen host, the angels, worship you. He is God. He is creator God. Did you underline made in verse 6?

[23 : 39] You need to underline made. By the way, if you take away the creation right now, even among popular evangelical preachers, they're denying the first 11 chapters of the Bible. They're doubting if the word of God is true.

If you ever pull the creation out of the Bible, the whole Bible falls apart because on every page they all found it was really real. They said, you made the heavens and the heavens of the heavens. How many did you make it?

By the way, if you're in Colossians, you're going to read this verse just written another way. God made it and God preserved it. Did you underline preserve us? It's God that holds it together. How in the world does this whole world stay together?

There's a God who made it and holds it together. Next, if you really want to worship him, you got to know he's the only one. How many of you know he's the only one? Say amen. If he's the only one, why don't you act like it?

If he's the only one, why don't you brag on him? Why don't you praise him? Secondly, you got to see him as right. You got to see him as right. Worship is seeing him as right. Look at Nehemiah chapter nine and verse eight. For the sake of time, we're going to jump to the end of the verse.

[24 : 37] And it says in Nehemiah chapter nine and verse eight, and it must not be eight because that's the wrong verse. Try seven, try nine, get around there and find it. He has performed his words. He is righteous.

Thou art righteous. That's not it. I'm sorry. I messed up on that. He has performed his words. It starts out in verse nine, chapter nine. The verse says, found his heart faithful.

Found his heart faithful. He has performed his words. He is righteous. I want you to find that verse. There it is. Is that it? Look at nine, eight at the last part.

He is righteous. Thou art righteous. I go down to verse 33, if you would. You see, you don't get to make God like you want God. God made you.

You don't get to make a God in your image and the ideas you have. God made you. God's keeping you alive. Nehemiah chapter nine and verse 33. This is worship. Worship is God. You're the only one.

[25 : 32] Worship is in God. Not only are you the only one, you're right. I love this verse. Look at 33, thou art just. In all that is brought upon us, you have done right.

Look at that. You have done right. We have done wickedly. We've been in Babylon for 70 years as captives, and we don't think you're right, God.

Why'd you do that to us? That would have been their attitude before this. But now they have separated from false gods and thrown away all the worldly thinking and what philosophers in our land might say.

And now they're saying, what's God say? They have separated themselves. They have confessed. And now they look at God and say, God, everything's going on in my life. You're right. I'm the one that's wrong. We did wicked.

Our people did wickedly. Chapter nine and verse 13. It is recognizing that God's word is good. You know what worship is? Worship is to say, man, I know God's word is good.

[26 : 37] I can trust God's word. Look at Nehemiah chapter nine and verse 13. You came down from the Mount Sinai. You spake from heaven. You gave them, underline that, right judgments. Would you underline that?

How many of you just get a little upset with the Bible? Can we be honest right there? You're like, I don't like the Bible. Sometimes I think the Bible's antiquated. Sometimes I think the Bible's wrong. I just don't like the Bible very much. That ain't worship. That's rebellion.

Did I get an amen right there? Come on. He said, you gave us right judgments, true laws, good statutes and commandments. You ought to just underline in that verse, right, true, and good.

Sometimes I don't like reading the Bible. It's kind of boring to me and I don't like what it says. I kind of think that Old Testament's out of date. Come on. But when you worship, you say, no, no, no, no, no.

You gave us that. And I want to know it because it's right, it's good, and it's true. I want to know what it says. Chapter 9, verse 19. Then you see God's mercy, his character.

[27 : 39] Did you know that God's character is great mercy? Nehemiah chapter 9, verse 19. Yet thou in thy manifold mercies. I want you to know that manifold mercies.

And you say, what in the world is manifold? It's like manifold. It's like a whole bunch of them. It's like God has mercy that works this way and this way and this way and this way. He has a multitude of mercies.

He has an abundance of mercy. He has mercy for when you're dying and mercy for when you're living and mercy when you're hungry. And he's just a good God. It's manifold mercy. Oh, God, you are good.

You are right. I know you're right. That's worship. Say amen. Manifold. Chapter 9, verse 27. You delivered them out of the hands of their enemies. Skip on down.

According to your manifold mercy. Like every time we did wrong, God did right. Every time we should have been punished, God had much mercy.

[28 : 35] Verse 28. They did evil again before you. But when they returned and cried, you heard them many times. Look at the last words. According to thy mercies.

You realize who God is? All through the history of Israel, they kept doing wrong. And any normal God like you invent would just have obliterated them. The fact is, he told Moses one day, I'm just going to obliterate them.

And Moses said, you can't do that. It goes against your character. God said, okay, you're right. I won't do it. And every time they did wrong, every time they did wrong, God just kept on loving them. Aren't you happy about that?

He loves you. You've been messing up a whole bunch. You've been doing wrong. You've been getting off track. You've been messing up. And he just keeps on loving you according to his mercies. Chapter 9 and verse 31.

Hang on, boy, you need to underline this. They are great mercies. It says, nevertheless, for thy great mercies sake. Boy, you should have killed them, God. You should have consumed them. But you're too sweet.

[29 : 37] What a God. You thought he was sweet in the New Testament. You just need to read the Old Testament. You find that's great. Then look at the last part of that verse 31. Thou art a gracious and merciful God.

God, you are gracious. You are full of grace. You have so much grace. And you are so merciful.

In verse 32, he keeps covenant and mercy. Hurry up. Let's go on. We're in a hurry here. Nehemiah 9 and verse 30. You ready? He's merciful, but he's also patient.

Thank God he's patient. Look at chapter 9 and verse 30. Look at it. Yet many years didst thou forbear them.

God, I've taken all of Nehemiah chapter 9 and told you all the junk they did and all the wickedness that was going on. And I've taken and shown you all of that. And God, you should have destroyed them. You should have killed them. But you just kept on putting up with it.

[30 : 40] Forbear it. You put up with it. We want to worship. We'll see him as merciful and gracious. We want to worship. We'll see him as patient. You know, sometimes we look at God like, God, you ought to be doing more for me.

And God's like, look, I'm putting up on a lot of junk right now. Your rebellion is sickening, but I keep putting up with it. Your disobedience. Your lack of getting in my book. Your lack of worshipping me. Your lack of recognizing me for who I am, but I just keep on being sweet to you anyway.

Boy, he's good. Now, can I show you how he is? Go to chapter 9 and verse 17. How is he? Chapter 9 and verse 17. I want you to skip down to the but.

Because we've already looked at the first part. Now, look at this. They refused to obey and all that. We looked at that. But now, but. Thou art a God ready to forgive.

Oh, God. You're ready to forgive. You are gracious, full of grace and mercy. You don't get angry quickly. You are of great kindness.

[31 : 42] And you never walked away from your people. Wow. You are good. You are good. They're worshipping now. They're worshipping now.

Now, I'll take you back to chapter 9 and verse 5. Because it's kind of all this works together. But in chapter 9 and verse 5. You had all those Levites stand up there. And you said, stand up.

And bless the Lord. Look at it. Y'all stand up and say, whoa, he's good. He is merciful. He is kind. He is patient. God, you are good.

In chapter 9 and verse 5. Stand up and bless the Lord. You're God forever and ever. And blessed be thy glorious name. Which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

He made you. He will save you. It's time to decide to honor and follow him. Lord willing, next Sunday we'll start here in Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 38.

[32 : 39] But you need to look at it anyway. They got through praising him. And Nehemiah said, all right, boys. We're going to sign us a promise right now that we're going to keep on loving God. Y'all come on up.

Look at Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 38. And because of all this, we make a sure covenant and write it and seal it. They're coming up and saying, God, we're going to worship you.

No more false gods. No more rebellion. No more hard necks. No more proud. No more pride. Nobody lifting ourselves up against you. No more throwing your word behind our backs.

We're here to serve you. I have a question for you. Are you worshipping God? Are you worshipping God?

Do you still love those that hate God? Well, my best friends don't really love God. Well, then you must not have been talking about God very much.

[33 : 36] And you must have been putting up with a lot of junk out of their mouths. You've become politically correct, so you won't offend them. You are quiet about your love for God.

You're a secret agent. 007. Worshipper of God. Back in the old days when people started getting saved in Idy Keepa Peru where we were missionaries, they started coming to church and they would stick their Bible all the way down into their pants.

And I'd say they'd come walking towards church because they didn't drive. They walked. And when they walked, they walked right by the bar. And the people they used to drink with and get drunk with, they'd laugh. Hey, brother. Brother, you're going up there to worship God?

And they'd just laugh at them every week because they'd walk by. And so I saw a lot of them. They'd keep their Bible hidden. And then we'd get to church just before they came in the door. They'd whoop it out. Like, I'm here now. I didn't want anybody to see me carrying one of these books. You live in Alpharetta.

You can pray everywhere you go. You can open a Bible because everybody around them. I mean, I go out to eat breakfast. And I'm having a meeting with my men. There's over there and there's over there. It's going on everywhere. Are you a 007 Christian?

[34 : 43] Nobody even knows you're saved. You choose your friends over God and his word. That's not worship. I don't like what you're saying, Austin.

I know. You need to get right. Do you continue to make excuses for what you do instead of believing God and obeying him? You know, and second, I'm going to give an invitation.

Give you an opportunity to say, God, I choose you. I will separate for those that don't love you. I will talk about you. I will confess my failure. I will worship you. You continue making excuses.

You say, this is the way it is. You can't really follow the Bible in this world today. Everyone else is doing just what I do. You have plenty of justifications and excuses for your rebellion.

You just want to get along in life. You don't like my wife. I don't like you. I really don't.

[35 : 45] You want to talk bad about my wife? You will one time around me. Then after I chew you out, you probably won't want to come around. But I'm going to let you know. I choose her over you. By the way, you don't like Jesus?

I'm going to let you know about that too. I'm going to let you know about that too. You start acting like Jesus is just like Mohammed. I'm going to be like, oh, no, he's not. You start acting like all religions are alike.

I'm going to say, oh, no, they're not. You obviously haven't read the Word of God, and you obviously don't even know what they believe because there's only one God like our God. The fact is there's only one God. The rest of them are all false, fake, imposters, counterfeits.

You'll worship God when you see God for who he is. You need to know him, love him, and seek him. Now, some of you came today, and you're not really saved.

You're not really going to heaven, and you're like, I don't know if God could love me. If you heard about the God I just talked to you about, he loves you. You're still breathing. He's loving you. You've been walking kind of crazy and doing junk you shouldn't do, and you wonder, could God love me?

[36 : 51] He's patient. You say, but I don't know. I might have gone too far. He's full of grace. He's full of mercy. He loves you right where you are. No matter what you've done, he loves you. You worship to other gods.

You fall into sin. You committed adultery. You became a drunkard. You had an abortion. I don't care what you've done. He's a merciful and good and kind God. We read about it today. I didn't say that. The Bible said it.

You read it. You got a Bible. You read it. I made one mistake on a verse, but I don't think I did on the rest of them. But it's in nine. Huh? He loves you. Some of you Christians, you've been away from God a long time.

You haven't really been seeking him. The last time you read your Bible, come on. You're not reading your Bible. You're not seeking God. You're not faithful to church. You're not honoring God.

He loves you. Why don't you worship? Why don't you get to worship? Separate yourself from anything that would keep you from worshiping God. Confess your failure and come talk to him.

[37 : 49] You're not talking to one another. You're not hiding. You're not fighting God. Raspberry ■■■'s heartache is notiggles. B zumew it. What's the reason? You're not calling it. You're not following the Bible. We don't care. You're not making a person with anything. You're not asking it. We don't care. No matter who'sARIKA means this idea.