



# DEADLY DISTRACTIONS



**STUDY GUIDE**





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## ***Leader's Guide:***

This study guide is here to help you lead a fun and transformative eGroup study over the next few weeks that will see each person progress and grow.

Use this guide, along with the DVDs and weekly Study Guides, for a life-changing, interactive experience.

### **BEFORE YOU MEET:**

- Ask God to prepare the hearts and minds of the people in your eGroup. Ask Him to show each of you how to apply what you learn to your own heart to see growth and to move forward.
- Preview the DVD and read through the study guide for that week. Think about what you might answer for each question. Make notes in your study guide if you want to.


### **SETTING UP:**

- Take time before everyone arrives to prepare some snacks to share with everyone, set up the room you will use, check that there are enough seats, and try to create a relaxed and comfortable environment to meet in. You might want to play music quietly to create a relaxed atmosphere when everyone arrives, or move the furniture in your living room to make the space inviting.
- Have a Bible handy for verses that you might want to look up during discussion.

### **HOW TO HOST YOUR GATHERING AND USE YOUR STUDY GUIDE:**

**ENGAGE:** Welcome each person as they arrive. Spend time chatting, getting to know one another, or just sharing about the week. Your relationships as a group are as important as the time you spend watching the DVD or in discussion. A relaxed and friendly environment is an easy place to learn and hear from God.

**RECAP:** After the first session you may wish to spend a bit of time each week recapping how your last seven days has been, inviting members to share any opportunities they had throughout the week to apply what they learned and how their individual activation went.





**WATCH:** After you have spent some time engaging with each other, watch the DVD for the week.

**DISCUSS:** Read out each question in the study guide, allowing time for everyone to share their thoughts or experiences if they desire.

When a question arises, ask the group for their input, and resist the urge to answer it yourself straight away. Your primary role is to create an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves and participate, not to provide all the answers to all of their questions. Don't be afraid of silence as participants think of their response to the questions.

Remember, the goal is not necessarily to 'get through' all of the questions. The main priority is for each person to learn and engage in dynamic discussion.

**PRAY:** Ask the group to pray for each other from week to week, especially about key issues that arise during your discussion time. This is how you begin to build authentic relationship, and encourage spiritual growth within the group.

**ACTIVATE:** As a group, read out and talk about the action in the study guide for that week. Decide together to commit to doing this action during the week to help you each grow and engage with God individually.





## SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR YOUR GATHERING:

**ENGAGE:** 15 minutes

**RECAP:** 10 minutes

**WATCH:** 10 minutes

**DISCUSS:** 30 minutes

**PRAY:** 5-10 minutes

**ACTIVATE:** 5 minutes

(Please note that these are just suggested times, you may wish to take longer in certain areas. However, we do recommend keeping your gathering to a maximum of one and a half hours in consideration of others' time)

## KEYS TO A DYNAMIC eGROUP

**Relationships:** Meaningful, encouraging relationships are the foundation of a dynamic eGroup. Discussion and prayer are important elements of a gathering, but the depth of each part is often dependent upon the depth of the relationships between members.


**Availability:** Building a sense of community within your group requires members to prioritise their relationships with one another. This means being available to listen, care for one another, and meet each other's needs.

**Mutual Respect:** Mutual respect is shown when members value others' opinions (even when they disagree) and are careful to never belittle or embarrass others in the group (including their spouses, who may or may not be present).

**Openness:** A healthy group environment encourages sincerity and transparency. Members treat each other with grace in areas of weakness, allowing each other room to grow.

**Confidentiality:** To develop authenticity and a sense of safety within the group, each member must be able to trust that things discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

**Shared Responsibility:** Group members will share the responsibility of gatherings by using their God-given abilities to serve at each meeting. Some may greet, some may prepare food, some may pray, etc. Ideally, each person should be available to care for one another as needed.





**Sensitivity:** Dynamic eGroups are born when the leader consistently seeks and is responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following His leading throughout the meeting as opposed to sticking to the “agenda”. This is especially important during the discussion and prayer time.

**Fun!** Dynamic gatherings take the time to have fun! Create an atmosphere for fun, and be willing to laugh at yourself every now and then!





## ***Week One: Purpose***

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**WATCH:** Watch Session One of the DVD.

**DISCUSS:**

Key Verse: *"Where there is no ongoing prophetic revelation (vision), people cast off restraint" - Proverbs 29:18*

We know we should do something, but we struggle with motivation.

**Question 1: Where does ongoing motivation come from?**

In Nehemiah 1, verses 3-4, Nehemiah is burdened by the news he receives about the wall of Jerusalem being left incomplete and broken down. He decides to go and rebuild the wall.

**Question 2: What is the last thing that upset or frustrated you?**

Ps Sam said "The next level looks like whatever is frustrating you - fixed"

**Question 3: What does the next level look like in your world?**

There could be a purpose God that has called you to, but you're distracted from getting started.

**Question 4: What are some of the reasons we delay getting started?**

Confused people live FOR identity rather than FROM identity. Romans 12 tells us that God's perfect will for us is about being transformed as people. It's not what we do, it's who we're becoming that is important.

**Question 5: What is the difference between living FOR identity and living FROM identity?**

In Nehemiah 6, Sanballat and Tobiah scheme to hurt and distract Nehemiah from what he was called to do (building the wall of Jerusalem).

**Question 6: What are some things that could cause you to get down off the wall of God's purpose for your life? Is it worth it?**

Nehemiah is an example of the Holy Spirit working in a focused life.

**Question 7: What does a focused life look like?**







**PRAY:** Pray as a group asking God to bring focus over the next 4 weeks in areas where you are frustrated. Pray that God will reveal and uncover purpose in your frustration.

**ACTIVATE:** Read the beginning of the story of Nehemiah in Nehemiah chapters 1 and 2.

Reflect on the key verse Proverbs 29:18 this week and write down/journal the vision you have for the season you are currently in.





## ***Week Two: Responsibility***

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**RECAP:** What did you think of the first two chapters of Nehemiah? Did you find it easy or difficult to write down your vision?

**WATCH:** Watch session two of the DVD.

**DISCUSS:**

*Key Verse: "Face it: we're in a bad way here. Jerusalem is a wreck; its gates are burned up. Come - let's build the wall of Jerusalem and not live with this disgrace any longer" - Nehemiah 2:17 MSG*

Responsibility in today's society is shunned. Not many people love responsibility or accountability.

**Question 1: Why do you think people draw away from responsibility?**

Often people can describe the problem, but they do nothing to rectify it or solve it.

**Question 2: Can you identify areas in your life where you've been describing the problem rather than solving it? What is the outcome of doing so?**

Nehemiah changed his city - brick by brick. It didn't seem like much at the time, but he remained focused, and the work was completed in 52 days. It was achieved as each man built a section of the wall 'in front of their house.'

**Question 3: What is the state of the world in front of your house? What "brick" or "bricks" can you put in place to see a problem solved?**

It can be tempting to blame others for the broken down walls we see around us, instead of taking responsibility ourselves. Blaming others can distract us from embracing the burden that God has placed on our heart.

**Question 4: Can you identify an area in your life that you've been waiting for someone else to fix, an area that you know you should take responsibility for?**





It's a deadly distraction to compare ourselves with others. Nehemiah's focus revealed Sanballat and Tobiah's inadequacies causing them to retaliate and try to discourage Nehemiah. Instead of responding like them, we need to get good at championing others' successes.

**Question 5: Have you ever caught yourself trying to compare yourself with another person? Why is it important that we learn to champion someone else's success?**

In the Kingdom of God more responsibility (according to the Parable of the Talents) is the reward of being faithful with the responsibility you already have.

**Question 6: Many people view responsibility as a burden. How can we shift our perspective to view responsibility as a blessing?**

You live a focused life when you take ownership of your responsibility.

**Question 7: How can you create space in your world for new responsibilities?**

**PRAY:** Pray in pairs over the areas where you see responsibility as a burden rather than a blessing. Pray that God will give you peace and courage to be the solution.

**ACTIVATE:** Read Nehemiah 3 and 4 this week. Spend some time this week writing in your journal about the things that burden your heart, and pray that God would show you where to begin building.





## ***Week Three: Religion***

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**RECAP:** Did you identify any areas where you want to start taking more responsibility since last week?

**WATCH:** Watch session three of the DVD.

**DISCUSS:**

Key Verse: *"I'm doing a great work; I can't come down. Why should the work come to a standstill just so I can come down to see you" - Nehemiah 6:3 MSG*

You can have good discussions that can turn into arguments, and then you forget what you were actually discussing in the first place.

**Question 1: When was the last time you had a decent argument?**

When an argument becomes win or lose, nobody actually wins.

**Question 2: What does a healthy argument look like?**

Sanballat and Tobiah had some good arguments about why Nehemiah couldn't rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. When purpose comes to your life, the next thing that comes to your mind are reasons why things won't work out.

**Question 3: When was the last time you had doubts, and how did you respond?**

The Pharisees, as well as Sanballat and Tobiah, are examples of people who were consumed by religion. Focusing on 'tick boxes' can distract us from living for what God intended for our lives, for true relationship.


**Question 4: What would a life consumed by religion look like?**

The law is all about external pressure, the spirit is all about internal restraint. Vision allows us to wear restraints.

**Question 5: Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you tried to achieve something in your own strength? What was the result of that?**

Sometimes we have good reasons to make a certain decision, yet it conflicts with what we feel the Holy Spirit saying. Proverbs 14:12 says "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death".

**Question 6: What is the difference between "living by reason" and "living by revelation"?**





Religion and relationship have been compared to the tree of good-and-evil and the tree of life.

**Question 7: What would you say a life connected to “the tree of life” looks like?**

**PRAY:** Pray that God would help you focus on what is central, not on the external things that are less important. Invite God to lead you each into a relationship-focused life.

**ACTIVATE:** Read Nehemiah 5 & 6 at home. In your devotional times this week set your focus on deepening your relationship with Jesus, rather than ‘ticking the boxes.’





## ***Week Four: Power & Relationships***

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**RECAP:** Did you notice a difference in your time with God this week, when you focused on relationship rather than ticking boxes?

**WATCH:** Watch session four of the DVD.

### **DISCUSS:**

*Key Verse: The king asked, "Well, how can I help you?" With a prayer to the God of heaven, I replied, "If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried." - Nehemiah 2:4-5*

Chapter three of Nehemiah talks about a whole lot of 'next tos,' people who were next to Nehemiah building the wall alongside him.

**Question 1: What is the difference between someone who is an acquaintance and someone who is 'next to' you?**

Distractions can be deadly, dangerous or divine. Some of the key relationships in our life are the results of distractions. Others relationships can potentially be deadly and dangerous.

**Question 2: When it comes to relationships, how do we discern the difference between good distractions and dangerous ones?**

Because they were unified, Nehemiah and his friends were able to build a wall in 52 days that had already taken 70 years of previous attempts.


**Question 3: How do you know if you are building alongside someone or if they are just distracting you from what you are building?**

Your friends can determine where you go in life. Wrong friends have the power to distract us from what God has for us.

**Question 4: What kind of friends distract us from God's purpose and what kind of friends remind us of God's purpose?**

King Artaxerxes was Nehemiah's 'next to,' and God used him to resource Nehemiah to do a great work. The person next to you could be the person who is going to create something great with you.

**Question 5: Who do you go to when you need help and support? Does this person enable you to move forward?**





Samson was a man who made some pretty bad choices when it came to relationships. As a result, his choices ultimately destroyed him.

Question 6: What values do you use to guide you when you start relationships?

Relationships affect the heart of every human.

**Question 7: Who are your close friends that are influencing your life? Are you growing in your love for Jesus as a result of having them in your world?**

**PRAY:** Pray together and ask God to give each of you wisdom and discernment in your relationships. Thank God for the people He has placed around you.

**ACTIVATE:** Finish reading the final chapters of Nehemiah if you wish to. Spend some time this week in prayer, asking God to reveal distractions, and to help you establish focus in your life.













