

DISCUSSION GUIDE 1

Ezra 4:1–6 & Nehemiah 1:1–4

- 1 **Read Ezra 4:1-6.** In your own words, describe what is happening in verses 1–3.
- 2 While it might seem like a simple question, what do you think it means to truly worship God? Why do you think God cares about the purity of our worship? **Read 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1** for help in answering these questions.
- 3 **Read Nehemiah 1:1–4.** The name *Nehemiah* means “Yahweh has comforted.” But it is more than a name. The comfort of God will be a major theme throughout the story of Nehemiah. To begin, notice how Nehemiah responds to the bad news he receives (Nehemiah 1:4). What does indicate about what kind of person Nehemiah might be? Why do you think this was his response? Was this the right response?
- 4 What we turn to in times of distress often reveals what we put our hope in. If you were completely honest with yourself, where do you go? To whom or to what do you turn? Why? Spend some time reflecting on those questions with one another.
- 5 When the story of Nehemiah begins, God’s people are greatly burdened and deeply discouraged. What about you? Where are you in this season? Are you tired? Energized? Do you feel burdened or discouraged? Helpless? Something more positive? Spend some time sharing with each other.
- 6 **Read Psalm 112,** remembering that what we turn to in times of distress reveals what we put our hope in. Like Nehemiah, we ought to bring everything—including our burdens and heartaches—to God in prayer, both on our own and with each other. Spend some unhurried time turning to God. Voice your burdens, releasing them and praying for God to move in one another’s life.

