

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Danelle Schlichenmayer

Essential Truth: *God's Word must not only be heard; it must be understood and received.*

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:4-8 4 And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. 5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. 6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. 7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. 8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Observations:

- Ezra first praises God and then reads God's law, in the sight & hearing of all the people.
- The people's first response is worship — hands lifted, faces to the ground, just like Ezra's.
- The Levites moved through the crowd, making sure everyone understood what was read, so nobody was left out.

Application: It's possible to sit under God's Word for years and still not understand it. We can know the verses, sing the songs, nod along in a sermon, and still feel lost when we actually open our Bibles. Here's the good news: the secret to understanding Scripture isn't cracking every detail or mystery. It's knowing and trusting God's character first. If your goal is to master the Bible so you can be seen as better or to win an argument, that's the wrong posture. If your goal is to know God and love Him more so others will know God and love God, then you're on the right track. Scripture exists to help us know God and love people well. When we read Scripture, our eyes are to be focused on God and then we take what we've read and apply it to our daily lives.

Nehemiah shows the full pattern: Ezra reads, the people worship, and then the Levites disperse among the crowd to make sure everyone understands. All three matter. Read, worship, and make sure there's understanding. This week, strive to keep a posture of worship and surround yourself with people who love God and His Word. Don't let the learning stop when you're done reading. Take something from God's Word and apply it to your life today.

Prayer: *Lord, don't let Your Word pass over us unnoticed. Give us hearts that worship and minds that understand. Send people to help us see what we're missing and help us notice those who need understanding. God, let your Word take root in our hearts and change how we live. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

