



**Title:** Lives of Obligation (Nehemiah: week 12)

**Text:** Nehemiah 10:1-39

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**Intro:** In Nehemiah 10:1-39 we see the response of life change to the repentance of Nehemiah 9. Where there is true repentance, there will always be some measure of change. Such was the case here. As we read this chapter, we see a picture of a people who made a decision to live in covenant obligation with one another. In our modern culture of rugged individualism and self-absorption, there are many lessons we can learn about living lives of obligation.

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### I. THE CONCEPT OF COVENANT

A covenant is much more than a contract. Rather, it is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man or man and man that stipulates the conditions of the relationship. Typically in Old Testament culture, when parties entered into covenant with one another, they would cut the carcass of an animal in half and walk through the middle of the slain animal's carcass. The statement they were making was that if either of them break this covenant, then they would be cut in two like the animal.

A). God to man: God cuts the covenant, establishes and fulfills the terms. Ultimately, God does this in Christ when Christ is slain on the cross, and through his sinless life fulfills our obligation to God.

B). Man to man: This is the type of covenant the people entered into in Nehemiah 10. They were saying to one another that they were committing to live this way with each other and if someone broke the covenant, they should die.

### II. MEN WHO ARE WILLING TO PUT THEIR NAME ON A LIST (v.1-27)

In this section we have another long list of about fifty names. It is important to note here that these men were making a commitment and statement by putting their names on this sealed covenant document. In our culture of low-commitment and consumer driven superficiality, we need men and women who are willing to say where they stand, who they are standing with, and what they are standing for.

### III. LIVING OBLIGATED LIVES WILL CAUSE CONFLICT WITH CULTURE (v.28-31)

In this section the people recommit to observing the Sabbath. This meant that they would not do business with the surrounding Gentile peoples on the Sabbath day of rest. After over 100 years of not observing this commandment, this surely caused a stir among the people. It likely cut into their profits, and made their Gentile business partners angry. But, the principle of Sabbath rest and obedience to God was paramount over their comfort and previous way of life.

The application is that when as people of God obligate ourselves to live in God honoring ways, it will inevitably put us at odds with the practices of the world around us.

#### **IV. GOD CALLS US TO A LIFE OF OBLIGATION TO ONE ANOTHER (v.32-39)**

In this section of the chapter we see the people reordering all aspects of their lives to bring it into alignment with their covenant commitment to one another and God.

The application for us is that Jesus came not only to reconcile us to God but also to one another through his work on the Cross. Many Christians think that their individual decision to accept Christ is all they need to sustain them. Not so. While faith in Christ is entered into individually, it absolutely must be lived out within the context of a grace filled family of faith that has decided to walk in covenant obligation with one another.