

Philemon 1:7-8 "7 Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people. 8 That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the **right thing** for you to do." (NLT)

WHAT ARE THE WRONG THINGS

Nehemiah 5:1 "About this time some of the men and their wives raised a cry of protest against their fellow Jews." (NLT)

1. When a basic need GOES UNMET.

Nehemiah 5:2 "They were saying, "We have such large families. We need more food to survive." (NLT)

2. When people feel like they're FALLING BEHIND.

Nehemiah 5:3 "Others said, "We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine." (NLT)

3. When leaders are INSENSITIVE to people's pain.

Nehemiah 5:4 "And others said, "We have had to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes." (NLT)

4. When people feel POWERLESS to change their situation.

Nehemiah 5:5 "We belong to the same family as those who are wealthy, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already mortgaged to others." (NLT)

HOW TO DO THE RIGHT THINGS

1. EMPATHIZE with the feelings of others.

Nehemiah 5:6 "When I heard their complaints, I was very angry." (NLT)

Mark 3:3-5 "³ Jesus asked the man to come and stand in front of the congregation. ⁴ Then turning to His enemies He asked, "Is it all right to do kind deeds on Sabbath days? Or is this a day for doing harm? Is it a day to save lives or to destroy them?" But they wouldn't answer Him. ⁵ Looking around at them angrily, for **He was deeply disturbed by their indifference to human need**, he said to the man, "Reach out your hand." He did, and instantly his hand was healed! ⁶ At once the Pharisees went away and met with the Herodians to discuss plans for killing Jesus." (LB)

2. PAUSE AND THINK before I speak up.

Nehemiah 5:7 "After thinking it over ..." (NLT)

Nehemiah 5:7 "After seriously considering the matter ..." (HCSB)

Proverbs 15:28 "The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking; the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words." (NLT)

3. Try to resolve conflicts PRIVATELY AT FIRST.

Nehemiah 5:7 "After thinking it over, I spoke out against the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are hurting your own relatives by charging interest when they borrow money!" **Then** I called a public meeting to deal with the problem." (NLT)

Matthew 18:15-17 "¹⁵ If another believer sins against you, **go privately** and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. ¹⁶ But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If that person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector." (NLT)

4. Appeal to the BEST IN PEOPLE.

Nehemiah 5:8 ⁸ At the meeting I said to them, “We are doing all we can to redeem our Jewish relatives who have had to sell themselves to pagan foreigners, but you are selling them back into slavery again. How often must we redeem them?” And they had nothing to say in their defense.”

Nehemiah 5:9 ⁹ Then I pressed further, “What you are doing is not right! Should you not walk in the fear of God in order to avoid being mocked by enemy nations?”

Nehemiah 5:10-11 ¹⁰ I myself, as well as my brothers and my workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now let us stop this business of charging interest. ¹¹ You must restore their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and homes to them this very day. And repay their interest you charged when you lent them money, grain, new wine, and olive oil.”

Nehemiah 5:12-13 ¹² They replied, “We will give back everything and demand nothing more from the people. We will do as you say.” Then I called the priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had promised. ¹³ I shook the folds of my robe and said, “If you fail to keep your promise, may God shake you like this from your homes and from your property.” The whole assembly responded, “Amen,” and they praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.” (NLT)

Hebrews 6:9-10 ⁹ Dear friends, even though we are talking this way, we really don’t believe it applies to you. We are confident that you are meant for better things, things that come with salvation. ¹⁰ For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for Him and how you have shown your love for Him by caring for other believers, as you still do.” (NLT)

5. Do everything with HUMILITY AND GENEROSITY.

Nehemiah 5:14-18 ¹⁴ For the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah—from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of the reign of King Artaxerxes—neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. ¹⁵ The former governors, in contrast, had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides forty pieces of silver. Even their assistants took advantage of the people. But because I feared God, I did not act that way. ¹⁶ I also devoted myself to

working on the wall and refused to acquire land. And I required all my servants to spend time working on the wall. ¹⁷ I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands! ¹⁸ The provisions I paid for each day included one ox, six choice sheep or goats, and a large number of poultry. And every ten days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused to claim the governor's food allowance because the people already carried a heavy burden." (NLT)

Psalm 112:5-9 ⁵ Good comes to those who lend money generously and conduct their business fairly. ⁶ Such people will not be overcome by evil. Those who are righteous will be long remembered. ⁷ They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the Lord to care for them. ⁸ They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly. ⁹ They share freely and give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will be remembered forever. They will have influence and honor." (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

Nehemiah 5:19 "Remember, my God, all that I have done for these people, and bless me for it." (NLT)

Psalm 84:11 "For the Lord God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right." (NLT)