



# Sermon Discussion Guide

**Title:** *The Joy of the Lord*

**Series Name:** Vision Weekend 2026

**Main Text:** Nehemiah 8:1–12

---

## Introduction

This guide can be used on your own or with a small group to reflect on the weekend message and apply it to your life. Choose the questions that work best for your group—there’s no need to go through them all. To learn more, visit [silverdalebc.com/smallgroups](http://silverdalebc.com/smallgroups).

---

## Icebreaker Options

1. When you think of “joy,” what memory, person, or moment immediately comes to mind?
2. What’s something small or simple that consistently brings you joy during a stressful week?

### Leader’s Note

Nehemiah 8 offers a powerful picture of spiritual renewal. As God’s people rediscovered His Word, responded in worship, repented of sin, and rejoiced in His grace, they experienced the joy that comes only from Him. Encourage your group to notice the movement of the passage—from hearing, to responding, to celebrating.

---

## 1. Hunger for the Word of God

### Key Scripture:

*“The priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding. <sup>3</sup> While he was facing the square in front of the Water Gate, he read out of it from daybreak until noon before the men, the women, and those who could understand. All the people listened attentively to the book of the law... Ezra opened the book in full view of all the people, since he was elevated above everyone. As he opened it, all the people stood up.” (Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5)*

### Discuss

1. What helps you cultivate a real hunger for God's Word? What things tend to dull that appetite?
2. What does it mean to elevate God's Word in your life? To make it central in your life?
3. What is one practical step you're going to take this year to spend more consistent time in God's Word? What's one way your Small Group can encourage you throughout the year?

### **Leader's Note**

Highlight that spiritual joy begins with spiritual nourishment. When God's Word becomes central—not occasional—renewal follows. Encourage the group to pick one practical step this week: start a reading plan, try SOAP, or study with someone else.

---

## **2. Participate in the Worship of God**

### **Key Scripture:**

*"Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and with their hands uplifted all the people said, "Amen, Amen!" Then they knelt low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground." (Nehemiah 8:6)*

### **Discuss**

1. What keeps you from being fully engaged in worship? What's one small step you can take to begin to more fully engage over this next year?
2. How does worship—private or corporate—shape your attitude, your decisions, or your sense of God's presence?
3. The sermon noted that weekly worship strengthens us spiritually, emotionally, and even physically. When have you experienced worship restoring your joy?

### **Leader's Note**

Authentic worship involves our minds, hearts, bodies, and voices. Help the group see that joy grows when we engage—not when we spectate.

---

## **3. Repent of Sins Against God**

**Key Scripture:** *"And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law." (Nehemiah 8:9)*

### **Discuss**

1. Why is repentance essential to experiencing lasting joy? (How does it affect our relationship with God? With others?)
2. What are some ways people try to avoid conviction? What does healthy conviction look like?
3. What would it look like for you to consistently confess sin to a trusted friend throughout the next year?

### **Leader's Note**

Remind the group: repentance is not about wallowing in guilt—it's about turning from what steals joy and returning to the One who restores it.

---

## 4. Rejoicing in Our Acceptance from God

**Key Scripture:** *“Then he said to them, “Go and eat what is rich, drink what is sweet, and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, since today is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, because the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)*

### Discuss

1. Why is it sometimes easier to stay focused on our failures than to receive God’s forgiveness? How does knowing you are fully accepted by God produce joy and strength in everyday life?
2. Where are you most tempted to look for joy outside of the Lord? What’s one way you can replace that longing for joy with time with God and His people?
3. Have you been living in “someday syndrome” (thinking your best days are still ahead of you)? What’s one step you need to take to begin to choose joy in the “here and now” of your life?

### Leader’s Note

True repentance leads to true celebration. God doesn’t want His people stuck in shame—He wants them walking in freedom, gratitude, and joy.

---

## Closing Prayer

Invite group members to share personal requests first. Then pray something like:

“Lord, thank You that Your joy is our strength. Help us hunger for Your Word, worship with sincere hearts, turn from anything that pulls us away from You, and rejoice in Your grace. Fill our lives, families, and church with Your joy this week. Amen.”