

Confronting paganism in the home Nehemiah 13:23-31

In these final verses in Nehemiah, at the end of the Old Testament history, we are brought to the cleansing of home life, and what home life was producing (*Nehemiah 13:22-31*). Nehemiah discovered that many of the marriages in Judah, were producing pagans and were defined by paganism. Foreign matter was introduced through marriage. Family life was dramatically affected. They rejected God's pattern for marriage and it showed. It was an urgent matter that required urgent and strong leadership. Nehemiah continues his work to "cleanse from everything pagan" (Neh. 13:30). What about our marriages and our homes? Are there any foreign elements which stand against the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God, the love of God, the purity of God? Nehemiah shows us how to confront paganism in our homes. Following are six ways Nehemiah is used of the Lord for this purpose.

1. An honest observation – the sad state of affairs - families in spiritual disarray, v23-24
2. A strong reaction - Nehemiah contends with the people who have hurt their families through their marriages, v25
3. A vivid recollection - Nehemiah gives a vivid illustration of how damaging this is, 26-27
4. An appropriate separation - Nehemiah chases out religious compromisers, v28-29
5. A life-giving agenda – Nehemiah cleanses and restores the power of the gospel, v30-31a
6. A prayer for good - Nehemiah prays that God would preserve what was good, v31b

Words for children to listen for

Post-exilic

Marriages

Pagan

Ashdod

Language

Strong reaction

Solomons wives

Sanballat the Horonite

Priests and Levites

Wood offering

First fruits

Nehemiah's prayer