

## Reflection Questions

1. Reflect on God's presence, provision, protection, and power in your life throughout 2015.
2. What could you (and/or your family) do to celebrate God's activity in your life over the past year? Be creative.
3. What do you sense God wants to do in and through you in 2016?

### **Prayer for Those Searching for Truth:**

*Lord Jesus, you claim to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent and convincing, and that leads to the life you promise.*

Amen.

### **Prayer of Belief:**

*Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.*



**Nehemiah 12:27-43**  
**January 3, 2016**

### **Recap**

Nehemiah, a cupbearer to the king, felt a burden to help rebuild the wall around Jerusalem after it had been destroyed.

Nehemiah displayed great leadership in the rebuilding process.

He united the people around a common goal.  
He overcame opposition to the rebuilding.

The wall was rebuilt in 52 days! (Which we learn about in chapter 6.)

The wall isn't dedicated until chapter 12 because they waited to dedicate it until the city was repopulated. After the wall was rebuilt, scores of people returned home to the revitalized city. Now it was time to party!

### **NOTES:**

## Joy of Dedication

What better way to celebrate than have a parade? So that is what they do.

They organize two processions. One walks around the wall to the south, the other to the north and they meet at the temple for singing and sacrifices. Together the two processions dedicate every foot of the wall.

The procession and following celebration was marked with joy.

*At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to **celebrate joyfully** the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres.* -Nehemiah 12:27 (NIV)

*And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them **great joy**. The women and children also **rejoiced**. The **sound of rejoicing** in Jerusalem could be heard far away.* -Nehemiah 12:43 (NIV)

NOTES:

## Recounting the Journey

Look closer at the details of the procession. The first procession goes south toward the Dung, Fountain, & Water Gates. The second procession goes north toward the Fish & Sheep Gates. This means it is very likely their procession began at the Valley Gate.

Why is that significant? Because Nehemiah's journey around the wall to assess the damage also began at the Valley Gate (Neh. 2:11-15).

The procession of celebration was a direct counterpoint to Nehemiah's midnight journey where he saw all the damage and desolation. This procession was literally a recounting of the journey they had been on.

Every step around the wall was a recounting of God's presence with them. God's provision for them. God's protection over them. And God's power displayed through them.

A new year is a great time to retrace your steps and reflect with joy on all the ways God has been with you.

NOTES:

*Prayer:*

*Light of life, you came in flesh,  
born into human pain and joy,  
and gave us power to be your children.  
Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us,  
so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness  
and walk in the way of peace. Amen.*