



# CHAPTER THREE

## Nehemiah's Leadership

*“And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. So the king said to me, ‘Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart.’ Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, ‘Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?’ Then the king said to me, ‘What would you request?’ So I prayed to the god of Heaven. I said to the king, ‘If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.’ Then the king said to me, the queen sitting beside him, ‘How long will your journey be, and when will you return?’ So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a definite time. And I said to the king, ‘If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go.’ And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my god was on me.” Nehemiah 2:1-8*

### NEHEMIAH'S LESSON OVERVIEW

- Being a great leader and follower. We need to understand that you really can't be a great leader unless you are a great follower.
- Learning how to lead through service. This is the very style Jesus Christ demonstrated for us when God sent His Son to the earth.
- Understanding authority
- Nehemiah appeals – not expects or demands
- Understanding Nehemiah's leadership
- Embracing Nehemiah's style of empathy
- Embracing a Biblical vision and mission. This was Nehemiah's top priority, which He got from God the Father.
- Learn to impart god's vision to others
- Discover how to empower others
- Are you a rebel or advancer?
- Nehemiah manages performance effectively
- Providing support for your workers

Many have leaders who they call “*great*.” Maybe it's a pastor, politician, famous ministry developer, life coach, or maybe it's someone they know personally like a boss, ministry teacher, or a friend. Four out of ten people you meet daily are involved in leadership in one capacity or another—a mother, father, pastor, or corporate leader. However, simply having the leader's responsibility doesn't necessarily make a person an effective leader, let alone a person having the spiritual gift of leadership.

Can you imagine the cost Israel would have undertaken if Nehemiah had wavered in his leadership? The price tag would be that Jerusalem would not have been prepared for the arrival of the King of kings.

While leadership is a gift from the Lord, all leadership positions need to learn Nehemiah's model. With a little study, humility, and hard work, all those who are placed in a leadership role can learn to lead effectively.

## **LEADERS EXPECT PERFORMANCE**

Even though indwelt believers are not to emphasize “performance,” the responsibility of carrying out the leadership tasks assigned to each is imperative—gifted or not. Quality leadership starts with quality submission. Meaning: any assigned tasks delegated to you by an authority figure, you must consider it a top priority and complete it as your primary objective—remembering, if an authority figure assigns you a task, you are a part of their leadership team. All leaders are or should be under authority themselves, who should be guided and directed by the original mandate given by the highest authority. Not only was Nehemiah under the authority of the king, who permitted him to take on this task, more significantly, he was also under the orders of God the Father.

*“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God” (Romans 13:1).*

God is the origin of original power and the Supreme Source of earthly established authoritative positions. It is His job to delegate authority and tasks to whomsoever He determines and wills. Ironically, the earthly governors themselves may not be of god or indwelt by His Son in most cases, so this is where our greatest leadership challenge lies—at the feet of all forms of government.

## **FLOW OF AUTHORITATIVE ORDERS**

In god's structure and system of functioning authority from Heaven downward, we see in the diagram that god is at the top; He is the one who delivers the orders; He gives them to Jesus Christ, and since Jesus is 100% obedient to His Father's plans and requests, He passes them down to Holy Spirit. If we are truly indwelt believers in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us, so the third element of these orders is manifested in the minds of true indwelt believers. We can be guaranteed that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit will be 100% responsible for carrying out God the Father's mandates and orders. The question then becomes, what happens when indwelt believers do not hearken to the voice of the Holy Spirit to carry out the plans of God the Father?

On the right side of the diagram, you see the original structure of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but if the indwelt believer rebels or pulls away from this structure, there will be no rebuilding going on in the sphere God has you influencing. To many people, this is a complex idea, but it is very simple. Those of us who are under authority, which is everyone, simply should carry out the orders that are given to us without hesitation.

## **CARRYING OUT YOUR ORDERS**

As Nehemiah understood, forming a quality group of leaders, who answer to him, must start with those who are willing to carry out their leader's decisions. He knew it was imperative for the Lord's success. It is a method ordained by god. In Nehemiah's case, any type of hesitation could be a loophole for the enemy to get into Jerusalem once again, causing the entire plan, which God gave Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls and securing the city, to come to a screeching halt. Both Nehemiah and his God knew a healthy environment for rebuilding and protection would be anarchy resulting in a chaotic attempt to fulfill god's mandate if there was any rebelling going on.

In traditional ancient times, god, in His Godological manner, appointed leaders willing to be used for His Divine purposes. God has been doing this since the days of Noah, Moses, Joshua, the Hebrew judges, and the civil societies He established under each one. In all cases, exemplified by our Lord, we find His method

of rebuilding the Hebrew community, along with those grafted into the Hebrew community, by assigning tasks to willing followers. God has used this method to keep His Supreme Power in play throughout the centuries. Therefore, you will discover Nehemiah's constant skill of analyzing the performance of his workers. He understood that identifying where you are, activates the need for planning where you must go. He explored the weaker side of his workers to empower them as workers of excellence. Most leaders understand that knowing where you need further development will enhance your skill level and assist in achieving the authority's objective.

## 18 LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

In the following list, you will see what I consider the “bull eyes” of a skillful leader.

1. Nehemiah knew that God establishes all forms of authority for His Divine purposes. He understood that quality leadership starts with quality submission.
2. When assigning tasks by his authority, he considers the skills of those who work for him.
3. A quality leader will not doubt themselves or their abilities to succeed in Christ.
4. The leader expects nothing less than top-notch results from themselves and their workers.
5. Leadership always works harder than the work expected from their people.
6. When a worker is upset, leaders refuse to allow emotion to dominate over leadership. Why? Because they know the real battle is with their enemy.
7. When circumstances change, because a quality leader has planned ahead, they know “what to do.” In Nehemiah's story, he divided the men into two groups. One half with their swords drawn and the other half with a brick in their hands.
8. True leadership does not allow personal feelings to get in the way of performance. Neither Nehemiah nor God allowed personal “feelings” to get in the way of the task at hand.
9. Quality leaders are highly motivated because they know they have what it takes in Christ to be successful. In our story, the power of god's anointing was upon Nehemiah.
10. They know that time spent worrying about their team is time wasted.
11. Leaders of quality refuse to get upset and worry in the workplace. They remain focused on the orders that were delivered to them.
12. Proactive leaders train and equip workers in how to accomplish a task.
13. When working with a team, leaders encourage everyone to work toward the same overall objective delegated to them by their governing authority.
14. Rarely will a quality leader “make an exception(s) to the rule” unless their supervisor or authority clears it. They understand it is more profitable to be an enforcer than a collaborator. In war, collaboration kills the workers.
15. Leaders take great delight in planning for the future.
16. Quality leaders embrace criticism as a tool for growth.
17. Leaders take time to learn from workers – in the task, work environment, and personal concerns. They know this advances their leadership skills.
18. Leaders are optimistic about the Life of Christ in their workers, assisting them in completing the task-at-hand with quality and excellence. They know that all unsaved workers become candidates for salvation by way of modeling quality leadership. They see setbacks as temporary. Problems are spiritual opportunities.

Gifted or not, leaders desiring quality leadership skills need to work at being equipped in those skills. For those of us who have been in leadership for years know that if we use each skill imparted to us, we become a real asset to the leadership and the workers we serve. Through the empowerment of Christ in each leader, we

can accomplish any skill put before us. If you are a gifted leader, it will come naturally. If you're not gifted, a workman worthy of his hire can still master the skill itself.

## REVIEWING NEHEMIAH'S LEADERSHIP

Three days after arriving in Jerusalem, Nehemiah went on a secret night excursion to evaluate the damage to the city walls and assess the possibility of repairing them. He traveled up and down the length of the wall, noting the areas that had been breached and the towers that had been burned. Although it was painful for him to see, the evaluation of the extent of the damage also gave him room for hope.

The next morning, Nehemiah gathered the leaders of the Jewish tribes and encouraged them to begin rebuilding the walls so that they would be protected from their enemies. He told them of the approval he had received from God the Father and the king himself, as well as the supplies God provided through this earthly king.

Strengthened by the Words of God and the king's support, the people feverishly began rebuilding the wall. Nehemiah's secret? The people understood he was a messenger of God come to save His people. His plan? To divide the wall into sections with each family and tribe responsible for repairing one section. How smart was that?

When the Samaritans, headed by a man named Sanballat, heard that the Jews were attempting to rebuild the wall, they became enraged. They organized a force of fighters to attack the builders to prevent the wall from being rebuilt. The idea that a group of refugees could gain independence and military security was not something they were willing to tolerate. Knowing the danger, Nehemiah took steps to protect the workers to allow the project to continue. As said before, he split the men into two groups, one of which would always be armed and stand guard while the second continued to work. He also gave each group trumpets to blast in case of attack, so that the other defenders could rally to them quickly. Additionally, everyone was encouraged to sleep in Jerusalem during the construction, to join the night guard, even if they lived in other towns. As a classic Godly leader, Nehemiah himself took part standing guard night and day. The work continued unabated 52 town days—morning until night. Finally, the wall had been completely re-enclosed. It still only stood at half its previous height but had no more breaches or openings. Only the doors of the gates were yet to be completed. Finally, after years of fear, the Jews of Jerusalem felt secure.

## PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR STUDY

1. **PERFORMANCE:** Quality leaders should expect quality performance for their workers or fail along with their projects.
2. **OBEY YOUR LEADERS:** Carry out your orders. It wasn't just important for Nehemiah's followers to keep his commands; it was important for Nehemiah to keep the commands given to him by the Lord God and the king.
3. **18 QUALITIES:** It is important to incorporate these in your day-to-day task in being a leader. In doing so, I think you'll find that you will succeed.
4. **REMEMBER NEHEMIAH:** God created him with His method of leadership, empowered him with supernatural power to carry out His orders, and stayed active in Nehemiah's mind as he was coming up with ideas in how to revise the plan as he was rebuilding.

## IN CONCLUSION

When Nehemiah had prayed for the relief of his countrymen, perhaps from David's words (Psalm 51:18), he did not sit still and say, "*Let God now do His own work, for I have no more to do,*" but he submitted himself as a vessel to be used by god.

One of the worst behavioral dysfunctions, which exists in life today, is that people procrastinate the orders of their leader, and when something goes wrong in their life, they wonder why. Orders are given to leaders to give their followers to carry out, which will ultimately protect and preserve them. In our society today, that does not exist.

Nehemiah's prayer was seasoned with an earnest passion for fulfilling God's endeavors. From the time of his prayer to applying his efforts, it was four months—primarily to wait for the right time for the king to hear his plea for deliverance for his people. While we are not limited to certain moments in our addresses to the King of kings, Nehemiah had to wait for the king's readiness, which proved to be great wisdom. Timing in leadership is the key to accomplishing a mission.