



CHAPTER FOUR

Nehemiah Evaluates

“Then I came to the governors of the provinces beyond the River and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about it, it was very displeasing to them that someone had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel. So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem, and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding. So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon’s Well and on to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire. Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King’s Pool, but there was no place for my mount to pass. So I went up at night by the ravine and inspected the wall. Then I entered the Valley Gate again and returned. The officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; nor had I as yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the rest who did the work. Then I said to them, ‘You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach.’ I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me and also about the king’s words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, ‘Let us arise and build.’ So they put their hands to the good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard it, they mocked us and despised us and said, ‘What is this thing you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?’ So I answered them and said to them, ‘The God of heaven will give us success; therefore we, His servants will arise and build, but you will have no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem.’” Nehemiah 2:9-20.

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

- Leaders make use of their authorities’ orders. They work diligently, and at times meticulously, to carry out those orders so the overall mission will be accomplished.
- Learn to let your leaders evaluate the crisis. Plus, they need to evaluate your job performance.
- Leaders don’t reveal their plan until the “perfect” time. I will discuss why this is so critical.
- Nehemiah appeals to Jerusalem’s leaders, which is the first thing on his list after he starts carrying out his mission plan given to him by God.
- The leader reinforces God’s commission. Many people thought that Nehemiah was sent under the orders of the king. There is also a suggestion that he was attempting to accomplish something without the king’s blessing.
- A quality leader avoids the voices of mocking.

NEHEMIAH’S FIRST CHALLENGE

One of the primary issues that Nehemiah had to deal with was the staggering wealth inequality. The widespread poverty in the land had forced many to borrow large sums of money from the wealthy. Later, when they could not pay the debt back, they had to pawn off all their possessions one by one to repay their loans. The situation had deteriorated to the extent that some of the poverty-stricken populace had already sold their daughters into slavery to pay off their debts. In God’s name, what leader would do that? Desperate men of cowardice have done this for centuries—selling their people into slavery. With mounting debt and no source of income now that their fields and vineyards had been repossessed, many of the Jews had no way of pulling themselves out of the red. With no other recourse, many saw no options other than selling themselves as slaves. Nehemiah immediately set out to rectify this. He gathered the nobles and wealthy men and began berating them in front of large crowds. He reminded them of how money was being

continuously raised to buy back Jews from slavery and that their actions were likely to force many of their brethren to sell themselves as slaves repetitively voluntarily. Nehemiah must have thought that this erroneous act must stop immediately. As expected with all God's leaders, Nehemiah announced that he would forego all the money owed to him by the poor and that he would be returning any property that he had collected from them instead of payment. He encouraged the wealthy, who had gathered there, to do the same. By the power of God, his words were heeded, and those who were gathered there agreed to return all confiscated property and forego any outstanding debts. This drastic reform allowed many a clean slate, which jumped started the economy to rebuild Jerusalem. Additionally, Nehemiah refused to accept payment for the entirety of his tenure as governor of Jerusalem, which was in stark contrast to his predecessors, who had used their power to levy high taxes to support lavish lifestyles. As proof of Nehemiah's proposal, he also hosted more than 150 people daily for meals—paid for them right out of his own pocket.

CHRIST-AS-LIFE APPLICATION

Let's say you are doing okay as a leader or follower, but you have the God-given passion for leading/following more effectively. While you've built the foundation of leadership and following, there is nothing wrong with improving your skills in becoming more effective as a Biblical leadership model and submission through releasing Christ's ability in you. You might be well on your way to becoming a respectful servant unto the Lord; however, you can never be satisfied with average submission—you can become a model for others in advancing the leadership of Christ in you. When combined with and applied through the release of Christ in you, there are many leadership skills and competencies that will help you discover a level of leadership few have embraced. Christ can develop in you a style and method that has worked perfectly throughout eternity, and yes, it can become yours; after all, how can you expect for God to answer your prayers of rebuilding a home, nation, or Church without your part of His doctrinal methods of rebuilding? He won't!

God never changes His leadership methods no matter the condition of society, particularly in a society that cannot be told what to do. In such cases, God turns a society over to itself until the conditions beg for a leader.

CHRIST-AS-LIFE LEADER

Christ-as-Life leaders tend to have certain traits. Two key areas of personal growth and development are fundamental to Biblical leadership success and those who follow such: Christ-confidence and a release of His mind in the leader and those who submit to him.

Christ-confident people are usually inspiring, and people like to be around individuals who believe in the practicalities of the indwelling Life of Jesus and how He can work out His leadership in the leader they serve. Likewise, if you're a Christ-as-Life leader and optimistic in "*all things work together for the good*," you'll find it much easier to motivate people to do the same.

Christ-confidence is built by mastering significant skills and situations and by knowing that Christ can add real value by the work He does through you. One of the best ways to improve your confidence is to become aware of all the leadership development He has already invested in you and your followers. These skills have eternal value.

What is your level of understanding of the Christ-as-Life modality of leadership? An excellent question.

A mindset set on the indwelling mind of Christ is also associated with strong leadership. However, being positive in Christ is much more than presenting a Christ-centered attitude to the work of rebuilding; you need to develop a strong sense of balance and recognize that setbacks and problems are a part of building the work

Christ has set before you. How you deal with these problems is what makes a difference. As for followers and workers, it redirects your temptation to insult the leader and replace insults with ideas for improvement.

The betrayal of leaders is a common reaction to leaders who have dedicated their lives to lead. Somehow workers expect perfection from the leaders they follow. When the leader reveals flaws, the followers dump them at the snap of misjudgment, which results in the leader having to restart their mission repetitively, having to recruit more workers. However, If the leader has workers who remain faithful through thick and thin, the mission can be readjusted and advanced despite the challenges. Sadly, this is no longer the norm in our society today.

The concept of dump and become the expected behavior of followers. In our culture, the masses change leaders as often as they change their shoes. Authentic Christ-centered leaders approach this situation realistically and prepare to make the changes necessary to overcome worker betrayal. Most have a plan to replenish forsaken workers. On the other hand, negative leaders often give in to the stress and pressure of the situation by retiring or giving up on the mission altogether.

While many leaders become overwhelmed with discouragement, they tend to forget that their decision to give up embeds fear, worry, distress, anger, and failure in the faithful ones who continue to follow them. Resting in Christ is the perfect way of getting rid of the negative thoughts, feelings, and temptations to give up or to give up on your leader. Understanding your fleshly thinking patterns and learning to identify and eliminate negative demonic thinking is key. You can learn how to do this by focusing your mind on your identity in Christ. Authentic leaders need the indwelling Leader, Jesus. Furthermore, their followers need like-minded Truth in supporting their leaders.

I have been told that the masses are socially and mentally challenged regarding relational skills and practical obedience to authority. While I'll agree with this analysis, we see this norm upside wrong in today's culture. Relational skills once were a precise understanding of the specific kind of human interaction needed to be productive within leadership.

WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF EMPATHY?

What is your level of empathy in following a Nehemiah? In all practical terms, empathy is communicating effectively through emotion while practicing listening to the heart of the one who is leading. It helps both the leader and the follower understand the mission and the frustrations of all those working within the proposed plan. Empathy defies betrayal, while it works toward a shared understanding of the leader and the mission at hand. If you have the fleshly tendency to cower (betray) under strong leadership, don't volunteer to serve strong leaders. They don't need your kind of "following." It not only slows the mission, but it is also in direct violation of Paul's admonishment found in Romans 13:1-2, which says, *"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. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves."*

Let's face it; missions delivered from God have always come through leaders God selected to carry out His plans. Not one of them was perfect. God has this habit of selecting the *"least among these"* to advance success.

Suppose that any of us expects perfection from God's sin-affected leaders; in that case, this might be a confession that we don't understand how God matriculates His mission. As Paul later stated to the Roman believers, he says in Romans 15:1: *"Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves."*

Furthermore, Paul wrote to the Corinth church in 2 Corinthians 12:9: *“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”* What a critical verse for us to understand—that God literally uses weaknesses to invest His power within us.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **EVALUATION:** Support your leaders’ evaluation of your performance. That is a good thing.
2. **IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS:** Leaders and followers should embrace training, discipleship, learning, ways to advance the mission God has put upon His children.
3. **CONFIDENCE:** We simply need to please Christ’s confidence from within, not muster up our own.
4. **LEADERSHIP:** Allow Christ to lead you from His inside out.

FINAL NOTE

Life-changing Leadership is a leadership style where leaders create an inspiring vision of the worker’s identity in Christ, their future—motivating their workers to act, manage implementation successfully, and develop their team to be even more effective in the future.

Life-changing followers are the replica of the Bridal members of Christ who understand and appropriate the method of obedience that God embedded in Christ being obedient through you. Jesus in you is always obedient to the plans and mission that His Father has written on the hearts of each true indwelt believer.

Our history lesson today demonstrates how God accomplishes His mission. He stamps His mission plans on the minds of all of whom are willing to sustain it. He avoids using those who tend to betray. As our example proves, the Jews, who had so long left Jerusalem desolate, were quite lazy in volunteering to work to rebuild. Such is the case of the condition of our Church today. Judah, however, woke up through their discouragement and difficulties, which brought out the perseverance that characterized true faith when the work of God was set before them, be it ever poor in appearance. The whole heart is in after believers know that it is God’s plan. That’s the golden key. Furthermore, when they were awakened through Nehemiah’s vision, mission, and purpose; the people readied themselves to work and fight at the same time.

By faith, followers can submit to Christ within a leader that makes the difference, and this becomes the spring of devotedness that Nehemiah-types need for rebuilding. Let us read Mark and this profound Truth in our obedience—that in times of difficulty, faith does not show itself in the magnificence of the results until it is united with a passion for doing God’s work, in and through a Christ-as-Life leader. For without this modality, perseverance cannot have its way, and, sad to say, the task will fail.