



NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH
THE MAN
& THE LEGEND

A Study On The Book of Nehemiah

DR. STEPHEN R. PHINNEY

THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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Nehemiah | The Man & The Legend

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Special thanks to Robert Jacobs, who is a spiritual son and who now serves as an Apprentice Member on my Board of Directors. I have watched him go from gang-related activities to a faithful servant of the Word of God. His growth in Christ is my “paycheck” for serving in the Lord’s calling and service.

Dedication:

To Robert Jacobs

This book is my prayer for you!

*Your faithfulness to God's Divine
Leadership is commendable.*

*This book is also dedicated to all the men
who have been faithful in mentorship
for 40+ years of ministry.*

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Nehemiah | The Life Coach

Anyone, anywhere, who becomes serious about rebuilding can expect to meet with opposition...

There are times when it comes from without. Some Sanballat or Tobiah will rise up against us as they did against Nehemiah. There are other times when the opposition may well up from within our own ranks. Like Nehemiah, we may find that some of our fiercest opposition may actually come from someone who has been on our team. . . . It's how we deal with the opposition—opposition that will surely come—that will largely determine the success or failure of our own rebuilding projects.

Nehemiah followed four key principles that enabled him to keep moving forward, complete the job, and reach the goal God had set before him:

First, Nehemiah shows us how important it is to deal with conflict head-on. He didn't ignore it and hoped it would just go away. Neither can we turn a blind eye to opposition. Nor can we turn around, run the other way, and expect to see the goal of rebuilding accomplished. We must deal with opposition head-on.

Second, Nehemiah made some proper adjustments. There was still a considerable amount of rubbish on and around the broken wall that needed to be removed and hauled away. Any attempt to rebuild the wall on a foundation as shabby as rubbish would only mean the wall would one day crumble again. From time to time, in our own rebuilding experience, it is necessary for us to call a timeout and make some adjustments to our game plan.

Third, Nehemiah was an overcomer. Once he had dealt with his opposition head-on and made proper adjustments to his plan, he

overcame obstacles by continuing to do the right thing. He watched, and he worked. With a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, he continued rebuilding, always keeping a keen eye out for any opposition. He never let the opposition deter him from his task ahead. He kept doing what was right.

Finally, Nehemiah rallied his troops. He knew how important his team's morale was in the rebuilding process. He not only got started with his goal in mind, but now, well into the journey, he continues to work to keep his team focused on that goal.

Remember, your coach is Christ Himself. He is coaching you up, encouraging you to deal with conflict head-on, guiding you to make some necessary and proper adjustments, and strengthening you to keep on doing what is right. He is rallying the troops around you, and you and I are on His team.

-O.S. Hawkins

INTRODUCTION

Servant | Builder | Leader

I was given a book to study, "*Hand Me Another Brick*," by Charles Swindoll, many years ago. This book impacted me to the degree it infected and affected my life in ministry and family life. I learned how to overcome discouragement, relate to authority figures, get over ministerial jealousy, handle money wisely, practice the Godly methods of thinking, listen to the indwelling Life of Christ, and, most importantly, own up to my part in daily conflicts.

The book ignited a passion for knowing the man and the legend of Nehemiah. Oddly, Nehemiah became my all-time mentor. His devotion to hearing God, obeying Him, and carrying out the Lord's orders became an obsession for me. To this day, I am compelled to hear the voice of the Lord in real-time experiences.

I have spent most of my adult years studying the life of Nehemiah. I have laughed, wept, and rejoiced over his life.

Our church society is in complete opposition to the principles Nehemiah lived by. Today, we need wise, Godly leaders like Nehemiah to stand in the gap of a depraved culture. The God-sized news? It's possible. In this book, I will walk you through the life lessons I gained by studying this man's life. I hope you learn the powerful leadership principles lived out by Nehemiah and his counterparts.

My mission is to lead you through God's leadership principles, following and rebuilding found in Nehemiah. You should learn to be motivated in the Spirit, overcome discouragement, and

face failure and opposition while learning to apply wisdom and insight in all your realms of life and leadership. Allow this timeless teaching to help you rise to the challenge of becoming a dynamic, righteous leader and follower in Christ.

The name Nehemiah means *Yahweh has comforted*. Before we even begin revealing the principles in the book of Nehemiah, know from the beginning that God is a God of comfort. God offered Nehemiah hope, power, insight, and much more. My main objective is to have this book lead each reader on how to overcome troubles and rebuild and trust in God while showing the reader the importance of living a dependent life in prayer and faithfulness.

The book of Nehemiah opens with reports of the horrid conditions of the wall surrounding Jerusalem, God's most Holy city, which lay in desolation. The people are scattered and bewildered. We learn that Nehemiah is far from Jerusalem at the time. He was a slave for a foreign king in Persia in 444 BC. He prays fervently and continually after hearing the report of his hometown family and friends being dejected. At the time, he was not a spiritual leader or prophet. His fasting and praying trigger compelling thoughts and a desire to take action. With approval from his king, he moves to Jerusalem to rebuild what the enemy has torn down. The king appoints him as the governor of Jerusalem and supervises the repairs. Through restoring the wall, the lives of the Jews, and dedicating his work unto the Lord, we glean many lessons from Nehemiah on prayer, leadership, overcoming enemies, restoring hearts, integrity, and Holiness.

Grab a brick, your sword, and a good cup of coffee, and join me as we walk through the streets of old Jerusalem, discovering a man who remained faithful until the end.

Stephen Phinney



CHAPTER ONE

The Back Story

We live in troubling times with political, cultural, and church fighting. We live in a simply upside-wrong society, where what was once wrong is right, and what was once right is wrong. Where are the Lord's quality leaders? Where are our modern-day Nehemiah types? Do they exist? We need sound teachers who present accurate facts related to scripture—free from meaningless cliches and relevant to our current events—men and women like Nehemiah.

This book, *Nehemiah, The Man & The Legend*, presents realistic observations of our present culture while evaluating how each one applies to the eschatological truths in the Old and New Testaments.

In the book of Nehemiah, the man who led God's people is presented in three roles. Early in the book, he is the **cupbearer** to the king, a servant. Midway through the story, he is a **builder** of the wall, and in the third part of the book, he is the

governor of the city and surrounding sections of Jerusalem. Nehemiah was an authentic leader of God. This book emphasizes the use of having one hand free to rebuild while keeping the other on the Sword of the Spirit. I am praying that this book blesses you beyond measure.

Nehemiah is considered the Old Testament depicive of Jesus Christ Himself. We will take the verses given to us from the book of Nehemiah and extract the eschatology or end times stated throughout this book. We will also reference other books and other leaders that God placed in the Old Testament, literally to set up for the Great Messiah, and of course, that's Jesus Christ.

Most of the prophecies stated in the Old Testament were given to us by God to set us up for the arrival of Jesus Christ and to understand the book of Revelation.

THE PROPHETIC LIFE OF NEHEMIAH | KEY POINTS

- † We live in a world that needs a modern-day Nehemiah.
- † Israel is under attack 24 hours a day.
- † One by one, countries are turning against our motherland—Israel. On most days, you will see Israel in the news. How does this tiny country seem to create such a global crisis in many countries today?
- † Israel's political and cultural walls are down.
- † The populous, in general, does not understand that today Israel is one of the most liberal countries in the entire world. We need to look at the reasons why this is true. Since Israel is considered one of the most liberal countries, the culture that has crept into authentic, Orthodox Jewish Judaism becomes our concern as born-again, indwelt believers.
- † What can the Body of Christ do to help her?

“The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of

Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.” Nehemiah 1:3

There are significant circumstances and history behind how and why Israel was able to drop its guard so that the influence of the Babylonian culture could overpower their lives as they knew it. This is one of the key reasons we need to look at the history behind the time of Nehemiah.

HISTORY

At the time of Nehemiah, the protective walls guarding Jerusalem were broken down, and the morale and infrastructure of the city were deplorable. The Jews were acting like Babylonians. The city's men were lazy and functioned like cowards, turning their city over to their greatest enemy. The leadership was covertly allowing religions outside of Judaism to penetrate the hearts of their people, resulting in a pluralistic, lukewarm, liberal society.

Does all this sound familiar to you? Well, even though the United States is known for dropping its borders, Israel and many other countries are being set up by Satan one more time to return to the state of affairs in the days of Nehemiah.

The story of Nehemiah is so significant it almost parallels what is happening in global religions, cultures, and governments. I am doing this study because I believe most people, saved or not, need to understand that history does repeat itself. God usually repeats history to help people understand what He said, even thousands of years ago.

ESCHATOLOGY OF NEHEMIAH

According to sound eschatology, there will be NO Nehemiah found in this last and final round. Two prophets in the likeness of Nehemiah will be sent directly from Heaven. However, since the Age of Grace will have passed by this time, these prophets will handle the liberal modalities of Israel through the Law. I am referring to a time toward the end of the seven-

year reign of the Antichrist. At the end of the seven-year reign, Christ comes in His Second Coming. Please don't confuse the Second Coming with the Rapture; they are two separate events. God sends these two prophets from Heaven toward the end of his reign, which Satan will fully manage. These prophets will do what Nehemiah did, but this time through a message of evangelism. The beauty of these two prophets is that they will evangelize the remaining pure-bloodline Jews, but there will only be 144,000—not one more or less. Through their work, God sets up to finish the work Nehemiah started. Take some time and read about this in Revelation 11:1-14.

NEHEMIAH'S CHARACTER

Nehemiah was a gifted young man. He was known for his immovability in Judaism, politics and his ability to build. He was born in Babylon and raised in exile. He understood the ramifications of bondage. Nehemiah grew up under a father passionate about preserving Israel—so much so that he equipped his son with the skills that mark the idealism of leadership today. In fact, present-day Orthodox Jewish leaders consider him one of their greatest historical leaders.

Nehemiah led three returns of the Jewish people following their 70-year exile in Babylon to set up a plan to rebuild: morale, Judaist rights, practices, and political rule. Little did he realize his leadership actions would one day become the last historical writings of the Old Testament, literally ushering in the birth, life, and prophetic actions of Jesus Christ. This leader was the “needle's head” of Old Testament prophecies. We know Nehemiah demonstrated the exact actions Jesus would fulfill in the book of Revelation. I believe Nehemiah is the Old Testament's preview of the abilities, actions, and character of Jesus Christ.

The methodology most known by Judaists and indwelt Christians is Nehemiah's mandate for rebuilding Jerusalem by keeping a brick in one hand and a sword in the other. Meaning, that while rebuilding, always be ready to defend your

homeland and the doctrines of God, something we do not practice today in modern Christianity. Nehemiah's method propagated a form of leadership that has preserved countries and corporations today. However, due to the satanic pressure of keeping the masses of countries happy, the lion's share of governments have dropped their walls to unify under the banner of one-world peace—even Israel.

Many countries are returning to the updated New Babylon stated in the Revelation book, which keeps our message congruent. The obvious connection is that Israel and global societies will return to where Nehemiah and God's people were once in bondage (Revelation 18:1-21).

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

Solomon once said, *“There is nothing new under the sun.”* No truer words. Satan is predictable. Since he is not an originator, he reuses the same madness methods throughout continuous history. The keynote to remember is that Babylon is and will continue to be Satan's kingdom of darkness until it is all over. Many eschatologists consider America to be this New Babylon. While I get their logic in claiming this, Babylon is a global system of function—in belief and governance. Looking carefully, you can see symbols, rhetoric, and religious beliefs splattered throughout every country in our modern world today.

Satan is relentless in embedding his system of religious governance in every culture, country, and individualized belief of our global society. The main symbol we see in existence from old Babylon is the all-seeing eye, historically stated as *Horus* or *Her*. Egypt is one of the most significant ancient Egyptian Babylonian deities who serve many functions—most notably, the *god of kingship*. That's the definition: *god of kingship and the sky* or *"principality of the air,"* according to Ephesians 2:2.

Horus was ultimately depicted as a feminine god who ruled all kings. The book of Revelation refers to this entity as Jezebel

(Revelation 2:20). Back in Nehemiah's day, he fought this Horus influence, permeating Israel. While the Israelites were in bondage to Egypt, they integrated this she-god into Judaism, which later surfaced as feminism throughout modern cultures. Since Nehemiah was more than familiar with this demonic ideology, he set out to rid this she-god from the land of Israel. This was his primary motive, hidden behind his God-sized ability to lead and rebuild.

Our ministry is destined to accomplish Nehemiah's objective in modern times, and that's why we're calling this project *The Man & The Legend*. Our study will bring back the methods and principles of Nehemiah, calling us to renounce the New Babylon, which is soon to arrive on humanity's doorstep. Therefore, this makes the book of Nehemiah not only harmonious but necessary to study today.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

Since it's proven that most listeners only pick up about two percent of what is being said, this is a great way to keep the primary points of communication clear and upfront.

1. **REMNANT:** God always maintains a remnant in each generation—that's a fact.
2. **NEW NEHEMIAH:** When a city or culture falls, God is known to raise a Nehemiah in every generation.
3. **HEROS NEEDED:** When men act like cowards, God shifts into high gear, and He raises and reveals a hero in our age.
4. **LEADERSHIP:** God only uses immovable leaders in beliefs, politics, and leadership. Nehemiah certainly filled that mandate.

It is hopeful that God strategically plans a remnant in each generation. It is His method of keeping the promise alive and the hope.

God maintains planting builders in each generation to continue the Biblical prophecies stated throughout the Word of God. I consider myself one of these well-placed builders.

While it is understood that God uses women to maintain His heroic efforts, men are the primary venue He multiplies His building modalities. However, there are fewer men available in our present culture. It is my hope this book raises more modern-day Nehemiah types.

Our world lacks Biblical leaders. God is known for accomplishing His work through the few. However, it is our responsibility to raise young men and women to rise to the challenge of becoming proactive leaders for God.

I am eternally thankful that God gave us the story of Nehemiah, although it's not a story but an action that God took through this young man to preserve the land of Israel and take back what belonged to them. As we go through our historical study—not only in Nehemiah but also in other major and minor prophets, we will discover that Israel, for some reason, dishes up their culture, beliefs, and leadership and hand it right back to the Babylonians. Well, we're going to talk about why they keep doing this.



CHAPTER TWO

The Journey Begins

“When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. I said, ‘I beseech You, O LORD God of Heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant, Moses. Remember the word which You commanded Your servant, Moses, saying, “If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to Me and keep My

commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.” “They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand. O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man.’ Now I was the cupbearer to the king.” Nehemiah 1:4-11

The name Nehemiah means “*Jehovah comforts*,” which means that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are Comforters. Nehemiah was a famous cupbearer who never appeared in scripture outside this book. As with the books of Ezra and Esther—named as his contemporaries, this book recounts selective events of his leadership. Nehemiah was one of the Hebrew people's greatest leaders throughout the Old Testament. The Greek and the Latin Vulgate had originally named this book 2nd Ezra. Even though the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are separate in most English Bibles, they may have once been joined together as they currently are in the Hebrew text, which is an extremely significant piece we need to keep in mind. Jewish history has proven that Nehemiah is the very last book written before the arrival of Jesus Christ, which is why we are starting with the book of Nehemiah.

THE JOURNEY OF NEHEMIAH

- † Leadership should always start with serving. Nehemiah serves as a cupbearer.
- † God only uses men and women of character—a life without lies, deception, and immorality.
- † God has a habit of using layman—people without importance. In the Old and New Testaments, we see people of importance are distracted with self-glory, so it became God's norm to use average, day-to-day individuals who had a clean heart before Him.

- † Leaders typically use people closest to them and people of the same beliefs.
- † God loves working with people who see opposition as a challenge, which creates endurance. Jesus said to us personally in the Holy Word of God that *“the one who endures to the end, he will be saved”* Matthew 24.13), which makes this statement essential.
- † Passionate people with the heart to rebuild become His most active workers.

Special Note: In the Bible, after the book of Nehemiah, you will discover there are 23 more books because of how it was canonized. In reality, the book of Nehemiah was the last book written before the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember this as we go through our series.

Our short passage from Nehemiah applies to the church culture today without question. Nehemiah was in one of the most significant positions, if not the most—that of being a cupbearer to the greatest king who lived on earth during his time. I’m going to talk a lot about the impact a cupbearer had on a king, but know this; all quality leadership starts with one being a slave to a great authority. In our case, because of Jesus Christ, we were granted a bondsman position, which means a volunteer.

RECORDING THE JOURNEY

Jewish tradition identifies Nehemiah himself as the primary author of this historical book. Much of the book is written from his first-person perspective. Jewish history and the Bible unfolded Nehemiah’s story as a servant serving the Persian royal court as the personal cupbearer to King Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 1:11-2:1). His position was not a lowly one. Cupbearers have the highest and most trusted positions within a king’s service. This prestigious position reveals something of Nehemiah’s righteous character. Though he remained in Persia after the exiles had been allowed to go home, he was

highly interested in the state of Judah, and so was his brother, Hanani.

The book of Nehemiah can be read as a sequel to the book of Ezra. But as I mentioned in the introduction, initially, these two books were probably one book. Some scholars believe the books were initially penned to lay out the journey that God took not only with Nehemiah but many other biblical leaders. With each, God displayed great respect and purpose. It is possible Ezra compiled Nehemiah's original accounts with other materials to create the book of Nehemiah. However, most scholars believe Nehemiah wrote the book, and I am one of them.

The Christ parallel: God the Father and Jesus the Son have always recorded the progressive steps to freedom. The book of Revelation reveals the concept of exacting that freedom. God is into details; however, there is no record of Jesus using the pen to scribe one single word; He left that to the men and women who served Him.

NEHEMIAH'S PERIOD OF SERVICE

The book of Nehemiah opens in the Persian city of Susa (now Iran) in 444 BC. Later that year, Nehemiah traveled to Israel, leading the third of the three returns of the Jewish people following their seventy years of exile (bondage) in Babylon. Most of the book centers on events in Jerusalem. The narrative concludes around 430 BC, and scholars believe the book was written shortly after that.

Special Note: The Persian Empire is where many of the descendants of Ishmael resided and ruled. One-third of Revelation's book deals with this group. Today they are classified as Islamic.

During Nehemiah's service to the Persian king, the city was considered the capital of gods and goddesses—formerly established by the Babylonian Empire. Persia was the next era that evolved from the Babylonians. Because of this, the setting

God placed Nehemiah in as a cupbearer to the king was when the king was battling Egypt. The Egyptians wanted to be their own people; however, this did not stop Artaxerxes from conquering the Egyptians. This king was known for having a soft spot for the Jewish people, and thus he commissioned Ezra to take charge of the ecclesiastical and civil affairs of the Jewish nation. King Artaxerxes was known for separating the government's interference with religious rights, particularly Judaism. Therefore, Nehemiah became the obvious choice to follow up on Ezra's work.

The Christ parallel: as in the case of Jesus, leadership starts with being a servant. From service, leadership is born. When Jesus walked the earth, He was a servant. However, when we see Him again in Revelation's book, He is in the mode of delivering severe consequences to those who refuse to serve Him, the King of kings.

THE LAST BOOK BEFORE CHRIST'S ARRIVAL

Nehemiah is the last historical book of the Old Testament; however, the book of Esther appears after Nehemiah in the Canon. The events of Esther occurred between Ezra chapters six and seven—between the first and second return of the people of Israel. The prophet of Malachi was a contemporary of Nehemiah, and so were many leaders from that day forward.

There is a godological reason why the book of Nehemiah is the last Old Testament book written—he was setting up for the birth of Christ by preparing the way for Jerusalem to host the King of kings. His character as a servant-leader illustrated the exact triune of a quality leader: *cupbearer*, *builder*, and *leader*. Finally, according to the book of Revelation, Nehemiah's style and function as a savior of Jerusalem was a precursor to Jesus returning to re-establish Jerusalem in His final action.

The Christ parallel: just as Revelation's book was the last pinned book of the trilogy of the Word, the book of Nehemiah is the final writing project before Christ's arrival. In this fact,

we know Nehemiah's actions and recordings are historically eschatological.

SAVIOR TO THE JEWS

Nehemiah was a layman, not a priest like Ezra, nor a prophet like Malachi. He served the Persian king in a secular position before leading a group of Jews to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls. Nehemiah's expertise in the king's court equipped him adequately for the political and physical reconstruction necessary for the remnant to survive. Please keep that in mind—God is always about preserving His remnant. This principle applies to our present-day culture and will apply until humanity's very last hour.

The Jews withstood opposition and came together to accomplish their goal under Nehemiah's leadership. Nehemiah gave up a respected position in the palace for hard labor in a political warzone. He partnered with Ezra, who also appears in this book, to solidify the political and spiritual foundations for the people of God. Nehemiah's humility provided an example for the people in the presence of God. He did not claim any glory for his success but gave God the credit. The prayer noted earlier is significant for this reason: it was an appeal to God with repentance for the wrongs of the Jewish people but also a request that God would transfer His power into the hands of Nehemiah to accomplish His mission.

Nehemiah recorded the reconstruction of the wall of Jerusalem, Judah's capital city. Together he and Ezra, who led the spiritual revival of the people, directed the political and religious restoration of the Jews in their homeland after the Babylonian captivity.

Special Note: Babylon is the first generation that came from the descendants of Ham. Ham was the “cursed” son of Noah.

The Christ parallel: Jesus Christ is the ultimate Savior to the Jewish people. In Nehemiah's day, while the Jews were waiting

for their Messiah, Nehemiah became the preview of their awaited King.

NEHEMIAH MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

Nehemiah's life provides a fine study of leadership. He overcame opposition from outsiders as well as from internal turmoil. He exercised his administrative skills in his strategy to use half the people for the rebuilding as the other half kept watch for the Samaritans—those who threatened to attack them under the instruction of Sanballat. (Nehemiah 4-7).

As governor, Nehemiah negotiated peace among the Jews who were unhappy with the Persian taxes. He exhibited a steadfast determination to complete his goal. Accomplishing those goals resulted in the people being encouraged, renewed, and excited about their future. Interestingly, God used the economy and taxes, in general, with the negotiations of a God-appointed leader to create, start, and ignite the Jewish revival.

Nehemiah was appointed as the governor of Israel by the Persian king, Darius, during the beginning of the second Temple period. He was instrumental in rebuilding the defenses of Jerusalem and the surrounding area while providing much-needed stability and management to the fleeting Jewish community, who had just returned from Babylon. Remember, Nehemiah was born in Babylon, raised in exile, and therefore barred from Jerusalem.

Nehemiah understood the ways of the Jewish enemy and the culture of the Babylonians. He was a clever and composed person; thus, the reason why he made a great cupbearer. Although the wise Jewish leaders of his time had forbidden the drinking of Gentile wine, Nehemiah was given a special dispensation due to his distinguished position.

The Christ parallel: there is no question Nehemiah's leadership was a preview of the coming style of leadership that Jesus would demonstrate. When Jesus arrived in His first

coming, He led by serving the people. Jesus was/is His Father's cupbearer. While He was serving, He was also in the process of rebuilding Jerusalem. These two mission points set Jesus up to rule God's people, which we see in Revelation's book.

GOD MAKES USE OF INTEL

One day, in the 20th year of King Darius's reign, Nehemiah spoke to his brother Hanani. He asked Hanani how the Jews, who had journeyed to Israel years earlier, were doing. The Temple had been rebuilt more than 12 years before this, and the Jews of Babylon were eager to hear news of their fellow Jews.

God used the modality of checking the hearts of His people to determine the strength available to rebuild. When their hearts were faint, so were their hands. Per God's design, the hands are as productive as the strength of His people's hearts. History proves that when God's people were put to work without an abundance of faith, they quit when opposition arrived—a modality that permeates our church culture today.

Hanani related to Nehemiah how the Samaritans, enraged by the completion of the Temple, descended on Jerusalem, destroying the walls and ransacking the city. The situation had worsened by day four. Overcome with sadness, Nehemiah wept and fasted. His grief continued unabated for several days. He prayed to God to help his brethren in Israel—to forgive them for their unfaithfulness and to fulfill His promise to gather all the Jews back to the land of Israel. Does that not sound familiar? When we look at the book of Revelation describing the end times, we see there is a great call to bring the Jews back to Israel.

The following month, Nehemiah was called to serve king Darius his wine. Despite his best efforts, Nehemiah's grief could not be contained, and King Darius noticed something was wrong. After being pressed to share what was on his mind, Nehemiah told the king that the plight of the Jews in Israel weighed heavily upon him and that he wished to travel to

Israel with the king's permission to assist the Jews in rebuilding the city while protecting them from their enemies. Moved by his sincerity, Darius allowed Nehemiah to go to Israel, giving him travel permission and timber from the Royal storehouse for the roofing along with a royal escort. Nehemiah gathered a few of his friends and set out for Jerusalem.

The Christ parallel: Jesus Christ always checks a person's heart before advancing His mission. If you read the book of Revelation, you will discover a method that precedes God's action—receiving intel from the angels who monitor the earth. Nehemiah used the same method in our study—receiving intel before proceeding.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **RECORD:** Document your journey with Jesus Christ for future generations. One of the greatest errors we see in church culture today is that people do not journal. If after a parent dies, there is nothing written; future generations will have nothing to look at and study for their present generation. God has always used the modality of recording every step He has made from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem.
2. **SLAVE:** Consider yourself a slave. But in our case with Jesus Christ, a bondsman, which means we volunteered.
3. **SAVIOR LEADERS:** Don't muzzle the mouths of your leaders and your prophets. God still uses leaders to this very hour and will continue until His last hour of humanity.
4. **GODLY SUBMISSION:** Submit to biblical leaders. God made it clear in the book of Romans that we are to honor all existing authorities. He said that all these existing authorities were created by Him, meaning God uses the good with the bad. But if you unplug authority, you unplug the Gospel; if you unplug the Gospel, there is a price to pay.



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 pleases 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 pleases 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

- † Be a great leader and follower. We must understand that you can't be a great leader unless you are a great follower.
- † Learn how to lead through service. This is the same style Jesus Christ demonstrated for us when God sent Him to the earth.
- † Understand authority
- † Nehemiah appeals - not expects or demands
- † Understanding Nehemiah's leadership
- † Embrace Nehemiah's style of empathy
- † Embrace a Biblical vision and mission. This was Nehemiah's top priority, which He received from God the Father.
- † Learn to impart God's vision to others
- † Discover how to empower others
- † Are you a rebel or an 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 possibly it's someone they know personally, like a boss, ministry teacher, or 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 responsibility of a leader doesn't necessarily make that 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 those in leadership positions need to learn Nehemiah's model. With a little study, humility, and hard work, all those 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; any assigned tasks by an authority figure must be considered top priority and completed as your primary objective. Always remember that if an authority figure gives you a task, you are a part of their leadership team. All leaders are, or should be, under authority themselves and should be guided and directed by the original mandate given by the highest authority. Nehemiah was under the authority of the king, who permitted him to take on this task, and more significantly, he was 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 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 under authority from Heaven downward, He is the one who delivers the orders; He gives the orders to Jesus Christ, and since Jesus is 100% obedient to His Father's plans and requests, He passes them down to the Holy Spirit. Now, if we are believers in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us, so the third element of these orders manifests in the minds of true indwelt believers. We can be guaranteed that God the Son and the Holy Spirit will be 100% responsible for fulfilling God the Father's mandates and orders. The question then becomes, what happens when indwelt believers do not listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and carry out the plans of God the Father?

In the original structure of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all are in harmony, but if the indwelt believer rebels or pulls away from this structure, there will be no rebuilding in the sphere God has them influencing. It is a complex idea to many people when it is very simple. Those under authority, which is everyone, should simply carry out the orders given to them without hesitation.

CARRYING OUT YOUR ORDERS

Nehemiah understood that forming a group of quality leaders who answer to him started with those willing to obey their leader's decisions. It is a method ordained by God, and Nehemiah knew it was imperative for the Lord's success. In Nehemiah's case, any hesitation would have been a loophole for the enemy to get into Jerusalem once again, causing God's entire plan of rebuilding the walls and securing the city to come to a screeching halt. Nehemiah and his God knew that the Jew's healthy and protected environment for rebuilding would result in anarchy and a chaotic attempt to fulfill God's mandate if there were any rebellions.

In traditional ancient times, God, in His Godological manner, appointed leaders who were 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 that He established under each one. In all cases, exemplified by our Lord, we find this method used for rebuilding the Hebrew community, with those grafted into the Hebrew community, by assigning tasks to willing followers. God uses this method to keep His Supreme Power in play throughout the centuries. Therefore, you will discover Nehemiah's skill, where he constantly analyzes the performance of his workers. Nehemiah understood that identifying where they were, activated the need for planning where they must go. He explored the weaker side of his workers to empower them as workers of excellence. Most leaders understand that knowing where they need further development will enhance their skill level and assist them in achieving their objectives.

18 LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

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

1. Nehemiah knew that God established 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 considered the skills of those who worked for him.
3. Quality leaders will not doubt themselves or their abilities to succeed in Christ.
4. Leaders expect nothing less than top-notch results from themselves and their workers.
5. Leadership always works harder than those working for them.
6. When a worker is upset, leaders refuse to allow emotion to dominate over leadership. Why? Because they know the real battle is with the enemy.
7. Because quality leaders have planned, they know what to do when circumstances change. 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. Authentic 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.
 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. 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 delivered to them.
 12. Proactive leaders train and equip workers on how to accomplish a task.
 13. When working with a team, leaders encourage everyone to work toward the same overall objective of 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 modeling quality leadership. They see setbacks as temporary. Problems are spiritual opportunities.

Gifted or not, leaders who desire quality leadership skills need to work at being equipped with those skills. Those 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. A worker worthy of his hire can still master the skill if you're not gifted.

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 wall noting areas that had been breached and towers that had been burned. Although it was painful for him to see, the evaluation of the extent of the damage gave him room for hope.

The following day, Nehemiah gathered the leaders of the Jewish tribes and encouraged them to begin rebuilding the walls so they would be protected from their enemies. He told them of the approval he had received from God the Father and the king himself and the supplies God provided through this 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 to save His people. His plan? To divide the wall into sections where each family and tribe were responsible for repairing their area. 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, allowing the project to continue. As said earlier, he split the men into two groups: one that would always be armed and standing guard, while the other group continued to work. He also gave each group trumpets to blast in case of attack so the other defenders could rally to them quickly.

Additionally, everyone was encouraged to sleep in Jerusalem during the construction and to join the night guard, even if they lived in other towns. As a classic Godly leader, Nehemiah himself took part in standing guard night and day. The work continued unabated for 52 days—morning and through the night. Finally, the wall was completely re-enclosed. It only stood at half its previous height, but it had no more breeches 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 from their workers, or they will 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 also 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 into your day-to-day tasks of 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 came up with ideas for 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 today is people procrastinating on the orders of their leader, and then when something goes wrong in their life, they wonder why. Orders are given to leaders and their followers to carry out, which ultimately protects and preserves them. In our society today, this is rare.

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



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 is accomplished.
- † Learn to let your leaders evaluate the crisis. In addition, they need to assess your job performance.
- † Leaders don't reveal their plans until the perfect time, which is critical.
- † Nehemiah appeals to Jerusalem's leaders, the first thing on his list, after he starts carrying out the mission plan God gave him.
- † Leaders reinforce God's commission. Many people thought Nehemiah was sent under the orders of the king. There was 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 Nehemiah had to deal with was the staggering inequality of wealth. The widespread poverty in the land had forced many to borrow large sums of money from the wealthy. Later, when they could not pay back the debt, they pawned off their possessions one by one to repay their loans. The situation deteriorated, and some poverty-stricken people 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 Jews had no way of pulling themselves out of the red. Many saw no other recourse 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 raised to buy back Jews from slavery and that their actions were likely to force many brethren to sell themselves as slaves repeatedly and voluntarily. Nehemiah must have thought that this erroneous act needed to be stopped immediately.

As expected of all God's leaders, Nehemiah announced he would forego all the money owed to him by the poor and that he would be returning any properly he had collected from them in place of payment. He encouraged the wealthy to do the same. By the power of God, the people heeded Nehemiah's words. Those gathered agreed to return all confiscated property and forego any outstanding debts. This drastic reform provided many with a clean slate, which jump-started the economy for the rebuilding of 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 hosted more than 150 people daily for meals—paid for them right out of his 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 have built a foundation of leadership or following, there is nothing wrong with improving your skills and becoming more effective as a model of Biblical leadership and submission by releasing Christ's ability in you. You might be well on your way to becoming a respectful servant unto the Lord; however, you should never be satisfied with average submission when you can become a model for others by advancing the leadership of Christ in you.

Many skills and competencies are available to help you discover a level of leadership or following few have embraced when combined with and applied through the release of Christ in you. Christ can develop in you the style and method that has worked perfectly throughout eternity. And yes, it can become yours. After all, how can you expect God to answer your prayers for rebuilding a home, nation, or church without your involvement in 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 Christ-confidence and a release of His mind in them and those who submit to them. These two key areas of personal growth and development are fundamental to Biblical leadership success and the success of those who follow.

Christ-confident people are usually inspiring. 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 that "*all things work together for good*" (Romans 8:28), you'll find it much easier to motivate people to be the same.

Christ-confidence is built by mastering practical skills in situations and by knowing that Christ can add real value through 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. An excellent question to ask yourself is, *what is your level of understanding of the Christ-as-Life modality of leadership?*

A mindset 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 toward the work of rebuilding; you need to develop a strong sense of balance, recognizing that setbacks and problems are a part of the work Christ has set before you. How you deal with these problems is what makes all the difference. As for followers and workers, it redirects the temptation to insult their leaders by replacing the insults with ideas for improvement.

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

The concept of dump-and-go has 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, opposing leaders often give in to the stress and pressure of the situation by retiring or giving up on the mission altogether.

When leaders become discouraged, 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 vital. You can know how to do this by focusing your mind on your identity in Christ. Authentic leaders need to tap into 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. Relational skills were once a precise understanding of the specific human interaction needed to be productive within leadership. While I agree with this analysis, we see this new-norm upside wrong in today's culture. Leaders need to balance relationship skills and leading without allowing relationships to block quality leadership.

WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF EMPATHY?

What is your level of empathy in following a Nehemiah-type leader? In practical terms, empathy is communicated effectively through emotions while listening to the leader's heart. This helps the leader and the follower understand the mission and frustrations of working within the proposed plan. Empathy defies betrayal while it works toward a shared understanding of the leader and the task at hand. If you have the fleshly tendency to cower (betray) under strong leadership,

don't volunteer to serve them; they don't need your kind of following. It not only slows the mission but violates Paul's admonishment in Romans 13:1-2: *"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 God's ordinance, and those 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, and not one of them was perfect. God has this habit of choosing the *"least of these"* (Matt. 25:40) to advance success.

Suppose that we expect perfection from God's sin-affected leaders. That might be a confession we don't understand how God matriculates His mission. As Paul later stated to the Roman believers: *"Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves"*(Romans 15:1).

Furthermore, Paul wrote to the Corinth church: *"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"* (2 Cor. 12:9). What a critical verse for us to understand—that God uses weaknesses to invest His power within us.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **EVALUATION:** Support your leaders' assessment of your performance. That is a good thing.
2. **IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS:** Leaders and followers should embrace training and discipleship while learning ways to advance the mission God has put upon His children.
3. **CONFIDENCE:** We need to release Christ's confidence from within, not muster our own.

4. **LEADERSHIP:** Allow Christ to lead you from the inside out.

FINAL NOTE

Life-changing Leadership is a style where leaders create an inspiring vision of the worker's identity in Christ and their future, motivating them to successfully implement their plans as they continue to lead and develop their team to be even more effective.

Life-changing followers are the replica of the Bridal members of Christ who understand and appropriate the method of obedience that God embedded through Christ being obedient through them. 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 plan on the minds of all those 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 do the work of rebuilding; such is the condition of our church today. Judah, however, woke up through their discouragement and difficulties, which brought out the perseverance that characterized their true faith when the work of God was before them, be it ever poor in appearance. After they knew that the plan was God's plan, they engaged with all their heart. That is the golden key. Furthermore, when they were awakened through Nehemiah's vision, mission, and purpose, the people readied themselves to work and fight simultaneously.

By faith, followers submit to Christ within the leader, which makes all the difference; this becomes the spring of devotedness, which Nehemiah-types need for rebuilding. Let us re-mark 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. Without this modality, perseverance cannot have its way, and the task will fail.

Failure to follow effectively is equally as damaging as ineffective leaders, probably more so. Leaders like Nehemiah, who was an effective follower, understood the best method of training a king to be more effective as a leader – God honoring submission and work ethic.



CHAPTER FIVE

Nehemiah Rebuilds

I encourage you to study chapter three of Nehemiah. The chapter is the pivot point of effective leadership.

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

- † We must build walls around our lives to protect God's interest.
- † We cannot rebuild what we don't believe has fallen.
- † Neglecting our heart's condition leaves an open door for the enemy.
- † Having and releasing the heart of God frees us to begin our journey.
- † Discover the marks of the competent leader (Jesus Christ) within you. If you do not have the life of Christ within you, then this point becomes mute.
- † Bathe your rebuilding in prayer.

THE WALLS OF OUR LIVES

God appears to reference the walls of our lives frequently in His Word. One of my cherished scriptures is found in Isaiah chapter forty nine:

“Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me. Your builders hurry; Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you.” Isaiah 49:15-17

Before we move on, let’s contemplate this passage a bit. First, God cares so much about our lives that He inscribes our names on the palms of His hands. He puts Himself, God, the Father, as the primary Parent figure in our lives. Secondly, He sees that the walls of our lives are just as important as those of Jerusalem.

By this point in our study, we should understand how important it is to keep the walls of Jerusalem repaired and strong. In this, God sends Nehemiah to conduct his business rebuilding the most important walls in the world.

The walls of our lives often lie in ruins through neglect, rebellion, and ignorance. Without question, the Leader ordained in our lives is none other than the Holy Spirit through the indwelling life of Jesus Christ. The Spirit accomplishes the Lord’s mission through the continuing work of reconstructing His protective walls from the inside out. The Spirit first brings our attention to the condition of our walls. While most of us are ignorant of hearing the voice of God from within, others simply dig in deep and rebel.

FACING THE FACTS

Most Christians today live with the walls of their lives surrounded by ruin, and it all began with a slow fade. Few Christians are taught how to discern the voice of the Spirit from their self-life. Others protest the mandates of God to remain secure within His boundaries. It all starts with a crack—a particular sin or bitterness that begins to rule one’s life. After the daily abuse from life itself, the crack turns into a hole, which creates a perfect opportunity for the enemy to enter. Satan then sends one of his demons, who gains access by creating a spiritual stronghold. Suppose further neglect becomes the norm for this believer. In that case, the weeds of carnal thinking align with the enemy’s thoughts and ideations, resulting from hearing the enemy’s voice over the indwelling Spirit. Now idolatry is formed. The enemy not only gains access into your life but is assured that the believer hears his voice, which many label as the voice of God. In this, Satan assaults the Living God, and the believer begins living by demonic doctrines.

You may be known for being a “good” Christian, but that does not guarantee you are one. People who follow Christian principles are not necessarily authentic believers indwelt by the Life of Christ. According to Revelation chapter three, these so-called believers put Satan’s words in God’s mouth, and thus, Jesus must spit them out of His mouth.

The parallel is simple: most Jews during Nehemiah’s leadership were pure-bloodline Jews; however, few practiced Judaism. To make them authentic obedient Jews, the two must join as one force. The same is true about Christianity; believers must not only claim Christianity but also fulfill the second most important doctrine: be born-again and filled with the Holy Spirit.

DO AN INVENTORY

Before Nehemiah started rebuilding, he evaluated the wall and did an inventory of its condition. Conduct an inventory of your

actual condition, including whether you are authentically born-again by and through Jesus Christ.

Many Christians tend to make light of the mandates of God. As our norm proves today, many hide behind the bush of Grace. Paul once said, *“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”* Then he went on to say, *“May it never be!”* Sadly, we live in a church culture where Paul’s fear has become the norm. Today, grace is used as a license to tear down the walls of God while worshipping the gods of Babylon. When caught, each one hides behind the rationalization that “we are all sinners” and “I am better than I used to be.” If this is your mindset, the enemy is living in your camp; your walls are down.

LEADERS OF RECONSTRUCTION

Nehemiah’s consistent concern and focus was reconstruction; however, he wasn’t focused on self-strength but rather on the strength of the Lord through prayer. He prayed for guidance and correction of his pathway.

Busyness is my constant enemy for fulfilling the Lord’s commission to *“pray without ceasing”* (1 Thess. 5:17). If anyone can say there isn’t enough time in the day to pray, it would be me. However, the older I get, the more dependent I become on praying without ceasing. I have learned to request the Lord’s direction—that the supernatural thoughts of Christ be revealed in my feeble mind, giving clear direction on every project. Without prayer and dependence on Jesus, erosion of the soul is inevitable. In neglecting the heart or soul, the world, our flesh, and the enemy’s chaos will soon overrun and crumble the walls of our lives.

Nehemiah was known for leading from the knees up. I, too, want to be known for the same practical application of quality leadership. I am alert to the reality that erosion is a constant battle within the souls of humanity. Little by little, bit by bit, the Bridal Members of Christ allow the enemy to enter holes

into the walls of their lives where he one day misleads and melts them into a lukewarm community of believers.

Important Note: Don't just repent; rebuild.

Many people repent on a normal, natural, and neutral basis, but repentance requires rebuilding within the soul, a step that many believers today ignore. Authentic repentance requires rebuilding. Preserving existing walls will assist you in the encouragement needed to conduct the hard work of rebuilding the parts of your wall that have fallen.

LIVING WITHOUT THE BODY OF CHRIST

We need each other. Since God placed a measurement of spiritual gifts within all His born-again believers, uniting those gifts as one force will ultimately create a workforce to rebuild the walls of the Church itself. We all need to stop making excuses as to “why” we don't partner with other real-deal believers, which usually hides behind the erroneous ideology of not enjoying being told what to do. Independent Christians are selfish believers or aren't necessarily authentic Christians to start with.

Nehemiah appealed not only to the Jewish leaders but also the Jews who were marginal, and he used his work ethic to accomplish this. The result: the real-deal Jews woke up, and the marginal Jews were won over by the structure Nehemiah put in place through Ezra. In the end, a revival of sorts broke out, and Jerusalem was restored to the norm of God.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **WALLS:** Maintain God's importance of walling up your life. Do you remember the story in the Book of Job where Satan was appealing to God to destroy Job? After God responded to him, Satan again said he could not reach him because of a *hedge of protection* that God had put about him. What did God do? He dropped the hedge. This is a

- significant point because Satan can't get at us without permission. God puts these walls around us—these hedges of protection; then, when Satan does get at us, we understand that the sovereignty of God has allowed it.
2. **FACTS:** Own up to the reality of your broken-down walls. Most Christians go through their day without taking a moment to examine the walls around them, which now have holes. As I stated earlier, these holes in the walls are a result of the erosion that occurred by allowing the enemy to infiltrate their minds. Most of the time, we are responsible for tearing down the walls God built to protect us.
 3. **INVENTORY:** Be willing to do a self-examination of the condition of your soul. Paul himself said, *“Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith”* (2 Cor. 13:5). Self-examination is a responsibility given to us that we often ignore.
 4. **PRAYER:** Reject independence, and rebuild from the knees up, which is a critical point. In our next chapter, I will devote the entire chapter to discussing the power God releases through a dedicated commitment to communicating with Him.

FINAL NOTE

One of my favorite men of church history is A.W. Tozer, who said: *“Every farmer knows the hunger of the wilderness, that hunger which no modern farm machinery, no improved agricultural methods can quite destroy. No matter how well-prepared the soil, how well-kept the fences, or how carefully painted the buildings are, let the owner neglect his prized and valued acres for a while, and they will again revert to the wilds and be swallowed by the jungle or the wasteland. The bias of nature is toward the wilderness, never toward the fruitful field.”*

Whatever is left to itself will return to the state upon which it was before redemption. In Tozer's illustration, those lush fields willing to produce fruit for the farmer but left unattended would revert to the same condition before the farmer began to till the land. The same is true for Christians—we will return to flesh on flesh.

The Christian mind must be renewed daily—all day. When left to itself, the self will dominate and rule. Yes, even an authentic born-again Christian can erode into a liberal and lukewarm mind—a mind that functions like an unsaved person. So, what's the answer? Release Christ's mind from within your mind. You and I can never trust our minds. They are self-governed, willful, and driven to be independent. Having Christ's mind in you is not a poetic expression but a fact. By learning to release His mind, your mind will fade into the dark corners of depravity where it belongs.



CHAPTER SIX

Building From The Kness Up

“Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews. He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria and said, ‘What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones?’ Now Tobiah the Ammonite was near him, and he said, ‘Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!’ Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity. Do not forgive their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out before You, for they have demoralized the builders. So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to

work. Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on and that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry. All of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it. But we prayed to our God, and because of them, we set up a guard against them day and night.”
Nehemiah 4:1-9

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

- † Covenant Marriage equals covenant prayers.
- † Believers who are desensitized to Satan lose every battle.
- † Approaching Satan Biblically is the key to a victorious Christian life.
- † True Spiritual warfare is eternal; it is not an earthly thing but purely warring with principalities of the air, which we cannot see.
- † The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God from within us; it is not just a written book in front of us. When we receive Jesus Christ into our lives, we receive the Word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword through the very life of Jesus Christ Himself.
- † Nehemiah’s “brick” is today’s work ethic.

As soon as Nehemiah began the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, the enemy attacked. Sanballat was not only a thorn in Jerusalem’s flesh but Nehemiah’s as well. Once Nehemiah began to observe the attacks, Sanballat asked this: *“What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day?”*

These workers were next to worthless when it came to rebuilding with excellence. Nehemiah certainly had a huge challenge on his hands. The evidence was in what Tobiah said: *“Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down.”*

We can't understand the enormous challenge that Nehemiah faced. The Jews in Jerusalem at that time were lazy and irresponsible when caring for their own. Due to Nehemiah's evaluation, it was obvious to him that the local Jews were lazy—sitting back and allowing the walls to fall that were erected to protect them. The odds of Nehemiah counting on quality workers were next to none.

Work ethic is a major issue within our church today. Following directions from authoritative leaders is next to impossible for modern-day workers. If they don't command themselves, simply put, they don't do the work. Overall, the body of Christ is sick, lazy, and stubborn. Each one defaults to a position of putting the workload on the leader. What is a leader to do? Pray covenant prayers before the Living God. Only God can strike a match and put some heat under His people; He has always been creative in finding ways to do that.

COVENANT MARRIAGE

The perfect description of Covenant Marriage is best described in the book of Revelation. Nehemiah prayed covenant prayers, although it was through the Old Covenant; however, the meaning, purpose, and description are found in Genesis to Revelation.

I believe the ordained reason for creation, the Old Covenant (Old Testament), the New Covenant (New Testament), and the book of Revelation, was given to us to secure a Bride for God the Father's Son, Jesus. God the Father gave John the heartbeat of why He created the earth, allowed the fall of man, delivered a Redeemer, and offered Covenant Marriage to all those who received the indwelling life of Christ by Salvation through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

You must understand these two types of Covenant Marriages. The first is the New Covenant Marriage represented in Heaven, the only anointed marriage system God supports. The second is marriage certificates fabricated or established by the

governing laws of nations—a modality proved by a license required by a state or country along with the signature of an ordained church leader.

One of the misnomers of governed marriages is that God supports all marriages sealed by the governing state or nation; He does not. If He did, it would erase the ordinances of New Covenant Marriage. Plus, all current legal marriages between dogs and their masters, adult/minor marriages, same-sex marriages, and other culturally friendly marriages would be ordained or accepted by God. That would be heresy. God only sustains and supports Covenant Marriage in the Old and New Testaments.

DESENSITIZATION

Satan has successfully used the world and its influences to bring a light-hearted attitude and mindset regarding the kingdom of darkness, which was the exact case with the Jews Nehemiah was responsible for overseeing. As for today, just look at the enormous volumes of books, movies, video games, T-shirts, music, toys, television, advertisements, the internet, fashion, jewelry, and silly jesting; we are bombarded with whatever we desire! Today, all worldly influences are leading us to anti-authority, anti-work ethic, and anti-Jesus Christ. The results leave the masses with broken-down walls of country, Church, and individual lives, precisely what Nehemiah was up against, with the Jews continuing to be influenced by the beliefs and practices of Old Babylon. Satan is about desensitizing God's people toward him and the influences and mandates that God puts before them.

The callous view that the world has about Satan and his role in man's sin is a subtle but a tragic attack on God's divine creation—His blessed children. The enemy of this world sees that the world, his domain, laughs off his actions with indifference. Always remember that this callousness is the enemy's most powerful tool in defusing God's serious plan of redemption. Christians should never entertain crude jokes, purchase degrading media products, or lightheartedly support

Satan. Also, believers must exercise care in not assigning all their wrongdoings as Satan's responsibility. We must, with Biblical insight, understand the limited power of Satan and his kingdom. Oppression and bondage are no joking matter.

APPROACHING SATAN BIBLICALLY

The key to the believer's emphasis on spiritual warfare must be based on a biblical approach to the subject. Subjective feelings, emotional desires, and genuine sincerity are not sufficient weaponry against the enemy who laughs in the face of one's intent. He yields no ground to emotion or sincerity, even if you use Jesus's name. He retreats only from the authority and power given to the Christians through their union with the Lord Jesus Christ and the absolute Truth of the Word of God.

If I were to give you a sharp two-edged sword and a butter knife, which would you use to fight an assailant? That's a dumb question, right? I don't think so. Your logical side would choose the sharp two-edged sword; however, we are essentially using a butter knife to war against an enemy who slings a ball and chain when we do not use the Word of God to fight him off.

Ephesians 6:17 tells us this: *"Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."*

Satan hates the New Covenant, which is the fulfillment and release of the condemnation of the Old Covenant. Furthermore, he hates New Covenant prayers.

Here's a sample of a New Covenant Prayer: *"Dear Lord Jesus, I have sinned before You. I know that I am covered in the power and authority of Your holy Name. While I admit I have committed this sin, I simply ask You to cause me to accept the forgiveness You provided for me many years ago."* In using the Old Testament style or the New Testament style with a mixture

of the law, people will say this prayer by begging God for His forgiveness when He has already provided it.

We have two primary offensive weapons against Satan: the Word of God, primarily the New Covenant, and the power of prayer released via the Holy Spirit who lives within us. When we combine these two, we have the most intimidating weapon known to the enemy. The enemy knows he's been "had" when a man or woman of God masters the art of using the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

Even though Nehemiah was bound to the Old Covenant, he used it to maximize his ability to combat Jerusalem's enemies, which worked. Why? In the Old Testament, God used the law to fulfill His ordained mission with His people, while in the New Testament, Jesus fulfilled the law by placing full responsibility upon Himself. Then He put the Holy Spirit within authentic Christians to enact the same power to ward off the enemy of His Bride. I pray that you are beginning to see our critical need for the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit released through prayer.

The Word of the Spirit, God's Word, is living and active. The sword that Nehemiah commanded his people to use is the Old Testament parallel of the New Testament Sword of the Spirit. In Nehemiah's story, the brick is the perfect symbol of the New Testament depiction of work ethic, the authentic Jews, and today's Christians' greatest weakness and challenge. What I am imparting to you today is the life-giving words from the mouth of the Living God. Use God's Word and live; it is that simple. Use our own words and die—minimally, fail.

Hebrews 4:12 says, *"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* Don't tell me that the Word of God is not powerful and active with the ability to pierce through the edges of darkness.

TRUE WARFARE IS ETERNAL

The Word is eternal, just as God Himself is eternal. Just as God is omnipotent (all-powerful), His Word has all the needed power to defeat the enemy and accomplish His will. Just as God is immutable, the Word of God will never change. Just as our Lord is omnipresent, His Word is always there and ready to be used in every situation. Just as God is holy, so His Word is holy. The bottom line is this: *“The word of God is living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword.”* The enemy hates hearing it. Jesus used it to fight off temptation, so why shouldn't we? We can't survive without it.

The Word has the power to penetrate the life of every being who hears it, including the enemy. The Word is to do corrective surgery within the soul, spirit, thoughts, attitudes, and body of all those who hear it, which is the secret of its power against the enemy. As it is read or heard, the Word can penetrate, cleanse, and change the lives of those who embrace it as Truth. Therefore, it cuts away at the grip of the enemy. There is nothing more powerful, and there is no substitute to accomplish such a mission when coming against the enemy; even Jesus, the Son of God, used the written Word to fight Satan in the wilderness. What worked for the Son of the Living God will certainly do no less for us.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **COVENANT:** Understanding the Covenant is the secret to power. If you use the law to try to come against the enemy, you will be powerless. But if you use the Spirit of the Living God, the Holy Spirit who lives within you, you will have success.
2. **THE WORD:** Using God's Word (the sword) is our weapon of warfare.
3. **HOLY SPIRIT:** Releasing the Holy Spirit is the power within the weapon—now, just put that in your mind. You have a sword, the Word of Truth,

and the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit gets ahold of that sword, you can be sure there will be a success.

4. **DESENSITIZED:** Never underestimate the Devil; he is alive, active, and alert.

FINAL NOTE

Luke 4:1-3 says, *“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.’”*

The importance of doctrinal Truth and doctrinal praying is given to us by God to use daily. Doctrine, God’s unchanging Truth, is mighty in defeating our enemies. As Christians, this Truth must go deep into our hearts, which will only come about as we understand God’s Holy Word and then use that Word aggressively in our lives by releasing the Holy Spirit from within us.

Nehemiah’s Old Testament model of praying was given to us to embrace New Covenant praying. Nehemiah was a man of prayer because he had the heart of a cupbearer. He was a perfect blend of prayer and action. As for me personally, he is the model that I operate from daily.

Prayer without action is impotent. Those who lead or follow must place a high priority on New Covenant praying. There are four reasons this is so important:

1. **Prayer makes us wait.**
2. **Prayer converts our vision to the vision of Christ within us.**
3. **Prayer quiets our hearts.**
4. **Prayer activates authentic faith.**

Jesus is a specialist in the field of leadership and following of God-given authorities. He delights in accomplishing what we cannot. It is His proof that we are authentically born-again.

However, He awaits our cry of dependence. When He sees a soul passionately reaching for *“not I, but Christ,”* He is quick to release Himself through the believer.

Like Nehemiah being quick to call for help—a kind of help far beyond his understanding and certainly beyond humanity, we need to do the same today. The difference is that Nehemiah did not have a Spirit from within to release; however, the authentic, born-again Christians today can release the True weapon against the enemy from within them.



CHAPTER SEVEN

The Frontline

“Thus in Judah, it was said, ‘The strength of the burden bearers is failing, yet there is much rubbish; And we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall.’ Our enemies said, ‘They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them and put a stop to the work.’ When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, ‘They will come up against us from every place where you may turn,’ then I stationed men in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears, and bows. When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people; ‘Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.’” Nehemiah 4:10-14.

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

- † Going to the frontline of battle is essential for victory. Hiding behind a bush or staying away from the battle will not accomplish the mission of winning the battle.
- † Understanding that the battle is real is critical. I'm always amazed how many people do not believe there is a spiritual realm that has drawn swords against both the Jews and the Christians; in fact, it's a bit shocking. Just because we can't see this world does not mean we're not going to have to engage in it.
- † Fearing the enemy is a confession that the enemy is more powerful than Christ. There are only two kinds of fear: the fear of the Lord thy God, which is the beginning of knowledge and holiness, and punitive fear, a fear that traps the person, so they reject the love of God. John told us, *"In fear there is punishment"* (1 John 4:18).
- † Never address the enemy personally. When I pray, I don't talk to Satan; I talk to my God. I do not reference Satan personally in any prayers I offer before God. If God wants to address him personally, that's His call.
- † Rebuilding our walls demands submission to God as the priority.

One of the most critical elements Nehemiah watched for was his workers losing the strength for the burden of rebuilding while observing that there was remaining devastation at hand. Since Nehemiah was in tune with the Jews who were unable to rebuild through their failing strength, he knew intuitively that their strength was to be found in the joy of the Lord. Furthermore, the average Jews were listening to the inner beliefs of Babylon. I call this the battle of the voices—the battle beyond the enemy fronting their walls. Remember, these Jews had been in bondage to Babylon for over a generation. Therefore, the Babylonian beliefs and practices were embedded into how many of them functioned daily.

The entire time Nehemiah's workers were rebuilding, the enemy was not far off mocking their efforts and the efforts of God. Knowing this, Nehemiah stationed warriors at the parts of the wall that were in the process of being rebuilt. After these warriors were in their place, Nehemiah quickly noticed the fear on their faces. What did he tell them? *“Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”*

The wisdom of God in Nehemiah implored the weak Jews to focus on the might of the Lord, which would work through them. Then he reminded them that the battle was for the Lord God and their brothers, sons, daughters, wives, and houses. That sealed the deal. Energy filled them, and they began to guard the openings with the power of God and the strength that came from protecting what was theirs.

THE FRONTLINE

Whenever we go to the frontlines where the enemy lives and breathes, he is bound to try to chase us away. Do not submit to his deceptive ideas and lies: there is no time, this level of combat isn't necessary, these are only words, we can put this off because we already have too many things to do, we're tired or too sick, we are already struggling with worries, doubts, and fears that will prevent us from completing our pathway to deliverance. We should push through it all and respond like warriors. That, of course, is done by rejecting the mockery and lies that Nehemiah and the Jews realized.

Some people experience terrifying feelings of guilt or terrifying spells of panic and depression, which I call oppression in many cases. If any of these symptoms paralyze you from remaining on the frontlines, you will need a spiritual mentor—men with men, women with women who understand the balance of warfare. They must pray over you and often stand with you at the wall. Remember, fear is the fire from the dragon's mouth; it is his primary tool of intimidation. It may scorch a few hairs but don't worry; it's only hot air. And, as I

said, never address Satan personally; do not talk to him. Also, avoid becoming preoccupied with Satan and his domain.

Have you ever wondered why people are intrigued with movies, video games, and music based on darkness? One of the games that the enemy plays is in creating an unhealthy fascination with his work. Many people are caught up in giving more attention and credit to the enemy than they are to God. I call that a demon behind every bush mentality. It is common for those struggling with Satanic affliction to be preoccupied with the enemy due to their level of temptation, obsession, and negative thoughts; however, one must take special caution to keep their eyes upon Jesus. *“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”* (Col. 3:2). Well-trained Christians in the Word and Spirit will not fear Satan or his schemes; they only glance at his works long enough to readjust their plans of defense.

THE BATTLE IS REAL

The Christian is engaged in a spiritual battle even if they ignore that it is real. Satan and his spiritual forces are on the battle line, waiting for us daily. A believer does not choose his engagement in this battle; it awaits him each day, and there is no way to get around it. If you are saved and have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are in, whether you like it or not! Be alert and sober, for your enemy, Satan, roams around on the earth seeking whom he may devour, including you.

Are you battle-ready? If not, don't panic; this book will equip and ready you to take on the challenges Satan and his demonic influences have to offer. Be a Nehemiah-type. If you are clueless, go to the ONE who isn't—the Lord your God.

Believers are being awakened to the reality that the fight in rebuilding their walls is not against flesh and blood but the powers of darkness and the principalities of the air (Ephesians chapter 6). Many Christians today are deceived into thinking

that what they see is what they battle when it is the opposite of that; it is in what you don't see that you battle.

As the Lord draws near, we can be assured that our battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil will intensify. It might be wise for you to ask where that world, the flesh, and devil stuff come from; it is exactly what Ephesians's passage reveals — *"in powers of darkness."*

The worldly idea that pop psychology will increase your ability to face the enemy is a madness method that most refuse to realize. Stop turning toward drugs, medication, self-ideas, and worldly fables called *"philosophies of men."* God calls each of His children to call upon Him, and He will deliver according to His divine Truth and will.

If God's sovereignty drops His hedge of protection temporarily by chance, accept His reasons; it is typically for training in spiritual warfare. Qualified leaders in Christ understand the importance of allowing the enemy to win a few blows to build the young warrior as he applies what he has been taught. Knowledge and training are mute if they are not tested.

FEAR OF FRONTING THE ENEMY

Fear of fronting the enemy has held most believers back from boldly going before God's throne regarding the enemy's temptations and afflictions. Remember, Satan could care less about you; he is after God. God's greatest servants have always shared an appreciation for the magnificent power of the Holy Spirit through prayer and the complete victory over Satan's kingdom available to all believers through the mighty Person and work of Jesus Christ who lives within them.

The book of Ephesians (New Testament) is the handbook on Spiritual warfare and prayer. Get to know this handbook.

The believer's emphasis in prayer must be upon a biblical and sound doctrinal approach to the subject. The Word of God recognizes that we encounter the three faces of Satan: the

world, the flesh, and the devil. When a person becomes born-again, their relationship to everything in the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional world completely changes. Since a believer is a citizen of heaven, he is given the power to face the enemy toe-to-toe, if necessary. Scary? Well, look at it this way: either we face him head-on, or he will consistently and constantly be nipping at our heels, eating away at our lives little by little.

To resist the limited power of the enemy, one must submit to God's unlimited power from within and then "*resist the devil, and he will flee;*" it is a promise given to us by God (James 4:7).

Because of our newfound relationship with God, all believers become marked targets for attacks from God's enemy, understanding that while we tire, he is relentless in his attacks. Believers must embrace the Truth that the Father has given them a defense system—the power of the Holy Spirit, our Sword of defense. Furthermore, we must not depend upon feelings and experiences as evidence of our being strong enough to pray. The power and ability to pray boldly are based on objective facts, not subjective feelings. The power of prayer is to be appropriated by faith and faith alone.

FIVE EFFECTUAL PRAYERS

1. **Personal reflection and confession.** It's not wrong to confess your sins before Christ in a New Covenant way; that's honesty. You do lay your sins at Jesus's feet, but don't ask Him to forgive you; claim the forgiveness He already gave to you many years ago.
2. **Praise, thanksgiving, and adoration.**
3. **Align yourself with the New Covenant.** When we pray, the New Covenant accepts what already exists for us, whereas Old Covenant-type prayers beg God for new things—a vast difference.

4. **Prayers of supplication.** This is when you plead before God for your children, spouse, or neighbor. He loves to hear our supplications.
5. **Finish your prayer time with worship**—offering Him affirmation, which He then turns around and offers back to you—the same affirmation already true about you.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **FRONTLINE:** It is not a place for fear but rather an attitude of victory.
2. **BATTLE:** Ignoring the reality of battle welcomes defeat.
3. **FEAR:** Fear is the enemy's initial goal of an attack. He bases everything he does on fear.
4. **IDENTITY:** Knowing your identity in Christ is your strength to endure the battle.

FINAL NOTE

There are few areas of life in which we live or work where we do not come ready-equipped to do the work we were enrolled to do; however, most Christians today do not step into the job assignments given to them by their Spiritual leaders. Why is this? Folks, it is simple. Money! If we aren't paid to do a task, typically, we don't do them.

Years ago, I asked a young man who rarely completed the assignments I gave to him if I paid him \$500 a month to honor and do the tasks would he do them? Without hesitation, he said, "Absolutely!" All these years later, I am watching him implode into a wealthy man who lacks honor in spiritual authority.

One of my mentors, Hudson Taylor, once said, "*It is possible to move men through God by prayer alone.*" While he was acute in his statement, the fact is, as a leader or a follower, you will come to a place where those in authority over you are beyond your self-power to resist. You see, the power of God is

manifested and demonstrated through God's ordained leaders, so when believers become lazy in honoring and obeying God's governing authorities, they do this deplorable deed unto God. Jesus even said this as well: *"To the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me"* (Matt.25:40). Not only that, but their walls will be filled with holes, or should I say doors for the enemy to come and dine at their table.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Motivating The Workers

Motivating the Workers

“When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work. From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows, and the breastplates; and the captains were behind the whole house of Judah. Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon. As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at this side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me. I said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, ‘The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another. At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.’ So we carried on the work with half of them holding spears from dawn until the stars appeared. At that time, I also said to the people, ‘Let each

man with his servant spend the night within Jerusalem so that they may be a guard for us by night and a laborer by day.' So neither I, my brothers, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us removed our clothes, each took his weapon even to the water." Nehemiah 4:15-23

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

- † Upgrading the plan of defense is often necessary. As we read the book of Nehemiah, we discover this on several occasions. Leaders may be unmovable in their leadership style, but they need to be very movable when it comes to God adjusting the plans.
- † God always makes use of existing authority.
- † The human norm is that most are annoyed by immovable authority figures, particularly in our culture today.
- † Waiting on God's response is the Golden Key, not just in our culture today. But even back through the ages, when people asked for something, they expected you to respond immediately and fulfill their every desire. There's a special place in God's heart for those who wait upon the Lord.
- † God honors a Godly man's plan—IF directed by the Lord.

Our passage reveals a God-sized doctrine. God had frustrated the enemy's plan—*"then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work."* It was not the efforts of the Jewish workers who intimidated the enemy; it was God alone who supernaturally frustrated the minds of the enemy, causing them to retreat, much like the story of God hardening the heart of Pharaoh.

A simple doctrine: God controls the minds of men; He drops their guard one day and fortifies it the next. This leadership method ultimately frustrates those who come against God's plan. When the enemy believes they have the upper hand, they

tend to relax their defenses. Letting the enemy think they have the upper hand is the moment to advance.

UPGRADING THE PLAN

Our story with Nehemiah shifts. When he started the rebuilding, he divided the men of Jerusalem into two groups: one group held a sword, and the other had a brick in each hand. Nehemiah upgraded his plan, stating, *“As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me.”* Quality leaders are always ready to adjust their plans to advance the work. Since Nehemiah’s workers were far from one another, the trumpet was used to unite the workers to one single location, meaning that war was upon them. Not only was this a solid plan, but it is also the same method God uses in Revelation’s book, which is the eternal symbol that God will fight for us. Nehemiah had confidence because God promised to fight for them by using all the tools, skills, and leadership reinforcements that Nehemiah had put in place.

EXISTING AUTHORITY

One of Solomon’s proverbs reveals God’s method of controlling existing authorities: *“The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes”* (Proverbs 21:1).

The Hebrew word for “channels” is *pathway or ditches*. The English expression of the original text is: like *irrigation canals carrying water is the heart of the king in Jehovah’s hand*, meaning every authority that exists—past, present, and future, are irrigation ditches to direct God’s plan toward His conclusive results, which applies to a Pharaoh or a Nehemiah. Both were used to accomplish God’s eschatological plans. We should find great comfort in this immovable doctrine. The bottom line is that God is not intimidated by ruthless leaders, nor does He change His plan for Godly leaders. Because all authority is in the hand of God, He causes it to be bent

wherever He determines most beneficial for His eternal timeline.

ANNOYED BY IMMOVABLE AUTHORITY

The story of Nehemiah perfectly illustrates the Truth revealed in Proverbs 21:1. Nehemiah worked directly under a man who just happened to be the king of Persia. I have studied Monarchy systems most of my adult life, and one common factor stands out in my research—kings are not easily moved—few change their plans. Even though Nehemiah was influential, he dared not appeal to his heart’s desire until the king asked it of him. In this, Nehemiah watched God channel the heart of his king to flow in the direction of the mission God put within Nehemiah. God, without question, placed the king in the palm of Nehemiah’s hand with unwavering respect and honor toward this ungodly king. Proverbs 21:1 was actively demonstrated for Nehemiah and us in this short dialogue between Nehemiah and his king. It’s amazing!

Do you have difficulty respecting your pastor, boss, and political leaders, or worse, submitting to them? Well, don’t get your feathers in a fluff. If, and I mean if, you believe the scriptures I teach today, you should believe that God can and will use these leaders to channel the flow of His will into your hands, even if they are ruthless leaders. I have seen it this many times throughout history.

I became friends with a king. In the end, we called each other “best friends.” It all started with a professional relationship I had with the president of his country. To enact the plan I offered to his country, I implored the president to introduce me to the supervising king of the thirteen kingdoms within his country. While seeing how the plan would benefit his reputation and leadership, he honored my request. Over the next several years, I learned to appeal to this king using monarchy protocol. Within a short period, the king requested I join his royal chamber as a *personal advisor*, which I did. Within a month, he commissioned me as a member of the royal

family household. Shortly after this commissioning, I was assigned as the ambassador between the United States and the thirteen kingdoms, and I carry this status today. The faith-based plan imparted to me by God is now actively developing and growing in this country. I share this to offer an up-to-date example of how this God-sized doctrine works today. I certainly am one who experientially knows that God does not adjust His doctrines for modern times; each one remains immovable and congruent.

WAITING | THE GOLDEN KEY

We already know what happened after Nehemiah prayed to the Lord—not much, at least not right away. If you understand the Hebrew calendar, God did not deliver the king’s heart into Nehemiah’s hands for four long months. That’s a lot of waiting! Most of us have that waiting experience every day of our lives. We must remember that when we request things before God, we pray into an eternal timeline—a Sovereign plan. As God sees fit to release His answer into humanity’s timeline, He does, not one second short or beyond His eternal timeline. So, we wait—sometimes, as in my case, for years. The key, however, is remaining active and progressive in the plans given to us by God unless He tells you to do nothing. A prayer warrior quickly learns the patience of waiting while working.

I’ve been involved in international affairs more than I care to admit. I can tell you this: Nehemiah is my number one Old Testament hero and example for providing a method of honoring kings, queens, presidents, and dignitaries. I’ve been blessed with many stories that sustain Nehemiah’s vision-casting in me. I internally appreciate Nehemiah’s honesty, integrity, and strategic methods; I use them daily. Anyone who knows me well knows my relentless focus on the importance of honoring all governing authorities. I have God to thank for that, mainly through the story He gave us through Nehemiah. In my mind, I respectfully disregard the attitudes and reactions of governing authorities. A simple fact to remember is that if God doesn’t need our plans to advance Him, our plans

will remain dead in the water—none of them will be channeled into the eternal timeline. In the meantime, I will do what I do best: honor all those in authority and the hands of the living God who manages them.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **UPGRADE:** Do not be afraid to change your plans if God directs you.
2. **USE OF AUTHORITY:** God uses all authority to accomplish His plans. There are no plans that any leader has, whether wicked or righteous, that God is not in complete control.
3. **IMMOVABLE AUTHORITY:** Remember, it's a quality, not necessarily a weakness. If they seem to be leaders who cannot be broken or bent, leave that in God's hands.
4. **WAIT:** All eternal prayer requests come in God's timeline, not ours.

FINAL NOTE

God honors a plan, but we must be willing to let Him direct our steps. God loves order and organization; most people don't. Why? It feels like the Law. Before Nehemiah entered the king's chamber, he already had the plan in his mind; not only that, but he also had organized how to carry it out. I function the same way. Most authentic leaders do their thinking, homework, and planning before putting themselves in front of an authority figure; this way, if the authority figure wants to hear the plan, it is on the tip of their tongue.

One of my fleshly weaknesses is engaging in dialogue with critics when they don't have a better plan to propose. Honestly, I find it annoying. From my mindset, we should keep our mouths shut in the presence of authorities if we do not have a well-planned solution to propose. Non-solution complaints are likened to *"what's done in the bathroom should stay in the bathroom."* I rarely spend God's time with these

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kinds of critics. I respectfully listen, file the good stuff, and then move on.

Attempting to manage ambivalent people is a leader's greatest challenge. While it is tempting to step back from such people, we must pursue the weak and the strong.



CHAPTER NINE

Stopping The Oppression

Stopping the Oppression

“Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. For there were those who said, ‘We, our sons and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain that we may eat and live.’ There were others who said, ‘We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses that we might get grain because of the famine.’ Also there were those who said, ‘We have borrowed money for the king’s tax on our fields and our vineyards. Now our flesh is like the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold, we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are forced into bondage already, and we are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others.’ Then I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, ‘You are exacting usury,

each from his brother!’ Therefore I held a great assembly against them. I said to them, ‘We according to our ability have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; now would you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us?’ Then they were silent and could not find a word to say. Again I said, ‘The thing which you are doing is not good; should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? And likewise, I, my brothers, and my servants are lending them money and grain. Please, let us leave off this usury. Please, give back to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money and of the grain, the new wine and the oil that you are exacting from them.’ Then they said, ‘We will give it back and will require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say.’ So I called the priest and took an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. I also shook out the front of my garment and said, ‘Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.’ And all the assembly said, ‘Amen!’ And they praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise.” Nehemiah 5:1-13

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

- † The importance of listening to the outcry of the people. There is an old technique used throughout political and church leadership when you want to captivate the people: earn their respect, get them on your side, and then go after those oppressing them. Find a solution, deliver it, and let them eat the fruit of that solution. You will have these people on your side until death parts them.
- † When God enacts faith—use it to the max. People cannot enact faith, but a leader must give us faith. Therefore, people have faith leaders worldwide, but when God enacts faith, we literally have the faith of Jesus Christ living inside of us.
- † Shaking the dust off your garment and getting back to work. This is not the same as what we’ve been told

about shaking off the dust of our sandals. We'll talk about the two different kinds referenced in Nehemiah.

- † Fighting and solving oppression make happy workers. A happy worker equals a quality leader.
- † Making use of lazy workers by having them take out the trash. Starting from the bottom up is always a good plan.

Can you imagine hearing the cry of a desperate soul and then walking away without helping them? Honestly, I carry a greater burden for those who do this than those suffering. We live in a world today where the lion's share does precisely that—both in the spiritual and earthly world. You know the gig—turning your head to avoid the messiness of involving yourself in trauma and pain. We've all done it.

Allow me to deliberate a true story. When I was six years old, I played with my best friend. I sent him across the street to get something from his home. He got on his trike and headed down the steep driveway. His mother and I saw the trauma unfold at the same time. A car was racing down the street, headed toward my friend. Before his mother and I could reach him, the car ran over him. By the time I reached the end of the driveway, I had witnessed the car tire pop his head, which resulted in his blood drenching my body. After the firemen picked me up out of the street and put me on the curb, I repetitively said aloud, *"I killed my best friend."* This traumatic event stayed with me throughout my life. While the sorrow I had for my friend was severe enough, the agony I saw on the face of his father and mother left a more significant mark on my conscience, even more than the death of my friend. The Lord used this trauma to cement my passion for freeing the oppressed. Without question, the Lord implanted in me the beginning of my compelling pursuit of freeing the oppressed that day. It is from this pursuit that the subtitle of our ministry is titled: Compassion in Action.

THE OUTCRY OF THE PEOPLE

Nehemiah stepped into a big mess. When he heard the tremendous outcry of the people, he most likely reflected on his childhood oppression committed by the Babylonians. Because he grew up under the oppressive nature of Babylon, he understood it. In my view, I believe God used this memory to establish him as the perfect candidate to free God's people. The king of Babylon's basic method of madness for the Jews was keeping them on the edge of starvation. Intuitively Nehemiah knew that providing food was a top priority. He used every ounce and resource available to him, including money from his own pocket, to solve this need. Nehemiah knew that his warriors would be weak if their tummies were not filled. He also resolved this crisis by buying back the vineyards and farms they lost to the wealthy Jews. Finally, and most importantly, Nehemiah bought back the wives, sons, daughters, and warriors sold into slavery.

The prospects for the poor people among the exiles who returned were deplorable. They had been deficient in rains and, therefore, lacking in harvests. They had mortgaged their lands to their wealthy brethren and sold their children to pay the royal taxes and procure means of sustenance. The rich had taken advantage of their necessities by oppressing them with grievous acts requiring immediate payment of their debts. When Nehemiah heard of it, his attitude was that of standing against the wrong, and in his way, he began to protest by using dependence on God for support. In a great assembly, he fronted the abusers with their acts of selfishness and greed. Nehemiah pleaded with the wealthy Jews to forgive them of their debts and return the property to the starving Jews. In addition, he commanded them to return to God and stop looking after their selfish interests.

GOD ENACTS FAITH

This history shows us that when God acts, faith stamps its character on the people surrounding it. Nehemiah acted with such faith. Nehemiah's faith activated the faith of all the Jews

in Jerusalem—poor and rich. The Jews who had so long left Jerusalem desolate were challenged to the core by their bloodline rights and were motivated to recommence the work of fixing what they had left desolate. However, Judah was discouraged when Nehemiah placed their sins and consequences in front of them: laziness and ignorance. Nehemiah's faith brought out the perseverance which characterizes true faith when the work is of God, be it ever so poor in appearance. His job was to shift their focus from self to the work of God. By his faith in God and a supernatural miracle of heart—Nehemiah's immovability, the people were ready to work and fight simultaneously. Authentic faith always identifies God and his people from the inside out. This becomes a spring of Living Water for all concerned, which was the case with Nehemiah. In times of difficulty, despair, and hopelessness, faith does not always show itself in the magnificence of the final product. Still, in moving forward while embracing difficulties, the love of God carries us across the line of victory.

SHAKING THE DUST OFF YOUR GARMENT

You probably have heard the phrase, *“Shake the dust off your sandals and move on.”* The Old Testament statement that Nehemiah made was set up in the form of what would happen to the people who did not keep their promise to free Jerusalem and restore them to God's leadership style.

Nehemiah shook out the front of his garment and said, *“Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied”* (Nehemiah 5:13).

Shaking the dust out of his garment was a symbol of using every resource to advance and complete the mission God gave Nehemiah to be successful. It would require every possession, belief, and worker to accomplish the task. Now, the real punch in this whole thing was if there were betrayers of this plan God

gave to Nehemiah, they too would be shaken off the garment of God.

Looking at our culture today, how many of us would apply Nehemiah's mandate to cause the success of the Lord's plans in a church or ministry? My guess would be not many. Using the illustration of "*shaking off*" what is on the garment. Could this correlate with what Revelation reveals about those who do not accept God's plan or God's leader, Jesus Christ, therefore shaking them off the garment of the Living God? I say there is a good chance of it.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR STUDY

1. **OPPRESSION:** Stand against all forms of oppression; it's critical and starts at the beginning of your work, which you must maintain throughout all the days of the project.
2. **CRYING OUT:** Listen carefully to the voices that cry out for help. A good leader has one ear turned toward his workers and the other ear turned toward his authority. Put the two of these together, and you have perfect hearing.
3. **IMMOVABLE FAITH:** Absolutely nothing is accomplished without faith in Christ. Our faith in Christ is given to us as a gift; therefore, the faith that we do have is Christ's faith.
4. **SHAKE IT OFF:** Be willing to give all for the mission of Christ while warning those who refute Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in life may one day be "shaken off" the garment of God.

FINAL NOTE

Nehemiah knew that he and the people of Jerusalem needed to do the work by using God's exact plans; by faith, he embraced this. He implored the workers to function the same way even if they did not have faith because they could depend upon his faith. Furthermore, the people needed to accept that Nehemiah had no intention of associating himself with those

who would seek to stop what God had ordered him to do. He was a firm believer in “task first, relationship second”—a modality that Jesus Christ Himself used. While this wounded the weak people, God's plan of rebuilding needed to take place. Jesus demonstrated this when a messenger came and told Him that Lazarus was dying. His reply? “I’m about My Father’s business.” And as you know, Lazarus died while Jesus was tending to His Father’s business. Jesus understood that nothing should get in the way of His Father’s assigned task.



CHAPTER TEN

Nehemiah's Promotion

Nehemiah's Promotion

“Moreover, from the day that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, for twelve years, neither I nor my kinsmen have eaten the governor’s food allowance. But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants domineered the people. But I did not do so because of the fear of God. I also applied myself to the work on this wall; we did not buy any land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover, there were at my table one hundred and fifty Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. Now that which was prepared for each day was one ox and six choice sheep, also birds were prepared for me; and once in ten days, all sorts of wine were furnished in abundance. Yet for all this, I did not demand the governor’s food allowance, because the servitude was heavy on this

people. Remember me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.” Nehemiah 5:14-19

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

1. Discovering what to do in a “crunch.” Crunch time is often the time when leaders tend to hesitate. It shows what that leader is made of—the proof in the pudding.
2. When all else fails, read the instruction manual; for us, that’s the Word of God. God has spent most of the Bible detailing how the people are to live. Today, that’s Christ Jesus. During Nehemiah’s time, it was the old covenant and the words that God had mankind record for the people.
3. The top ten errors Nehemiah avoided. As I have studied leadership through the years, I have come up with ten items leaders should avoid. This is going to be an exciting part of our study
4. Replicating Nehemiah’s method of solving dilemmas. Where did he learn such things? Did he get it from God directly, or was it a part of the mentorship process he experienced while under the regional king?
5. Connecting Nehemiah’s methodologies to Christ and prophecy.

PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS, AND MORE PROBLEMS

In chapter five, we see that further problems arose, this time from within. If Satan can’t defeat you with his forces from without, he will seek to wreck you from the forces within—a common and predictable madness method Satan uses that works almost every time. The church’s greatest enemies are not the atheists or those godless forces outside the church, but statistics prove they are from the self-proclaimed Body members of Christ—factions of body-life hatred within the church. Usually, the thing behind it is jealousy, which rises in the church from greed and differing opinions of the end times,

and minimally occurs through self-as-God views of the Holy Scriptures. Tragically, infighting within the church sets the enemy up to destroy the protective walls from the inside out. You would think that the church would wake up to the fact that we are all one Body working together for one King, one Lord. But no, they work to destroy each other with their demonic wisdom, which is none other than a self-perceived interpretation of what God means by what God says. Tragically the church does not realize we should be working together for the cause of the indwelling life of Christ by rebuilding the walls surrounding the Body of Christ. The problem is that some haven't correctly identified the enemy or are functioning in the stupidity that Satan doesn't exist.

Our enemy isn't the church, opinionates of the Bible, or loved ones who betray us; the real issue is the spirit of the antichrist, who uses both real and fake body members to practice demonic doctrines. When we explore the warnings Jesus gave most of the seven churches, we find a common denominator; the enemy uses the same technique of attacking from without while embedding spies within. He uses fake Christians to create unsettling differing doctrines of what Jesus said and what His first generational leaders proclaimed during that time. The technique of attacking from the outside shifts the focus of the people so that the spies the enemy sends into the churches begin to create controversies, differing doctrines, and internal fighting.

James 3:13-15 communicates a compelling statement: *“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.”*

Self-interpretation is one of the leading causes of destroying local fellowships. I agree the pastor must keep his focus on the Word of God, and whatever comes out of the mouths of these pastors better be verified by the authentic Word. But when

many congregants find a weakness in their pastors, they start doing self-interpretation to combat the leader God put in place. The same modality took place during Nehemiah's time of commitment when fulfilling God's orders of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem and reactivating the faith of the Jews.

A golden secret of the spirit of deception is that Satan uses two modalities simultaneously: first, attacking the authentic believers externally, and second, attacking real-deal believers from within the church walls. In Nehemiah's case, that was within the walls of Jerusalem. Satan does this through the modality of the flesh, which remains in each of God's people.

AVOID THESE ERRORS

The ten graven errors (sins) Satan uses to tempt people to conduct a slow fade into a lukewarm mindset:

1. **Withholding Information:** The most common error in Christianity is Body members withholding critical information from their spiritual leaders. Spiritual leaders need data put on their desks in front of them. They need to know what the troubles are within the church, and they need to know the names behind the trouble. Body life members often keep this information away from the leaders. This information could involve sins, gossip, or motives that set the leader up for an attack. Thus, these members are used to destroy the pastor's authority. In the case of a ministry, it could be the ministry leaders God has appointed for that outreach.
2. **Not Making Time for Discipleship:** We live in a culture where we say, *"I can do it myself."* Yes, even within the Body of Christ. Most reach out to their authorities after the hidden matters backfire and take control of their minds. The key is to go to the Church's elders when the Spirit reveals is a problem. Sadly, this is a confession of putting

pressure on the discipler, the pastor, or the leader to clean up the mess they created. Fact: aftermath discipleship never works. The one who comes to them after the fact becomes disappointed because the pastor, teacher, or leader cannot fix their problems, forgetting that they are the ones who created the situation in the first place. Therefore, they detach, dump the leader, and move on.

3. **Being Too Hands Off:** Body members who don't go to work after being convicted of sin by the Spirit return to the sin that initially trapped them. Our me-me church members typically like growth materials; however, growth (faith) without action (works) is dead, fruitless, and impotent.
4. **Being Too Friendly:** The Word of God tells us very simplistically not to be friends with the world. Today, people want to be friends with everybody; however, James 4:4 tells us something entirely different. It says, *"You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?"* Many believers I have talked with didn't know that verse existed in the Bible, nor that it is one of the most pivotal chapters in the New Testament. It is where God reveals to the people why they quarrel and fight and how to preserve themselves from doing so; that is, do not be friends with the world.
5. **Failing To Be Organized in Christ:** Christ expects you to be organized in your day. Statistics reveal that we live in a lazy society, and this lazy society is the worst noted in world history. Lazy Body members are fruitless in fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ. They might be out there on the streets with picket signs about abortion, or anti-virus, or whatever the modality is of the day, but they are like salt that has lost its punch; they do not put the Gospel at the end of their videos, their articles, or their postings. The answer to this demise is simple: when you hear the voice of Christ, act

- immediately. A friend once told me, "*The sin of procrastination is satanism in action.*"
6. **Misunderstanding Authority:** The most frequent excuse abused by humanity is that if one does not understand the orders or guidelines of authority, it's okay to dump'em. However, it is the follower's responsibility to ask for clarification. Instead, most dump the authority like a scorpion in hand. How could Nehemiah possibly understand every thought and intention going on through the minds of all his workers? He could not. Plus, it was not his job. It was the workers' responsibility to ensure they were receiving the correct orders from Nehemiah.
 7. **Too Busy to Serve Your Leaders:** Can you imagine this being an issue during Nehemiah's governorship? It's almost ridiculous even to think. And Satan loves this one. All are under authority; that's a fact. While culture fades from this principle, it remains true. Spiritual leaders count on Body members to help accomplish their local mission. Members who are too busy for their church's objectives become the enemy of their fellowship.
 8. **Not Walking the Talk:** Christians, in general, are sick of hearing this spoken statement; it's too bad, though. But faith without action is dead; it's fake. True faith requires true works. Let's face it, talking about what you believe is much easier than living what He believes in you. So, what do most end up doing? They fall into hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the tool Satan uses to bring down the walls of protection. Key: if you are unwilling to walk what you're taught, keep your mouth shut. God deals seriously with false vows. If you need to learn a bit more about this, I challenge you to study chapter five of the book of Matthew.
 9. **Not Being Dependent:** Leadership 101 has this at the top of the list of threats in successfully

fulfilling a task. Effectiveness is solely dependent on those you can depend on. The fact is, everyone is a liar until they are grafted into a loyal, obedient, and dependent Person—Jesus Christ within you. Too harsh for you? Study 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John. These three books are too harsh for many believers to study. Not me. I find a balance between the law of the Spirit of Life, the believers' self-proclaimed beliefs, and the new covenant theology.

10. **Misunderstanding the Role of Being Christian:** Our role is NOT to guarantee salvation, be loved by God, or even grow in Christ; our role (calling) is to go into all nations and make disciples of Jesus Christ. This should be accomplished through the leadership of the fellowship you attend. If your fellowship is weak in this methodology, seek out a Christ-as-Life discipler. What we find in our church culture today is people who are indulgent in the elementary principles of the Gospel called *"the milk."* That milk is grace. Many of our people today are addicted to milk, so when you throw a *"T-bone steak"* in front of them (meat), they have no idea how to digest the true proteins of the Gospel.

GENEROUS LEADERS

Nehemiah was known for his generosity spiritually, psychologically, and financially. While it is the responsibility of a leader to have such qualities, sad to say, most selfishly take advantage of these leaders to be independent and to build their self-life. The Church is not the place to have your needs met. Is that shocking? Well, Christ is ordered by His Father to do that within you through your daily walk in Christ. Although the church is for building up the Body of Christ through instruction to advance the Gospel; however, today, it is all about meeting the needs of the attendees. Thus, authentic discipleship has faded into a culture-friendly missional movement that rubs in the face of Christ. The result? The Church is filled with a socialistic ideology of *"I don't have to*

work to eat,” translated as “I don’t have to work for the Church to be of the Church.” If this is true, these followers must explain this: “Faith without works is dead.” Again, translated as Christianity without works is fake Christianity.

COUNTING THE COST

As with all quality leaders, Nehemiah made sense of the basic needs for the prosperous task God gave him. He knew his responsibility was to use their weaknesses to advance a work ethic or task, which sounds like a paradox for most believers. It is not; it’s one of the secrets of leading people. You can read in Hebrews 13 how God used Paul’s weaknesses to advance the power of Christ within him. Nehemiah and Paul knew that it was their responsibility to use the people’s weaknesses to get things done. For the Old Testament believer, it was through the power of God; for the New Testament believer, it is from the power of Christ within them. As for the Jews working on the plan of Nehemiah, he knew using food was the basic motivating need; however, Nehemiah counted the cost before he started the project.

“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’”
Luke 14:28-30

God does not care about your reputation, but He does care about His reputation in you. The reputation of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the fuel He uses to advance the Gospel—to have people in the community, in the world, who believe you when you speak the Truth. Nehemiah did not care about his reputation, only that of his God. Remember, he lived by the Laws of God while fulfilling the directions God gave him.

Nehemiah reviewed the following:

1. He understood there was a famine in play. He was about to use the famine to accomplish one of the greatest works completed in the Old Testament.
2. The king extracted too many taxes. By Nehemiah being the cushion between the king, the people, and the authority given to Nehemiah, He could cut taxes.
3. Excessive interest rates were forcing Jews to sell everything. Because of the authority given to Nehemiah, he was able to put a gap between the people who were doing this to the Jews and the Jews who were placing it upon other Jews; they saved that money, time, and work ethic for the wall.
4. The people were not honoring God in their beliefs. This might be a mystery to some people. You would think that all the Jews within Jerusalem at that time were loyal to Judaism; they were not. Remember, they just came out of 70 years of bondage under the Babylonians, which is a little over a generation. The people, like Nehemiah, born in Babylonian practices, beliefs, and religions, were still functioning by Babylonian thought. Therefore, Nehemiah needed to set Ezra up to reignite the beliefs of Judaism. Nehemiah had a two-fold, two-side-to-the-coin mandate that he needed to re-energize. The first side was protecting Jerusalem—the Holy Motherland. The second was protecting themselves and believing what God said through the practices of Judaism.
5. The people were fearful, discouraged, and hopeless. This is a common thing that we've had to deal with throughout the ages of humanity. Fear is the number one tool Satan uses to unplug our actions. Discouragement is another leading factor involved with people deconstructing their faith.
6. Hopelessness makes you lazy. Most of the Jews were lazy and inactive. Once the enemy has you in

a lazy, inactive mode, Satan can come in from all sides of your life and paralyze you in fear. The bottom line was that the Jews were breaking the standard mandates of Judaism. While Nehemiah maintained the principle of calculating the cost of completing the assigned job, the people's habit was starting and stopping. When it was taxing their integrity, the rebuilding resulted in laziness.

PRINCIPLES OF OUR STUDY

1. **PROBLEMS:** Stand on solutions, not on complaints. People complain because of their flesh. People complain because God won't change His sovereign plan to match their feelings.
2. **AVOID ERRORS:** Stand against the modalities of the enemy. To stand against methods the enemy uses, you must be alert. You must look out to the horizon to see the enemy approaching externally and then turn around and look within the walls to see who within the Body of believers is creating complaints, controversies, or rebellion.
3. **GENEROSITY:** Refuse the temptation of abusing generosity—a common sin humanity practices. They put the whole responsibility on the leaders and less on the responsibility on building up the leaders—holding up the leaders' hands so that victory can be accomplished.
4. **THE COST:** Be willing to give it all for the mission of Christ. In Nehemiah's day, it was sure he required the people to give it all for the Lord their God—God the Father of Eternity.

FINAL NOTE

From the day Nehemiah was appointed governor in the land of Judah, he knew he had the responsibility of reporting to the earthly king; he had to state his progress and failures. Shortly after he finished the wall, in fifty-two days, he gave the king an

account of his success and how things stood in Judah. Furthermore, as with Christ, he used the weaknesses of the Jews to advance the mission assigned to him by the Living God.

Overall, it wasn't about the people but the prophetic end of God's will. From what is related here, the people always supplied the governor's table with bread and wine. The people were also greatly oppressed by the servants and officers of the governor. But during the 12 years Nehemiah had been with them, he refused a salary from the king. Can you imagine that? He paid for the expenses out of his own pocket. Having set such an example for the Jews, it was scandalous for their chiefs, priests, and nobles to oppress, afflict, and distress the people. Nehemiah's kindness forced the nobles, chiefs, and priests to follow his example. I can assure you they were unhappy about this, and since Nehemiah was their governor, they had to comply. But if not, it was time for the Jews to find another leader in another nation.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

Conspiracy Attack

Conspiracy Attack

“Now when it was reported to Sanballat, Tobiah, to Geshem the Arab, and to the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall, and that no breach remained in it, although at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates, then Sanballat and Geshem sent a message to me, saying, ‘Come, let us meet together at Chephirim in the plain of Ono.’ But they were planning to harm me. So I sent messengers to them saying, ‘I am going a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?’ They sent messages to me four times in this manner, and I answered them in the same way. Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same manner a fifth time with an open letter in his hand. In it was written, ‘It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel; therefore, you are rebuilding the wall. And you are to be their king, according to

these reports. You have also appointed prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem concerning you, "A king is in Judah!" And now it will be reported to the king according to these reports. So come now, let us take counsel together.' Then I sent a message to him saying, 'Such things as you are saying have not been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind.' For all of them are trying to frighten us, thinking, 'They will become discouraged with the work, and it will not be done.' But now, O God, strengthen my hands. When I entered the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined at home, he said, 'Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple for they are coming to kill you, and they are coming to kill you at night.' But I said, 'Should a man like me flee? And could one such as I go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.' Then I perceived that surely God had not sent him, but he uttered his prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. He was hired for this reason, that I might become frightened and act accordingly and sin so that they might have an evil report in order that they could reproach me. Remember, O God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were trying to frighten me." Nehemiah 6:1-14

Nehemiah's enemies weren't through; they continued to seek an opportunity to hinder the work and discourage him. And so, when Sanballat and Tobiah saw that the work continued and the wall was almost completed with just a few breaches left, they sent a message for Nehemiah saying to come on down into one of the cities, one of the villages, that they might talk with him about peaceful coexistence for all. But Nehemiah knew they intended evil for him. And they kept sending these demonic messages for him to come on down under the ruse of meeting for counsel—to talk things over so that they would all have an understanding. They sent this kind of message four times, but Nehemiah ignored it, saying, "*I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?*" He did not

delay the work but just continued to rebuild. Folks, talk is cheap, and Nehemiah knew that ideation.

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

1. While work is at hand, talk is cheap. An enemy's primary technique when they know they are losing is to devise fake peace talks.
2. During wartime, peace talks tend to be tactics.
3. Discouragement is not an option in the heat of battle. Let's face it, when you're discouraged, the last thing you want to do is draw your sword and go right back to the frontline and fight the battle. Discouragement is the gateway to passivity.
4. Leaders who flee in battle are cowards. People who follow any commander (leader) during a battle count on the leader's strength, hope, and victorious attitude to empower them to follow them right to the enemy's door.
5. Becoming frightened in battle is a sin.

FORMS OF ATTACKS

Keep in mind that these six things stack up against a leader or follower with this one goal: to frighten them. When fear becomes the most dominant force in a person's life, they begin to make stupid decisions.

1. **Ridicule:** It begins to break down the self-view that God put in Nehemiah, the workers, and the builders of Jerusalem.
2. **Intimidation:** If ridicule doesn't work, they will do everything possible to intimidate and create fear.
3. **Discouragement:** After one submits to fear, discouragement settles in. Once someone feels discouraged, they will slip into morbid passivity.
4. **Fear:** It all implodes upon one simple tactic the enemy uses: to create fear in the lives of those they are warring against.

5. **Selfishness:** When fear consumes the heart, selfish decisions become the norm of the day.
6. **Fake Peace:** If none of the other attacks work, the enemy will come in with a fake peace deal, attempting to deceive in the cleverest way, stating that all those within the war must come to a peace agreement and begin working together as one unit. We'll discuss how this is a tactic and confession that the enemy uses.

After Nehemiah's enemies tried to attack from within through moral decline, they shifted to the most deceptive form of attack—global peace. When that failed, the enemy set up a conspiracy theory (a lie) to activate fear. As fear is known, it causes hearts to grow faint. With most enemies, Nehemiah's attackers were relentless. If the threat of a sword doesn't do the trick, they will quickly regroup and go for “peace, peace,” but it is a fake peace talk.

WELL-TIMED ATTACK

Chapter six reveals that Nehemiah was not living “*high off the hog.*” Understanding that he had been faithful to his God and his king, a plot to defeat him was the constant threat he faced daily. As Satan would hate to admit, the peace tactic offered by his enemy was a significant turning point in Nehemiah's leadership. Since fake diplomacy didn't work, it was time for a new venue of attack—conspiracy, a type of diplomacy rooted in the greatest kind of deceit—that of planting lies within the hearts of Nehemiah's people. This madness method was used toward the end of the completion of the walls. Shortly before their celebration of completing the wall, the enemy offered a peace deal, which is a confession by the enemy that they were indeed losing the battle. They knew they would be up a creek without a paddle if their conspiracy trap didn't work. I'll give the enemy this; they were persistent—always trying to break Nehemiah and the Jews down by wearing them down through lies, lies, and more lies.

Fact: Often, the enemy wants to chew up our time in unproductive meetings or in endless debates and discussions with those they are threatened by, which is a common approach used today. When people aren't advancing in their part of the mission within the battle they have chosen to take on, they start lying through their depraved minds to attempt to convince their leader that they don't have what it takes to complete the mission.

The approach the enemy used with Nehemiah was a fruitless attempt. It was like a dried-up fig tree. However, it didn't stop them from proposing a ridiculous peace offering while having no intention of keeping those peace agreements. They intended to harm Nehemiah. Remember when the enemy said, "Come, let us meet together at Chephirim in the plain of Ono?" Nehemiah said, *"But they were planning to harm me."* With that, Nehemiah sent a messenger with this message, *"I am doing great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"*

Furthermore, Nehemiah didn't stop, not for a moment. He didn't take the time to go face-to-face with their proposal. When his people tried to protect Nehemiah by safeguarding him in the house of God, he said: *"Should a man like me flee? And could one such as I go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in."* Nehemiah intuitively knew this was all part of their plot. Nehemiah refused to retreat or hide from the enemy. He knew that hiding expressed defeat, which was not in his thinking or the God-given action plans imparted to him.

These messages went back and forth four times. As any quality leader would calculate, the enemy attempted to wear them down. Remember, it was said: *"For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, 'They will become discouraged with the work, and it will not be done.' But now, O God, strengthen my hands."* There is no way a human could have such wisdom, insight, and foresight. The Living God was empowering Nehemiah. Since God saw and heard all the words on both

sides of this battle, God simply informed Nehemiah through divine wisdom not to submit to such ridiculous ideas.

THE CONSPIRACY

After Nehemiah rejected the enemy four times, Sanballat changed the game plan. He sent a letter with conspiratorial charges to Nehemiah and his people to destroy Nehemiah's standing with the people and undermine his authority.

What was the conspiracy? The conspiracy was that Nehemiah was seeking to position himself as *"king of Judah."* How ridiculous was that? This would threaten the king and create a revolt in the land of Judah. Nehemiah responds with this:

"Such things as you are saying have not been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind."

How did it turn out for the enemy? Nehemiah proved that Tobiah and Sanballat hired these men to write the lies to create distrust between his king, the Jews, and himself. He also proved that this tactic was a madness method to kill Nehemiah and place fear in the worker's hearts, which would ultimately block them from finishing the wall. Another tactic that was dead in the water.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **TALK IS CHEAP:** Believe God's words over that of man; this is critical. If you do not know the Word of God well, when the enemy whispers his lies (conspiracies) in your ears, you will believe them. Knowing the Word of God and using the Word of God as the Sword through the Holy Spirit is the key to a believer's victory.
2. **RIDICULE:** It is pointless but has the power to motivate a leader if the leader decides to use ridicule for motivation. But if ridicule creates disappointment and disappointment creates despair, then ridicule cannot be used to motivate.

3. **CONSPIRACY:** This is to be expected of quality leaders. If you're in leadership under God's command, I can guarantee you the enemy will use lies, lies, and more lies to try to create distrust and doubt in the people following you.
4. **PROOF:** The best proof is in the results of the project. In Nehemiah's case, his task was almost completed. This is when the enemy is most threatened because there are only a few more bricks to put in place or a few more gates to put up. This is the time for the enemy to strike—to use his most deceptive form to conquer you as a leader or a follower through conspiracy.

FINAL NOTE

I am wholeheartedly convinced that the number one enemy of all authentic believers' unity with each other is the tongue. While we blame other things more closely aligned with overt sins, it is none other than the covert deception that pours forth from the tongue.

The leading venue for destroying leaders of God is through the spreading of rumors (lies) about the leader. Even when a quality leader can prove their innocence, believers always get caught up in the wake of the lies, which results in never trusting this leader again. It is in this that the enemy finds his favorite tactic—conspiracies.

The critical technique for leaders is to find the source of the lie and address it rather than the messengers hired to deliver the lie, which is what Nehemiah did. He went directly to the source by using the enemy's messengers. But it wasn't the gossip-spreading messengers; it was the ones communicating from Nehemiah's camp to the enemy's camp—that's the key. However, in Nehemiah's case, no one was around to witness the truth of the messages. Thus, he went to the heart of the enemy while being public about the venue and the attack.

Lies, mocking, and ridicule impact all leaders. The question is, what will the leader do with the threat? Will he sink into fear, despair, and weaknesses, or will he rise to the occasion and pierce the enemy's heart with the Truth that will set his people free?

Fact: Tobiah was Nehemiah's number one enemy—a true unbeliever, and he hated the ways of the God of Judah. Worse, inside the walls was a leader he could not bring down. And get this—Tobiah was related by marriage and blood to Nehemiah's people inside the walls, yet he was forced to walk away with his evil tail between his legs.



CHAPTER TWELVE

Mission Accomplished

Mission Accomplished

“And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law. Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose...Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen,’ while lifting up

their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground...he explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.” Nehemiah 8:1-8

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

1. Victory robbed the enemy of confidence.
2. The enemy realized it was God who won the battle.
3. While there was a great celebration, they needed to keep their sword handy.
4. Victory ignited revival.
5. The highest positions reward the Holy insight of a leader. We all know Nehemiah did not gain financially or materially throughout the 52 days; his reward was eternal, and God blessed him in significant ways.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Nehemiah had finished building the wall. What a God-sized magnificent accomplishment—the power of the Living God completed the wall through a leader and cup-bearing servant to an earthly king, highly respected by both the secular and the holy. The final brick was laid by the hand of God through weak and fearful people. Nehemiah didn't just survive the attacks; he dominated them with the wisdom God imparted to him. And now, it's time for Nehemiah to lead these wavering people to Judaism—their traditions, customs, and doctrines.

With the Lord's help, Nehemiah survived three separate attacks, fearful workers, conspiracy, and a host of other challenges. Not one of these things worked to slow his mission given to him by God. Persistence and immovability offered rich rewards. However, the commissioning of the wall was only half the reason God put it on Nehemiah's heart to rebuild; the other was to awaken the people's hearts to return to the sound doctrines of Judaism, which was the responsibility of Ezra. Since each leader of the 12 tribes failed to keep the

people's hearts focused on the laws of God, Ezra was assigned to step up and preach.

REVIVAL AT THE WATERGATE

It was time for Nehemiah to sit back and relax. The leaders of Jerusalem gathered the people at the city square directly in front of the Watergate. The Watergate was part of the Temple complex rather than the wall. It was so named because it led to the city's primary source of water, which is symbolic of the Living Water, Jesus Christ. But in Jerusalem, it came from the Gihon Spring, named in early Hebrew as the Fountain of The Virgin. It was also a traditional place to have the Law of God read to the masses.

The tribal leaders asked Ezra, the scribe, to bring the book of the Law of Moses, given to the people of Israel. While all the men, women, and children were present, Ezra began to read. The reading lasted from early morning until midday. The miracle? All who were present were attentive and understood what was read to them. Once Ezra started to read, everyone stood up in reverent respect. Looking back, we see that God used the attacks upon Nehemiah to gain their attention for this very moment. Once Ezra started to pray, the people raised their hands, then dropped to the ground, bowing to the Lord in worship. The leaders of the 12 tribes explained the law to the people while they remained in their place after the reading. Folks, this is called a revival.

In every revival noted throughout history, two things were certain: first, there was a mighty outpouring of the Word of God, and second, there was a specific response in unifying believers to go out and make disciples worldwide. This happened in Jerusalem that day—Judaism came alive for lost people. As we learned in chapter seven, droves of exiled Jews were brought back into the homeland before the great revival when Nehemiah asked Ezra to read the law.

THIS DAY IS HOLY

Once the reading and worship had been completed, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the 12 Tribal leaders proclaimed before the people: *“This day is Holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep. For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law.”*

When was the last time you wept as the Word was read to you? The Jews wept because they were overcome by the memory of being released from captivity, facing the giants in the land (their enemies), investing blood, sweat, and tears in rebuilding the wall, and for their newfound freedom as bloodline Jews. But wait, all of this created a spiritual vacuum.

THE SPIRITUAL VACUUM

Did you know that the revival of the Word of God resulted from Nehemiah’s work, which is the first revival noted in world history? You cannot have a revival without a spiritual vacuum. God’s people certainly had that being exiled to Babylon for over a generation of living. Each grew up under the spiritual, psychological, and environmental deception of the aftermath of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who captured the people of God—the pure bloodline Jews (chapter 7:6).

It is said that the environment of culture is the greatest influence for cementing beliefs in a growing child. I don’t believe there are any truer words.

Fact: Babylon worshiped pagan gods.

Most of Babylon is related to female deities, as noted in Jeremiah 52. Besides devotion to false gods, sexual immorality was widespread in Ancient Babylon, and cult and temple prostitutes were common. And let’s not forget that Babylon was the home to the Tower of Babel, which means *several voices made a confused noise*. As the Jews were led out of Babylon, they brought demonic doctrines that fronted their Hebrew God, creating a spiritual vacuum for all of them. Therefore, this created a perfect Holy moment for God.

A FINELY TUNED WATCH

An illustration that has impacted me is that we are to function like a finely tuned watch, whether Jews or today's grafted in Jews (indwelt Christians). The Body of Christ (His Church) is like an impressive, well-constructed watch. It has hundreds of wheels, cogs, gears, and many other moving parts. The beauty of this illustration is each piece does one thing and one thing well. If all components work harmoniously, it will produce the perfect timepiece of God's eschatological timeline. Now, imagine this timepiece is on the wrist of God. He calls this watch the Body of Christ—meaning the earthly representative of Jesus's body is housed in God's Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Folks that would be us indwelt believers. Back in Nehemiah's day, it was the pure bloodline Jews. I believe this is an excellent illustration of today's authentic believers working in perfect harmony with the spiritual gifts the Living God has placed in each of them. However, if one or more parts do not do their part, the timepiece will not show the accurate timeline of the Father. In this, we understand why God is into revivals through brokenness and suffering. In other words, the Lord must break open the watch and repair each part that is not cooperating with the other parts that depend on all the parts doing their thing.

Leaders take note: If one or more of the workers stop moving, it affects the entire objective of the timepiece. Did you comprehend that? All well-organized plans cannot remain on the timeline of God unless all parts are moving in harmony and submission to each other. If one piece is not cooperative with the mission, remove it and replace it with a new piece built to harmonize with the existing piece; it's that simple. Not only did Nehemiah do this, but so will the Living God.

A former mentor of mine had a plaque on his desk that said, *“Lead, follow, or get out of the way.”* After he explained the phrase, it not only stuck in my mind but also became a motto in all that I do throughout my ministry.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Nehemiah was not the only man with the plan; he employed a handful of skilled workers: Ezra, Hanan (his brother), the nobles, and the 12 leaders of the 12 Tribes of Israel. After Nehemiah fulfilled his role as a cupbearer to the king, rebuilt the wall, and became governor, he enacted Jerusalem's leaders' gifts, talents, and skills. While both sides of the coin of his mission were important, the second half of the mission is what propelled God's people into this revival. In the Old Testament, works came before faith. The Old Covenant was affirmed through works, while the New Covenant shows us that Jesus kept to the same mandate as the Old. But this time, Jesus did the work, and we enacted faith.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **MISSION:** An immovable leader results in an immovable mission. It's plain and simple; if you have a movable leader, his mission will be just as easy to move, shift, or change.
2. **REVIVAL:** Accomplished work is a precursor to a revival, which we see in our passage today. Because of Nehemiah's success in keeping to the Lord thy God and his earthly king, a revival broke out amongst the people.
3. **VACUUM:** Quality leaders create a vacuum of beliefs. Typically, when a leader, as in the case of Nehemiah, is immovable, it causes a reverse process upon the people who are supposed to follow, and it creates this crisis of belief, which we are referring to here as a vacuum of beliefs. Once pulled into this vacuum, the real decision is whether they will humble themselves before the Living God, submit to His mandates, and move forward. This described Nehemiah's plan as part two kicked in motion for him.
4. **HARMONY:** Building a finely tuned timepiece by way of using the people. The people were the

gears, the cogs, and the moving parts necessary for Nehemiah to keep to God's eschatological timeline.

FINAL NOTE

Both discerning leaders and followers know how to distinguish the means from the end. When looking through the mind of Christ from within, we are free from demonic tunnel vision. As in Nehemiah's case, leaders and their followers kept the horizon in focus, not just their contributions to the project. Nehemiah made provision for the completion of God's plan, not only for Jerusalem but for his life calling. He learned the art of submission to an ungodly king, and he wisely avoided the pitfall of wrangling words with the enemy and his fellow Jews. Nehemiah refused to entertain inflated problems and opinions. The best part; he was immovable in including the first Jewish revival at the tail-end of his investment. This wasn't all about brick and mortar. It wasn't all about getting that wall up to protect them physically. All this was needed to ignite the revival of Judaism.

While most despise working for an immovable leader—calling him vain, arrogant, filled with pride, or demanding- this is the kind of leader I prefer to serve. Nehemiah was this kind of leader, and it is why I have modeled my method of leadership after him: a man who was a great cupbearer, servant, builder, strategic leader, and governor—a strategic one who leads effectively.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Israel Confesses Their Sins

Israel Confesses Their Sins

“Then 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 were weeping when they heard the words of the law.” Nehemiah 8:9

“Then on the second day, the heads of fathers’ households of all the people, the priests, and the Levites were all gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law.” Nehemiah 8:13

“He read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance.” Nehemiah 8:18

“Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month, the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dirt upon them. The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.” Nehemiah 9:1-2

We have here a general account of a public fast, which the children kept—probably by order of Nehemiah and with the advice and consent of the Chief of the Fathers, Ezra. It was a fast that the men appointed, but such a fast as God had chosen. It was a day to afflict the soul (Isaiah 58:5). They probably assembled in the temple courts in sackcloth in the posture of mourners with earth on their heads and ashes under their feet (Nehemiah 9:1). These outward expressions of sorrow and humiliation gave glory to God while taking shame on themselves, leading to repentance. Everything was beautiful, including being brought to the point of humbling themselves before the Living God.

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

1. Worship leads to repentance.
2. Confession prompts more worship.
3. Israel reaffirms their belief and obedience to the Law of Moses.
4. Revival ignites a new way of living.
5. New living is recorded in a sealed document.

THE LAW SPEAKS DEATH

Nehemiah knew that the words of the law wounded the people who read to them because the law works death and speaks terror. It shows men their sin, misery, and danger of sin, with the thunderous conviction against anyone who does not continue in every part of the law. Therefore, when they heard it, they wept (Nehemiah 8:9). It was a good sign that their hearts were tender due to Nehemiah's work. They wept because they realized how they had offended God. The Law exposed their many violations of adhering to the cultural

influences that remained in them from the Babylonians. Since the Law separated them from their fleshly practices, they all saw themselves guilty before God. Weeping was the result of the mind separating itself from the mind of God—the Law of Moses. Healing required a separation of the deeds of their flesh from the deeds of God. The Jews were healed and comforted with the words of peace. It was good that they were greatly affected by the Word of God, but it was important they not yield disproportionately in their mourning, especially at this time because the day was Holy to the Lord. It was one of the solemn feasts on which it was their duty to rejoice over God's victory and sorrow over their sins of disbelief mirrored by the Law of Moses.

THE FEAST OF THE BOOTHS

The Feast of the Booths (Feast of Tabernacles) commonly goes by another name—*The Season of Our Joy*. Joy predominates on this Holy day more than any other. Jewish people construct *sukkot*—frail huts or booths that remind them of God's provision and dependence on Him. These booths are a memorial to remind them of the building of booths during their ancestors' wandering in the wilderness. The *Feast of Tabernacles* was an annual reminder to the people of God that God truly is the Great Shepherd who had chosen the Tabernacle among them. This was to protect and bless them wherever they wandered during their times of failure. It was Old Testament grace in action.

Nehemiah and Ezra's actions renewed devotion to the Word of God. They had spent the greatest part of one day praying and listening, yet each was far removed from the weariness of their sins. However, this was about to change after Ezra spoke from the pulpit. At this point, God intended the event to celebrate His grace and mercy. Typically, the *Feast of the Booths* was viewed as a time to delight in their successes, worldly pleasures, and self-obtained profit. You need to note here that Nehemiah's Jews didn't realize the more they communicated through the Word of God, the more they were given the right to understand it and to be affected and transformed by it. Ezra

knew the more the people were exposed to the Words of God, the more they would interact through His Words. Those who understood the scriptures would desire to understand them more. Thus, Ezra would read over them for seven days.

As odd as it sounds, the priests of the 12 tribes and the Levites came with the Chief of the people to Ezra to understand the Words of the Law. They realized they needed to qualify to instruct their people with the law, so they stepped forward for instruction in teaching. Get this—the priests responsible for managing the beliefs of the Jews were as ignorant as their followers within each Tribe. When returning on the second day, the priests showed humility by seating themselves at Ezra's feet to learn from him. Ezra's humility had set them on his right hand and his left as teachers with himself (Nehemiah 8:4,7).

JEWS CONFESS THEIR SINS

It was a day to lose the bands of wicked rebellion. Spreading sackcloth (burlap) over their bodies, ashes under their feet, and earth on their heads, the Jews remembered where they derived from and their time in the wilderness. It also reminded them they were the seed of Israel, a Holy seed. Furthermore, it was a message to remain separated from all strangers they had mingled with while in Babylon. Remember, Ezra had separated them from their "*strange*" wives some years before, but they had returned to the vomit of their forefathers committing the same sins. Now, Ezra challenges them once again to join themselves to God and God alone. It was a day of communion with God. They spoke directly to God in prayer through their confessions, offering their loyal and devout affections to Him. They heard Him speaking to them by His Word, very proper on fasting days, a mirror for their souls so that each one may see their wicked ways of defilements to know what to include in their confessions. The Word directed and quickened their prayers. Nehemiah's Jews began to see that the Word of God was indeed the mirror to unravel their rebellious souls.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **LAW:** The law produces death, brokenness, and humility. In the New Testament, Jesus fulfilled the law. He had to be humbled, broken, and put to death. In the Old Testament, the law was by works, so the outcome was the same, but the Jews were the ones who had to pay.
2. **JOY:** The *Feast of the Booths* was to display God's grace. In the New Testament, Jesus became this Feast. He became this Joy, and He became this Celebration. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ was and is Grace. The key factor here is that in the New Testament, when we become born again, Jesus fulfills the law so that we may become the Booth, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, where Jesus Himself can reflect His joy in His Father.
3. **CONFESSION:** Releases the bands of wickedness. It doesn't matter if it was in the Old Testament or the New Testament; confession releases the bondage of wickedness. We don't need to beg Jesus for His forgiveness in the New Testament. After we confess, we simply claim what is already ours: that Jesus forgave us on the cross many years ago.
4. **MIRROR:** The Word of God is a mirror to the soul. Whether the Jews from the Old Testament listen to the Word read over them or we read the New Testament ourselves, the Word is a mirror that God has always used to evaluate how we might be offensive to God by what we're doing.

FINAL NOTE

In our past few teachings, God used Nehemiah to work the people into exhaustion, which produced brokenness and dependence. Once the wall was built, their exhaustion produced this brokenness before the Living God, allowing them to return to His ways as a lifestyle. The sackcloth they were required to wear was a physical reminder of Nehemiah's methods, which aligned with God's methods. Yes, what a

weariness it was, but it was necessary. Without Nehemiah's methods, it would not have profited them when the Law was read to them. To be blunt, they would have converted Israel into an extension of Babylon, like many nations around Jerusalem. God would not allow this to happen, that's for certain.

Through Nehemiah's progressive plan: hearing God, accepting His orders, going to the king for a blessing, evaluating the condition of the wall and the Jews, working with the people first, and empowering the weak to conduct business through the power of the Living God—all these things led up to a revival that would transform the land of Israel for years to come. In fact, it set Israel in place for the coming of Jesus Christ.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Future Leaders

Appointing Future Leaders

“Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem, but the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine-tenths remained in the other cities. And the people blessed all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem. Now these are the heads of the provinces who lived in Jerusalem, but in the cities of Judah, each lived on his own property in their cities—the Israelites, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon’s servants.” Nehemiah 11:1-3

Jerusalem is called the Holy City of the Living God (Nehemiah 11:1). The city of Jerusalem was where God had chosen to place His earthly Temple, and He placed His name in and upon this Temple. The Holy City became a setup for God’s Holy Seed, Jesus, to minister to the entire world until His last hour. Those who care not about the Holy City would exaggerate if they said

they would be entering the kingdom of God. Acceptance of Israel is paralleled to acceptance of salvation. When Nehemiah became the governor of Judah, he carefully picked the right leaders to carry his work forward for generations to come. We will discuss just how this turned out.

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

1. Quality leaders prepare the next generation to lead.
2. Love drives future leaders to protect God's investment.
3. God used Israel's poverty to protect His people. As odd as that sounds, it is a true-to-life principle that not only Nehemiah used, but one God uses daily.
4. God restores the kingdom of Israel.
5. God promises prosperity to those who love Zion.

HATRED OF ISRAEL

Jerusalem, of all places, was most hated by her unbelieving neighbors who leveled malicious attacks against her; therefore, the Jews were unwilling to make themselves known there. Holiness produces persecution and reproach, so their running into trouble kept many Jews out of the holy city, making them fearful of God and authentic Judaism. Thus, God set Jerusalem as a place of special malice to be threatened and insulted by their enemies, so God protects it, but only under the conditions of their obedience. However, God set the standard for those willing to live under the guidelines of the law of Moses. It was more for their worldly advantage to dwell in the country because Jerusalem was no trading city; therefore, there was no money to be had from their merchandise as there was in the country from corn and cattle.

Note: All seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:21).

A general and just complaint is that most people prefer their wealth, credit, pleasure, ease, and safety before the glory of God and the public good. Thus, God set the Jews in place who were willing to glorify Him for the good of the people—those who were willing to live under the law obtained by God through Nehemiah and Ezra.

FUTURE FOR THE FAITHFUL

God's priority for the rulers of the people was that they were to dwell in Jerusalem. Since they were the core leadership of the nation, they were to have proper respect for the performance of their offices while protecting and defending them, setting an example for the people, and encouraging them to dwell there. The bottom line is that God established Jerusalem as the center of worship for Jews—past, present, and future. After the Lord set up the Holy Place for all the Jews, the rest of the people also cast lots for one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem. Though it was the chief city and place of public worship, the people were unwilling to settle there. This was partly because of the enemy's rage, which this city endured, and partly because it was to their worldly advantage to dwell in the country where they could have better supplies. For this, they consulted their own ease, safety, and profit.

NEHEMIAH BRINGS ONE OF TEN

The rebuilding was going fast, and a wall now encompassed the city. Jerusalem had many inhabitants by this time, but it was insufficient to preserve the city. Nehemiah, therefore, obligated one-tenth of the country's people to come and dwell in it so that the population might be sufficient for the preservation and defense of the city. One of ten was set apart, and lots were cast among them to see which of them would take up their residence in the city.

Very few people inhabit Jerusalem, so why build a wall around rubble? Because, for the Jews, Zion was to be honored until the Second Coming of the Messiah. Why weren't people willing to live in the city of Jerusalem? First, the city had been without a

wall for 160 years. But Nehemiah built the wall in 52 days by using the Jews held in captivity by the Babylonians for 70 years. When Nehemiah first appeared on the scene, Jerusalem wasn't much more than a pile of rubble. Second, the people knew their work was cut out for them under a relentless leader who directed each to fulfill God's order. This resulted in Nehemiah's plan to conduct one in ten. That was after he placed the leaders of Jerusalem in their positions.

SEPARATED FROM STRANGERS

On the twenty-fourth day, the people came together to humble themselves in a manner that became their position, separating themselves from all strangers. Beginning with the blessing promised to Abraham, they relayed all the tokens of God's grace bestowed upon Israel with the frequent unfaithfulness of which they had been guilty, and there was a true expression of heartfelt repentance. They acknowledged, without any disguise, their condition, and they undertook the mandate to obey the law by separating themselves from the people of the land to faithfully perform all that the service of the house of God required.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **HATRED:** Godliness produces persecution and hatred. It's a simple fact of either being indwelt by the Living Christ or honoring God the Father through Old Testament laws in Nehemiah's day.
2. **FAITHFUL:** Jerusalem was preserved for the faithful. God had no intention of doing all this rebuilding to hand the city over to Babylonian influence, fake Jews, or even the real-deal Jews. God's purpose was to hand this city over to the faithful, and He accomplished this feat.
3. **ONE IN TEN:** A strategy to establish Jerusalem for future generations.
4. **SEPARATED:** Keep yourself separated from worldly influences. It was important for the people

to realize that God wanted to separate His people from worldly influences, particularly the Babylonians.

FINAL NOTE

Each leader mentioned in chapter eleven is equally important as the willing unknowns. God fully makes use of every faithful Jew and marks them as valuable. Most never became famous and were never marked in the halls of Jewish history. However, all of them are noted by God in His eternal kingdom—the great and the small.

“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.” Hebrews 6:10

Not only does the Word say that every word that proceeds out of man's mouth are words held in an account on judgment day (Matthew 12:36), but everything we do. God holds dear to His heart the words and deeds of the righteous while He sits on His throne in Heaven.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Dedication of The Wall

Dedication of the Wall

“Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites from all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem so that they might celebrate the dedication with gladness, with hymns of thanksgiving and with songs to the accompaniment of cymbals, harps, and lyres.” Nehemiah 12:27

Let’s face it; few things are as exciting as attending a dedication service of hard work invested. As I write these words, my mind is flooded with the faces of those who work behind the scenes so that this series might flow freely—people you might never know who had a vital part in this series and its success: my wife, who faithfully supports me, staff, editors, transcribers, and others who work to make this series user-friendly to the public. Each one is a great believer. They are

classically unheard of and anonymous individuals. However, each one greatly contributes to our project's overall success.

“But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, which we are speaking in this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end. So that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Hebrews 6:9-12

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

1. The unsung heroes. Many workers in God’s kingdom do not have the spotlight shining on them. Most workers who do enjoy the spotlight of ministry are usually the ones who must put up with the distresses, difficulties, and trials that come with being in the spotlight.
2. God never overlooks the works of ordinary workers.
3. God honors the non-spotlight workers. In fact, Scripture proves to us that these are the ones He honors the most.
4. God watches for those who refuse to be sluggish. That is His main objective. He’s not interested in elevating someone’s fame; He’s interested in elevating His workers who are willing to do the work without getting the credit.
5. The Lord eagerly rewards those who wish to inherit the promises.

GOD KNOWS THE ANONYMOUS

While the norm is that the primary leader is the one who receives the credit, this is not how God functions. As in our story, Nehemiah was the brunt of distress, difficulties, and persecution. The Lord designs leaders to bear up when

suffering unjustly. Those who never reach the spotlight can do their job without worrying about processing the attention that comes with being in the spotlight. However, you can relax; you are not anonymous to God. God remembers every labor done in love. It's never overlooked or forgotten. Let's face it, though, the flesh of humanity enjoys the limelight usually offered by those in charge. However, few can handle the responsibility of such self-glory. That's a fact. Faithfulness does not need to be rewarded. However, faithfulness does expect applause from the Creator—not by gratification but rather by honor and loyalty. We must remember that when workers give credit to their leaders, they quickly give credit to the workers who made them successful. The cycle is self-rewarding.

DEDICATING THE WALL

In our passage, the people have gathered to dedicate the recently completed wall. The city is slowly beginning to take shape with signs of progress: new homes, new businesses, and the whole gamut of Jerusalem's latest successes. However, this doesn't mean that times weren't still difficult for them. But as any quality leader knows, stopping to celebrate existing successes is needed to ignite the excitement for future progress.

NEVER STOP THE SINGING

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our God Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”(Ephesians 5:18-21)

Scripture tells us that God inhabits the praise of His people (Psalms 22:3). If you want God close by, sing praises to Him. Anytime praises are heard as sung out before the Living God, before the Living throne, before the Living Christ, He will

inhabit these praises. The Jewish people during Nehemiah's time may have found this new, but they quickly caught on to it.

THE SECRET TO JOY

Joy is never dependent on happiness, but joy is dependent on the strength of the Lord. It does not depend on outward circumstances but on inward strength and focus. However, if joy depends on circumstances, it isn't true joy; it's happiness, which comes and goes with the winds of doctrines. Therefore, the first immediate point we need to review in looking at Ephesians 4:32 is where we are encouraged to *"be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."* Paul's topic here is that God's forgiveness is our example of forgiveness. Be followers of God or follow God's example for us in forgiveness.

The Bible has the keys to good mental focus. An essential thing for mental focus is a forgiving spirit. If you hold bitterness or hatred in your heart toward someone, that bitterness will harm you more than the person you choose not to forgive. The Bible constantly emphasizes the importance of forgiving and being forgiven. Jesus incorporated His forgiving Spirit into the model prayer he gave His disciples, saying, *"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."* Accepting Christ's forgiveness and acknowledging that we have received forgiveness or that we must be forgiven becomes the key to living victoriously with one another, throughout the Body of Christ, and with strangers.

There has always been a great mystery regarding forgiveness. Jesus said, *"For if you will not forgive men of their trespasses against you, neither will Your Father forgive you your trespasses"* (Mathew 6:14-15).

Forgiveness is key in standing on the wall and praising with a fellow believer—to standing and worshiping the Living God together as one unit. In fact, forgiveness is probably the golden key to making all this work in all times of celebration.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **ANONYMOUS:** God honors the anonymous. These people do not wish to have their names in the spotlight; they simply want to commit to completing the work God set before them.
2. **DEDICATION:** Dedicating God's work is what seals His work in Heaven.
3. **SINGING:** Who you sing to will confess who you believe should get the credit. The beauty of singing praise and worship unto the Father is it directs attention to Him, who is to receive all the glory for the work that has been accomplished.
4. **JOY:** True joy is the evidence of true strength. The Word even tells us, "*The joy of the Lord is our strength*" (Nehemiah 8:10). There are no truer words than these.

FINAL NOTE

It is safe to say that the Jews laughed on the wall as they rejoiced over God's provision. They sang together, and their joy flooded the hillside so all could hear and be glad. Did their circumstances change? No. They were changed from the inside out, and so had the land of Jerusalem.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

It is Finished

It Is Finished

“But during all this time, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon, I had gone to the king. After some time, however, I asked leave from the king, and I came to Jerusalem and learned about the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, by preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. It was very displeasing to me, so I threw all of Tobiah’s household goods out of the room. Then I gave an order, and they cleansed the rooms; and I returned there the utensils of the house of God with the grain offerings and the frankincense. I also discovered that the portions of the Levites had not been given them, so that the Levites and the singers who performed the service had gone away, each to his own field. So I reprimanded the officials and said, ‘Why is the house of God forsaken?’ Then I gathered them together and restored them to their post.” Nehemiah 13:6-11

For a period following the wall's dedication, Nehemiah continued to establish a righteous government in Jerusalem. However, verse six of our scripture reveals that he returned to being a cupbearer to the king. While he was gone, the people returned to four significant areas of wrong. After the king released Nehemiah to go and address these wrongs, as was his style, Nehemiah grabbed the issues at hand and resolved them one at a time.

NEHEMIAH LESSON OVERVIEW

1. **Compromising relationships.** We must remember that there is an extended period when Nehemiah first came in to evaluate the wall, strategically making plans to rebuild the wall, immediately encountering the liberal modalities that the Jews were suffering at that time. Nehemiah then does the rebuilding of the wall. He reestablishes the law of Moses and creates this great revival with the people dedicating their lives to the Living God once again. Then, the king establishes him as the governor of the territory. During that time, Nehemiah practically worked out all the little details necessary to get proper Godly governance into the city of Jerusalem. Now, here he is, coming back after returning to the king to be a cupbearer, and he hears the rumors of how the Jews went back to some of their old ways. The first thing they did was compromise their relationships.
2. **Financial compromise.** There was a financial compromise going on within the city of Jerusalem.
3. **Secularizing the Sabbath.** They were guilty of secularizing the Sabbath. This was probably the greatest offense out of the four.
4. **Domestic disobedience.** This is a big one. God is concerned because God does not allow the Jews to intermarry within the bloodlines of other people and other countries in the surrounding nations.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE PEOPLE

What is wrong with the people in whom God invested complete restoration? He rebuilt the wall in 52 days, reestablished the law of Moses, reconstructed the lives and homes of His people, and consistently won battles against their enemies. Yet they returned to their morbid beliefs by violating and comprising relationships while financially jeopardizing their standing, returning to secular views of the Sabbath, and cloaking their minds in domestic disobedience. Why? The simple answer is sin makes you stupid.

COMPROMISING RELATIONSHIPS

Before Nehemiah returned a second time from serving the king as a cupbearer, Eliashib, the priest, was appointed over the chambers of the House of God. As the comprise would have it, Eliashib was a direct relative of Tobiah—Nehemiah's greatest enemy. Furthermore, since day one, Tobiah had been an enemy of God and a thorn in Nehemiah's side. Here we have it: the first enemy of Nehemiah's work became the first compromise of relationships to revert God's people to devotion to family over loyalty to the Living God. Thus, upon Nehemiah's return, he arrived at a mess within the house of God that Tobiah and his evil plans had infiltrated, thanks to the cowardly actions of the appointed High Priest, which is evidence that blood truly is thicker than water. Since water is our symbol of obedience, it leaves us with blood that is thicker than obedience.

FINANCIAL COMPROMISE

As proof from our text, *the love of money is the root of all evil*. Tobiah knew this immovable truth. Nehemiah was wise enough to know that when relationships are compromised, the love of money is hidden in the walls of relational deception. As they say, *“Always follow the paper trail”* (money).

“I also discovered that portions of the Levites had been given to them so that the Levites and the singers who performed the service had gone away, each to his own field.” Nehemiah 13:10

In Nehemiah’s day, the people who served in the temple were called Levites and drew their living from the temple. These were the paid workers of the temple, and the tithe paid to them was from the worshipers. Since the money managers redirected the funds, the foundational structure that God had put in place scattered the Levites to the surrounding communities so that they were no longer serving in the temple of God. A big mistake! Ultimately, this shift in money funded Tobiah while starving the Levites of their God-given right to be paid by the High Priest and the temple managers. They had redirected the money toward Jerusalem’s enemy because blood truly is thicker than water.

SECULARIZED SABBATH

The shift of financial gain for the non-religious also shifted worship of the Sabbath to a secular framework. Remember, the people committed to God, Nehemiah, and Ezra to observe the letter of the Law of a spiritual day of rest—Saturday. As Nehemiah walked through the streets, he noticed that the Jews were back to their nasty habit of working on the Sabbath, making money on God’s Day of rest. God supported the Jews in making money, but He refused to support the Jews in making money on His most Holy day—the Sabbath. They could make as much money as they wanted any day of the week; however, no money was to be made from Friday evening at sundown to six o’clock the following evening. Nehemiah was so offended by this debauchery that he was willing to use force to stop its illegitimate practice (Nehemiah 13:21).

DOMESTIC DISOBEDIENCE

This is likely the most hard-hitting issue out of all four areas. Verse 23 says, *“In those days, I also saw that the Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.”* Not good!

As for God, who you marry is of the utmost significance. Religion passed from women to children, and Nehemiah, knowing this, declared war against this wrong. The Jews were supposed to refrain from intermarriages to maintain the solidarity of their race and keep it as pure as possible.

Furthermore, interracial marriage brought tragic results to the children's children. Whom you marry declares the "god" you serve. Marriage involves the language of the people and the intermingling of customs. From these customs are the practical applications of what God uses to rule the people's hearts, as in King Solomon's lesson, which he learned from the Lord - who you marry determines the direction of the god who rules your household and your kingdom.

AVOIDING PASSIVITY

When a leader is not present, passivity becomes the default function. Thus, in my playbook, passivity is the greatest enemy of God's people. Therefore, Nehemiah's closing message to leaders and followers becomes relevant at best. All leaders who play with passivity play with an investment that soon becomes impotent, which means that all the work invested comes for not if the leader remains at war with the four pillars of leadership deconstruction.

The Four Pillars of Nehemiah's Leadership

1. Nehemiah faced the wrong he encountered head-on in all cases.
2. Nehemiah dealt with the wrongs directly, severely, and emphatically.
3. Nehemiah did what was right despite the rejection of the people.
4. Nehemiah not only worked toward a permanent solution of correction but always followed up the wrong with prayer and dependence on God Himself.

PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF OUR LESSON

1. **RELATIONSHIPS:** Nehemiah never compromised the truth over relationships—something he is known for resisting.
2. **MONEY:** Nehemiah was quick to avoid the compromise of money for progress.
3. **SABBATH:** Nehemiah refused to compromise the ordinances of the Sabbath. He knew it was holy; He cherished it and kept it in play the entire time he was in the city. All things imploded when he left the city and returned to being a cupbearer to the king.
4. **DOMESTIC:** Nehemiah kept to the rules of God regarding intermarriages. Pure bloodline marriages have always been very important to God. It also happens to be one of the leading temptations that God's people have suffered throughout the ages. King Solomon's mistakes are clear examples of what not to do.

FINAL NOTE

Biblical observation must come first before human understanding. Honesty must be matched with spiritual conviction, not common sense. Quality leaders cannot tolerate people doing their own thing. An unbending leader reveals the unbending God he serves, along with all the rules and functions provided to God's people whom they are required to serve alongside. When leaders are courageous in their convictions, they must be tempered with a deep devotion to the living God—not to their land, city, family members, or friends, but to the Living God. This can only be displayed in serving God from the knees up, and Nehemiah was certainly known for that.

Our world is filled with a fearful, confused, and selfish humanity. Most act as shepherd-less sheep begging for a leader they refuse to follow. They tend to cry out for a leader but find

themselves in a constant state of resistance toward the leader God puts in place to protect their lives and save them from the modality of leading them from the bottom up—a madness method that God will never support.

KEY TAKE-A-WAY

One thing you should take away from this chapter is that when God answers your prayer by giving you a leader, honor this leader until death parts you. Even though you might not understand their methods of victory, go with it, stay with it, and remain faithful until the end. If you do, you might find an everlasting reward on the other side of eternity awaiting you.



LEADERSHIP

Leaders In Action

UNDERSTANDING OUR ACTIONS

As men and women, we need to understand and know the purpose of the activities we engage in. This purpose determines our effectiveness. The success of a chosen task depends on four components: 1) knowing the target, 2) understanding our weaknesses in reaching the objective (target), 3) planning creative solutions and steps to meet the objective, and 4) implementing the steps to “hit” the target.

OUR TARGET

Our target is to reach the hearts of the believers in your sphere of influence, helping believers understand who they are in Christ, who they are as an indwelt, and who they are as ordained leaders of God.

WEAKNESSES – Fear of Being in a Small Group

Most believers in our culture are independent, fragmented, indulgent, and devoid of spiritual purpose. Our challenge will be to “convince” them that they need a personal relationship with Christ, with other believers, and with the Church body as a whole. Most are intimidated by being a part of a small group. Small groups can intimidate anyone, but in particular, they intimidate most Body members. One of the greatest lies we face as believers is believing we can “fix” our own problems. This couldn’t be further from the truth. Small groups provide environments that help Christians connect with Christ, other members, and other significant people in their lives.

MEN/WOMEN AND THEIR MENTORS

All leaders need other leaders to guide and direct them in all of their ways – men with men & women with women. It has been my experience that if leaders surround themselves with other leaders who can keep them focused and directed in their calling, they can multiply their efforts exponentially. I have had five mentors in my life for many years. These mentors were “*hand-picked*” to advise me in all areas of life.

Consider the model of mentorship:

Ministry Mentor – this individual should have experience in the day-to-day operations of ministry activities. They make great “*sounding boards*” for your ideas and plans. Their experience will help you avoid unnecessary “*mistakes.*” In addition, when they pray for you, they know what it is like to embrace the challenges of ministry.

Business Mentor – most “*ministers*” do not like to look at the business side of ministry. The reality is that all ministry activities must function under the ethics and organizational management of business. Business doesn’t mean “*making money.*” The business combines the practical elements of managing a structure that involves people, strategic plans, and measurement outcomes. Your business mentor will be able to

help you effectively manage the administrative side of your ministry.

Personal Mentor – this individual keeps a close eye on your personal life, marriage, family, financial affairs, and personal vulnerabilities. Pray that God gives you a personal mentor with their *“household”* in order. This does not mean they are without *“sin”* - it means that they are faithful in walking after the Spirit and active in keeping their personal affairs in order.

Leadership Mentor – this is a man (for men) and a woman (for women) of God with the gift of leadership. They will be quick to lead you and assist you in leading others. I have a dear friend (mentor) who is highly gifted in this area. He plays a major role in my life. His wisdom and insight are more valuable to me than words could ever express. This mentor is easy to find – he/she usually has a group of people following them.

Friend – is a person who is simply one of your friends. This friend is faithful, loyal, and true to you. They are always there for you through the *“good”* and the *“bad”* times. This type of friend is quick to love on you and support you when you *“mess up.”* If you do not have such a friend – pray for one. All believers need a friend like this. These kinds of mentors are *“armor-bearers.”*

I recommend that you meet with a mentorship group (Bible Study) on a weekly basis. I meet with my mentors frequently. Don't allow scheduling or vacations to get in the way. Whoever is able to come – comes! Through the years, there have been times that I was there alone, having coffee with myself and God. Show your mentors that you are committed to being there at all costs. If you are out of town – they meet without you. This will keep a steady, consistent pattern going for all of you. In due time, this meeting will become a *“top priority”* for each of them.

BEING “CALLED” AS A LEADER

The men’s movement, as well as our ladies, needs gifted and called leaders. When workers feel manipulated into “*filling the position*” of helping in a ministry, they will consistently fail at their responsibilities. This is why it is critical that each leader embraces their calling from God to lead. Leaders who know God consider it a privilege and honor to lead and be led.

The best leaders are servant leaders. A qualified leader is one who is willing to serve their leaders, as well as serve the people who are in their care. Jesus said He did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom. Through service, followers become faithful. If you have chosen to be a small group leader, you are choosing to step into a life of giving your life away. Being responsible for people’s lives is a privilege that comes with great requirements. God said, *to whom much is given, much is required*. Those of us who are in leadership know the sacrifice and hardship that comes with the job. If it weren’t for the power of the Holy Spirit, it would be an impossible task. God not only calls the leaders, but He empowers them to accomplish all of what He gives them to do.

FOUR LEVELS OF TRANSPARENCY & INTIMACY

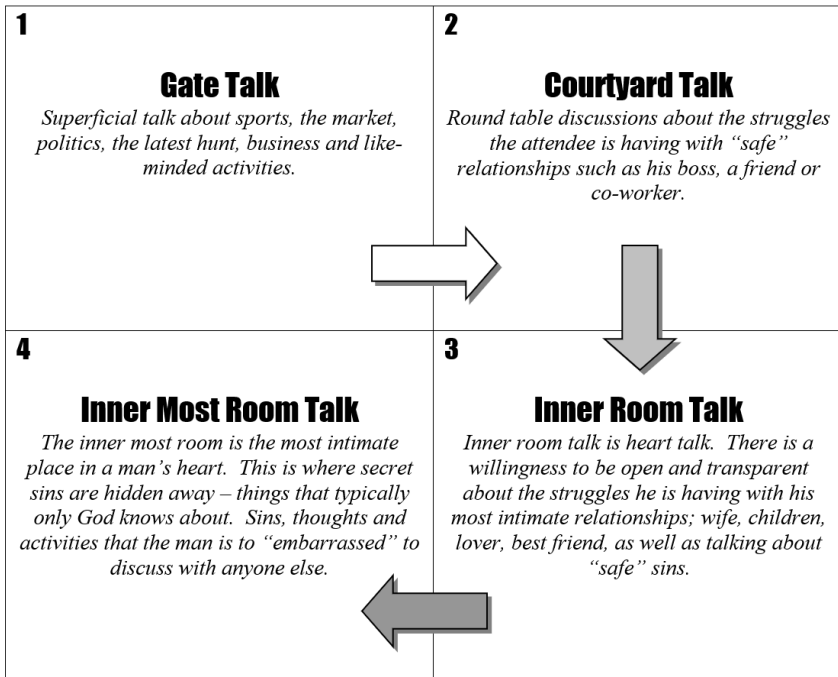
It is “*wishful*” thinking on a leader’s part to think that every person they try to help will be ready and willing to allow you, as a leader, to go into their “*innermost room*.” Most people need “*runway talk*” to feel comfortable, or they typically run away. Transparency is a difficult thing for most people to demonstrate and enjoy. It usually brings up all kinds of fear: fear of the unknown, losing control, getting emotional, confessing some unknown sin, or just the fear of someone hurting them once they take the risk of being transparent. Whatever the case may be, it is your responsibility as a leader to help each of the people you reach out to – to feel safe enough to be intimate and transparent with you.

Throughout my years of counseling, I have learned that there are four primary levels of intimacy within relationships. Most

“hang out” in the first two quads, but every once in a while, you will have someone go to levels 3 and 4 on their own, but this is rare. Usually, the leader has to lead the other individual to “deeper” levels of intimacy.

Please consider these four levels of intimacy when attempting to minister:

Four Quads of Intimacy



ONE: Gate Talk

Superficial talk about sports, the market, politics, the latest hunt, business, and like-minded activities. This is where most believers tend to *hang out*. This phase is filled with self-talk. Since most enjoy talking about themselves, this is an important place to start.

TWO: Courtyard Talk

Round table discussions about the struggles the attendee is having with “safe” relationships, such as his boss, a friend, or a co-worker.

THREE: Inner Room Talk

Inner room talk is heart talk. There is a willingness to be open and transparent about the struggles he is having with his most intimate relationships: wife, husband, children, courtship candidate, best friend, as well as talking about “safe” sins.

FOUR: Innermost Room Talk

The innermost room is the most intimate place in a believer’s heart. This is where secret sins are hidden away – things that typically only God knows about. Sins, thoughts, and activities that the person is fearful to discuss with anyone else.

A LEADER’S RESPONSIBILITY

It is the leader’s responsibility to lead the wounded person into each level of intimacy. A leader should not expect the individual to walk into these quads without help. Don’t get me wrong, many people are open, willing, and ready to step into the *Innermost Room* quickly. However, this certainly is not the “norm.”

When walking a brother or sister into deeper levels of vulnerability and intimacy, it takes the leader building trust in the relationship. Trust comes through love, acceptance, and forgiveness. The leader needs to allow gate talk and courtyard talk as often as necessary to help the individual feel comfortable and safe. Once there is a certain level of trust built, the leader should begin asking questions that will gently lead them into the next quad. Yes, this will take time. It will completely depend upon the level of openness that exists between the two. What I have found to be the most successful strategy is to confess my own struggles (men with men &

women with women) with temptations of the world and the flesh. This places the leader and the follower on the same playing field.

TRINITY OF INTIMACY

The Trinity of Intimacy concept offers Body Life members a more intimate environment to build relationships. The plan is simple. Find two other men/women you trust to form a group of three. Get together on a weekly basis to discuss the topics disclosed in the Bible Study. This will challenge all members to become intimate and transparent with fellow attendees in Christ.

My personal experience is that the Trinity of Intimacy concept is the glue that holds people together. I think you will find the same thing.

The key: Each of the men/women is to get close and personal. This arena is conducive for each participant to challenge one another by revealing personal struggles they did not feel comfortable sharing in the small group setting.

The triads will produce vulnerable and intimate participants who will become valuable contributors to your small group meetings.

CONSIDER LEADING A SMALL GROUP

Leading your small group requires spiritual leadership that includes sacrificial serving and giving. Whatever a leader does, it needs to be done wholeheartedly, working for the Lord and not for others (Colossians 3:23-24). Each small group leader is to serve Christ in their efforts of leadership. When a man/woman attempts to serve Christ by ministering unto humanity, they are sure to fail. In fact, this is the number one reason why people drop out of leadership. They become discouraged because they are not getting the response they expected from the people. This is a mindset of investment with

an expected return. All leaders want to see the fruit of their labors, but God calls us, as servants, not to expect fruit but rather to pray for it.

Small group leaders have the privilege of *“planting the seeds”* or watering them, but God is the one that causes the growth – therefore, He gets the fruit.

Leading in ministry also requires bearing fruit in our own lives, being a *“watchdog”* in the lives of those we serve, being an example, using our spiritual gifts to their fullest capacity, teaching solid Biblical truths, being patient and longsuffering with those we help, and most important – focusing on the ministry of reconciliation. When we lose sight of these basic elements of leadership, we become *“dust in the wind.”*

BEING ORGANIZED

Being organized can be a challenge for many of us. Doing things at the last minute is one of the worst habits of many leaders. They use their positions of authority to do things when they want and on their timetable. Once a leader takes on the responsibilities of ministry, it becomes all about the people they serve. I want to help you be prepared and organized, but I can't *“make you”* use our available tools. That's up to you.

SUGGESTED LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS

Leadership is a complex and multi-faceted topic, and there are many ways to approach it. Questions about leadership can help you better understand what it means to be a leader and how leadership styles can vary from person to person.

Asking leadership questions can help you better understand what it takes to be a successful leader. You can develop your own leadership style by understanding the different definitions and approaches to leadership.

Leadership is about setting a vision and inspiring others to achieve it. It's about taking charge, making decisions, and motivating others to do their best.

There are many different leadership styles, but the best leaders can adapt their style to the situation at hand. Most importantly, your leadership style works for you and helps you get the best out of your team.

Here are some possible questions to ask when recruiting small group leaders:

1. Can you tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills?
2. How do you monitor the performance of the people that you have to lead?
3. Are you able to delegate responsibilities efficiently?
4. How would you describe your leadership style?
5. What “ways” do you tend to motivate a team?
6. What values are most important to you as a leader?
7. Are you able to collaborate with others and accept new ideas?
8. How do you handle disagreements with co-workers?
9. Who is your favorite leader? Why?
10. Are you more comfortable with verbal or written communication?
11. How do you respond to criticism?
12. Can you tell me about a time when you solved a problem for your fellow workers?
13. How do you measure your own performance at work?
14. What strengths would you bring to our ministry?
15. How well do you know our ministry? What changes would you seek to make if you volunteered here?

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication is a vital skill in various aspects of life, including personal relationships and professional

settings. Here are some key points to consider when aiming to communicate effectively.

Clarity: Choose your words carefully to ensure your message is clear and concise. Define your goals and audience before communicating, and eliminate irrelevant details. Avoid using overly flowery language that may distract from your message.

Conciseness: Be mindful of the length of your message. Strive to be brief while conveying all necessary information.

Correctness: Ensure that your message is accurate and free from errors.

Completeness: Provide all necessary information to avoid confusion or misunderstandings.

Coherence: Organize your thoughts logically and present them in a coherent manner.

Consideration: Be mindful of the needs and perspectives of others when communicating. Show empathy and respect.

Courtesy: Maintain a polite and respectful tone in your communication.

These characteristics can help you enhance your communication skills, whether engaging in face-to-face conversations, written exchanges, or digital communications. Remember that effective communication is a skill that can be learned and improved over time.

TOOLS OF WARFARE

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the victor’s crown, the life God has promised to those who love Him.” James 1:12

As leaders, you probably understand the importance of having a toolbox equipped with the exact tools you need to accomplish the task you have set out to do. Nothing is more frustrating

than wanting to do some projects around the home and not having the necessary tools.

In the same way, we need a spiritual toolbox packed with the proper tools to accomplish the eternal project that God has set before us as men. This is the underlying purpose of using this book as a Study Guide – to provide practical, useful information and insight into waging war against the powers of darkness that seem to bind us as believers. The world, the flesh, and the devil will be continuously defeated if we use the weapons of our warfare effectively. The Lord Jesus has provided all the tools we need. He has already secured our daily victory. The tools His Father gave Him to “*fight off*” the enemy are the same tools He has made available to us. But, it remains our responsibility to activate these weapons by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

“Consider mine enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.” Psalms 25:19 NKJV

The subject of aggressive spiritual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil is becoming increasingly important. We live in a degrading society that makes fleshly things more accessible than ever before. Many, if not most, believers succumb to rampant abandonment and indulgence in fleshly sins. The enemy is pushing for conformity to his image through the power of media, unhealthy relationships, and an overwhelming influx of opportunities to please ourselves. Satan and his demonic kingdom relentlessly press their battle against believers and all of God’s provisions of freedom.

The primary emphasis of this book is on practical spiritual instruction rather than theoretical exhortation. Christian believers need to know how to fight a good fight. Believers in our culture today are untrained in the most important battle of life – the battle for the soul. Leaders need to focus on using this objective, the absolute truth of the Word of God – your sword – and not subjective or emotional experience.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places.}” Ephesians 6:12

Believers tend to battle what they see. This includes our wives, husbands, rebellious children, unfaithful friends, employers, employees, etc. The first thing you must embrace before starting this study is that we do not fight flesh and blood but the powers of darkness. Satan simply uses and abuses what we see to destroy God’s ordained leadership of the home, community, nation, and world. He hates leadership. He knows that through leadership comes authority, and through authority comes power.

NO LAUGHING MATTER

Satan has successfully used the world and all of its influences to bring a light-hearted attitude and mindset regarding the kingdom of darkness. Just take a look at the enormous volume of books, movies, video games, T-shirts, music, toys, television, advertisements, the internet, fashions, jewelry, and coarse, silly jesting that we are bombarded with wherever we turn!

The desensitization about Satan and his role in man’s sins is a subtle but strategic attack on God’s divine creation – His blessed children. The enemy of this world sees to it that the world (his domain) laughs him off with indifference. Always remember this callousness is the most powerful tool the enemy has in defusing God’s serious plan of redemption. Believers ought never to entertain crude joke-making, purchase degrading media products, or light-heartedly support Satan in any way. While believers need to exercise care in not assigning all of their wrongdoing as Satan’s responsibility, we must, with biblical insight, understand the limited power of Satan and his kingdom. Oppression and bondage are not a joking matter.

The key to the believer’s emphasis on spiritual warfare must be based on a Biblical approach to the subject. Subjective

feelings, emotional desires, and fervent sincerity are not sufficient weaponry against an enemy that laughs in the face of your intents. He yields no ground to emotion or sincerity. He retreats only from the authority and power that has been given to the believer through his/her union with the Lord Jesus Christ and the absolute truth of the Word of God. An illustration worth remembering is this: If I gave you a sharp two-edged sword and a butter knife, which would you use to fight an assailant? Dumb question? I don't think so! Your logical side would choose the sharp, two-edged sword. However, in reality, when we do not use the Word of God to fight off the enemy, we are essentially using a butter knife to war against an enemy that slings a ball and chain.

"Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
Ephesians 6:17b

We have two basic offensive weapons to use against Satan. They are the word of God and the power of prayer. When you put the two of these together, you have the most intimidating weapon known to the enemy. He knows he has been "had" when a man of God masters the art of using the Word of God in the power of prayer. Hey, I'm all about turning the tables on this relentless enemy! How about you?

Just as in preparing for battle in real life, it would not be wise for you to draw your sword and start fighting until you put on your armor. We need to learn how to do that practically. Only when we are battle-ready should we pick up our swords, pray, and fight.

I pray that you are beginning to see our critical need for the Word of God and prayer. The sword of the Spirit, God's Word, is living and active. These are not words on a page. They are life-giving Words from the mouth of a living God! Use your words - you die. Use God's Words - you live.

It's as simple as that!

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The Word is eternal, just as God Himself is eternal. Just as God is omnipotent (all-powerful), so does His Word have all the needed power to defeat the enemy and to accomplish God's will. Just as God is immutable, so the Word of God will never change. Just as our Lord is omnipresent, so His Word is always there and ready to be used in every situation. Just as God is Holy, His Word is Holy. The bottom line is this: His Word is living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword. The enemy hates hearing this. Jesus used it to fight off temptation. You can't survive without it.

As a sword, the Word has the power to penetrate the life of every being that hears it, and that includes the enemy. It is meant to do corrective surgery within the soul, spirit, thoughts, attitudes, and body of all who hear it. This is the secret of its power against the enemy. As you use it, the Word can penetrate, cleanse, and change the lives of those who embrace it as Truth. It is why it cuts away at the grip of the enemy. There is nothing more powerful than the Word, and there is certainly no substitute for the Word to persistently, steadily, and consistently apply it to engage the enemy. Even Jesus, the Son of God, used the written Word in the wilderness to fight off Satan. What worked for the Son of the living God will certainly do no less for us!

"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.'" Luke 4:1-3

The importance of doctrinal Truth and doctrinal praying is given to us by God to use daily. Doctrine, God's unchanging Truth, is mighty in defeating our enemies. This Truth must get

deep into our hearts as believers. It can only come about as we understand the Holy Word of God and then use that Word aggressively in our lives. Hopefully, this book has helped you keep doctrinal Truth at the forefront of your leadership activities.

Normally, I am not one who advocates following “steps” to embrace freedom. However, regarding deliverance from strongholds in our lives, I see a definite need for a plan to follow the suggestions in this book faithfully; they will equip you and build a foundation for your soul and your leadership. The Holy Spirit will aggressively act to guard your heart against your enemies.

WARNING

Whenever we prepare to go to the frontlines, where the enemy lives and breathes, he is bound to try to chase us away. Do not submit to his deceptive ideas and lies that tell you there is no time or this level of combat isn’t necessary, that these are only words, that you can put this off because you already have too many things to do, that you’re tired, or too sick, or that you are already struggling with worries, doubts, or fears that will prevent you from completing your pathway to deliverance. Push through it all and respond like a warrior!

In rare cases, some people experience terrifying feelings of guilt, worthlessness, physical symptoms (choking, pains moving around their body, tightness above the eyes, dizziness, blackouts, or even fainting), and terrifying spells of panic and depression. If any of these symptoms occur to the point of “*paralyzing*” you from being unable to apply the principles within this book, you will need another partner (men with men & women with women) to do the study with you. Remember, fear is the fire of the dragon’s mouth – it is his primary tool of intimidation. Don’t worry – it’s only hot air!

Another warning: avoid becoming preoccupied with Satan and his domain. Have you ever wondered why people are

intrigued by movies, video games, and music based on the dark side? Well, one of the games that the enemy plays is to create an unhealthy fascination with his work. Many people are caught up in giving more attention and credit to the enemy than they do God. I call this a “*demon behind every bush*” mentality. It is common for those who are struggling with satanic affliction to be preoccupied with the enemy due to their level of temptation, obsession, and negative thoughts. However, one must take special caution to keep their eyes on Jesus. Well-trained believers in the Word and Spirit will not fear Satan or his schemes.

IN CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. For those who choose to use it as a group study, don’t hesitate to reach out for guidance from another leader.

It has been an honor to serve you in the writing of this book. I pray that the encouragements you gained by reading will assist you in building up the walls that may have fallen in your life.

As a follow-up, I encourage you to read my book *Praying New Covenant Prayers*. Be of great courage.



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LIFE MISSION:

Dr. Phinney is the Founder of IOM America, Identity Matters Worldview Institute, and the IM Online School. He is the author of fifteen books that focus on Christ, Culture, & Creator - all centered on the believer's identity in Christ. IOM America publishes online articles & media through multiple venues. Dr. Phinney holds degrees in Psychology, Counseling Psychology & International Cross-culture Leadership (D.Min).

Ministerial Objective

Building and equipping members of the Body of Christ to complete the work of service through the indwelling life of Jesus Christ. Since Worldview is formed through personal

identity, Dr. Phinney's objective is to serve the hurting by providing practical and proven materials & media to further equip each participant in embracing the life-transforming message of the Exchanged Life—" Not I but Christ." He focuses on the root cause of cultural and interpersonal problems— spiritual, psychological, and cultural identity. By using the Bible and over 40 years of experience, his grace-oriented & systematic solutions to worldview problems are refreshing and comforting – thus his coined term Transformational Biblical Worldview™ development.

Family Life

Stephen has been married for over 45 years to Jane, and they have three grown children, Abigail, Elizabeth, and Jessica, plus eleven grandchildren & counting. Stephen and Jane focus on the institution of marriage, family, and child development. They focus on providing ministry tools needed to raise the "next generation" with an actual Transformational Biblical Worldview™ – in an anti-family society. Both are active supporters of the multi-generational faith principles stated in Deuteronomy chapter 6 – God's simple command to Moses to teach the Word of God diligently to the children and generations to come.

Biblical Worldview

Christ, Culture, and Creator. Dr. Phinney has focused his studies, research, and writings on International Leadership & Cross-cultural Biblical Worldview within the arena of global eschatological impact. He is proactive in serving ministry leaders and interested authentic Christians - with the mission of establishing a "Christ-as-Life" modality of growing in Christ.

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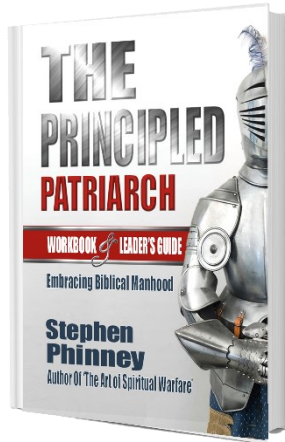
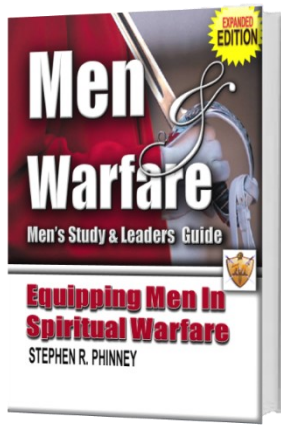
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