

Get Going — There Is Work To Be Done; God Will Help! (Lessons from Nehemiah)

By Ida Mall

[With thanks to the Rev. Darold Reiner, LWML Counselor 1989-1993, who did a Bible study on Nehemiah years ago and inspired me to study further the book and use Nehemiah as a leadership model.]

As you study Nehemiah, think of your responsibilities as an individual or within a group and consider the following:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to work through God's Word to change your attitude so that it is in line with the attitude of Christ.
- Know and understand the task God has for you.
- Solicit the appropriate people to help in the task.
- Assign people tasks that are commiserate with their skills.
- Know your obstacles and depend on God's help.
- Keep people informed of the progress of the task.
- Upon completion of the task, thank God and all involved.



PRAYER

Introduction: Nehemiah 6:15-17

So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

When Nehemiah first inquired about the wall in Jerusalem, it was broken down, and its gates had been burned with fire (**Nehemiah 1:3b**). His immediate reaction was to weep, fast, and pray.

Chapter 1

Read the prayer of Nehemiah (**Nehemiah 1:5-11**).

- How does Nehemiah describe God?
- How does he describe himself?
- For whom does Nehemiah pray?
- What is his request(s)?

If one wants to be a leader or “get going” in anything for the Lord, Nehemiah's prayer is a “perfect” example as to what one should do to adjust one's attitude and mind. It is also described in **Philippians 2:3-5**.

Nehemiah knew that there was a job to be done for his people with God's help. Prayer was his constant companion in his endeavors.

Chapter 2

After obtaining the support of his employer, the king, he went to Jerusalem to see the task. For any leader, the task needs to be defined.

In verse 17, as leader, he shared the opportunity/task with others.

Read verses 17-18.

- How does he describe the task to be done?
- How does he get those who will help do the work to be involved?

At times when we are doing the Lord's work, we may encounter obstacles, which may challenge us.

Read verses 19-20.

- Who are the adversaries?
- What do they do?
- What is Nehemiah's response?

Chapters 3, 4, and 5

With the actual rebuilding of the wall, Nehemiah:

Assigned the rebuilding of the gates.

- Why did he especially want the gates rebuilt?
- Why is Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests named first as rebuilding the Sheep Gate? **3:1**.
- In **3:28**, it says, “the priests made repairs each in front of his own house.”

What is the significance of repairing the wall in front of their own houses?

Kept adversaries in their proper place.

- Read **4:4-5**. What is used to “fight the enemy”?
- Read **4:13-15**. As leader, what action did he take that resulted in the frustration of the enemies?
- Read **4:16-23**. What other actions did he employ to assure the completion of the wall?
- Read **5:1-6**. Who announces a problem? What are the problems? What solution does Nehemiah offer in verses **5:9-12**?

After the wall was completed, Nehemiah appointed people of integrity to shut the doors and bar them. He also had residents of Jerusalem serve as guards at posts near their homes.

Chapter 7 The city was large but had few inhabitants. In **Nehemiah 7: 5**, Nehemiah says, “So my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the common people for registration of families.” Discuss the importance of the words, “So my God put it into my heart....” Even though the wall is rebuilt, Nehemiah continues to have an intimate relationship with God.

Honor and Praise Chapters 8 and 12

To honor and praise God at the completion of the wall, Ezra the scribe read the Torah to the people. Apparently it was a very special occasion because the assembly included men and women. The praise culminated in **8:6**. Read.

Celebration at Completion: Read **8:9-12**.

Celebration at Dedication: Read **12:27, 28, 31, 43**

What are the similarities of their celebrations and our celebrations?

Chapter 9 The people confessed their sins. The history of the relationship of God and his people is recounted. If you have time as a group or on an individual basis, read verses **Nehemiah 9:5b-36** to relive God’s grace in the lives of His people.

Chapter 10 The people made promises and acknowledged the responsibilities they would assume.

Chapter 13 The people sinned. Nehemiah purified the priests and the Levites. The book ends with the words: “Remember me with favor, O my God.” Why are these words appropriate for Nehemiah?

Self-reflection:

Think of a task that you have been requested to do. If this task is of God, how can Nehemiah be an example to you for fulfilling the task? [You can do the same exercise as a group.] Think of other ways our lives could be influenced by Nehemiah’s example.

Close with prayer or by all saying together: “The joy of the Lord is your strength. There is work to be done; He will help.”

This Bible study is dedicated to Florence Montz and Helen Morris who were LWML Presidents when I was Louisiana-Mississippi District President, 1972-76. Florence and Helen were Nehemiah examples of leadership to me.

Ida Mall and her husband have two married children and six grandchildren. She currently serves on the LCMS Board for District and Congregational Services, the Lutheran Braille Workers Board, and is an Ablaze! Ambassador. Ida was International LWML President 1991-93 and LWML President 1993-95.