Leadership Lessons from Nehemiah

Lesson 4: Never Quit God's Plan
Nehemiah Chapter 4, the Value of Diligence

Prepare for Chapter 4: Nehemiah assembled a team of men and women from near and far. They rebuilt the gates first so the city would have protection.

I. The prize is worth the price.

Nehemiah 4:1–3 *But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we built the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. [2] And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? [3] Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. [4] Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:[5] And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.[6] So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.*

A. Nehemiah had to deal with opposition.

1. If you're doing anything worthwhile, youwill face some opposition.

2. We're in a world that's been affected by sin and by Satan, but Jesus has already overcome it for us.

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

1 John 5:4-5 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*

3. Sometimes we face difficulties, challenges, and things we don't understand, but we keep our eyes on Jesus.

I Peter 4:12–14 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: [13] But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. [14] If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

4. Nehemiah faced significant opposition that began with one person, then another, and finally whole groups of people.

5. The opposition was trying to intimidate him.

   2 Timothy 1:7 *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

B. Despite the intimidation and mockery, the workers kept working and finished the wall because they had a mind to work.

   1. Whenever you study Jewish people and the early church, the more they were oppressed, the more they prospered.

   2. The Bible has a lot to say about work: John 4:34, 9:4, and 17:4; Acts 13:2 and 15:38; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; Hebrews 6:10; and Revelation 22:12.

II. The more they went forward in their work, the more the enemy challenged them.

Nehemiah 4:7–20 *But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,* [8] *And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.* [9] *Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.*

[10] *And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.*

[11] *And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.*

[12] *And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.*

[13] *Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.* [14] *And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.*

[15] And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

[16] And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. [17] They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. [18] For the builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.
[19] And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. [20] In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.

A. Don’t fight against God’s people.

    1. Throughout history, anyone who has fought Israel has lost in the long term: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

B. Don't fight against God's purpose.

C. According to the Bible, there is a battle, but Satan is a defeated foe (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 4:7–8; Revelation 1:18).

D. Nehemiah and the Jewish people prayed and set a watch against their enemies. God is not the enemy—the devil is!

1 Peter 5:8–9 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: [9] Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

E. Be aware of the enemy's tactics. The workers had a hard time because of all the trash against the wall. The enemy throws trash at us: envy, strife, and unforgiveness.

James 3:16 *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*

F. The workers chose to watch and not fear.

G. They watched and worked. They just kept going. The enemy made a lot of noise, but he didn't stop them.

    1. While they built, they were ready for the enemy's tactics with a brick in one hand and a weapon in the other.

    2. The builders had a sword by their side and listened for the trumpet to sound a battle cry. We know that the sword is God's Word that quenches the enemy's fiery darts (Ephesians 6:16).

H. There was strength when they came together, where the trumpet sounded. They kept succeeding.

III. Do not quit!

Nehemiah 4:21–23 *So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. [22] Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let everyone with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day. [23] So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that everyone put them off for washing.*

A. They worked from dawn until dark and finished the work in 52 days!

    1. They didn't even stop to change clothes except to wash them.

    2. Pastor Bob Nichols said, "Good things happen when you going to work."

Conclusion: The prize is worth the price. There will be battles. Do not quit, chase believing in God, and never stop doing what God called you to do, and you will win!

Go Deeper

Things done in our strength and power that weren't necessarily God's purpose for us will burn up and have no eternal results. When we invest in ministries and people who do what God has called them to do, we have a lasting effect on eternity. Keep doing things that have an eternal value.

- What are you investing in that will have eternal rewards?
- What are you doing that will have eternal value?

You have to keep taking out the trash. If you don't take out your trash, you won't accomplish God's purpose in your life.

- What trash do you need to get rid of so you can keep working to accomplish God's purpose?

You can take the Word of God, apply it, believe it, and speak it, and you can be constantly taking territory for the kingdom of God.

- Which scriptures will you apply, believe, and speak to take territory this week?

Declaration: I will spend my life accomplishing things that God has called me to do that have eternal value.