

## **Pursue: When Your Assignment Matters Most – The Book of Nehemiah**

### **Lesson 1 – What In Your Heart – Nehemiah 1–2**

#### **The heart matters**

- ❖ When the assignment God gives matters most, it begins with a burden, prayer, and a willingness to move when God opens the door
- ❖ We have to pursue our assignment from God that He placed on your heart – Neh. 1:1–4
  - Nehemiah cares deeply about the condition of Gods people – Neh. 1:3–4, Rom. 9:1–3, Jer. 29:7
  - His weeping was God’s preparation
- ❖ God focuses on your heart before He sends provision
  - You don’t need provision if your heart allows you to quit

#### **It’s Time to Pray**

- ❖ Prayer should precede pursuit – Neh. 1:5–11
  - Especially leaders –Neh. 1:5–6, 2 Chr. 7:14, Phil. 4:6
- ❖ How you pray also matters
  - He prayed with humility, confessing sins of the people and reminding God of His promises.

#### **God Provides for the Assignment – Nehemiah 2:1–8**

- ❖ God creates the opportunity to pursue it. Neh. 2:4–5, Pro. 21:1, Rev. 3:8
- ❖ When you allow God to touch your heart, He will touch others on your behalf
  - God moved the heart of King Artaxerxes to grant Nehemiah permission, resources, and protection to rebuild Jerusalem.

#### **Now It’s on You**

- ❖ Your assignment requires action – Neh. 2:9–18
- ❖ You’re going to need to do it with courage and leadership – Neh. 2:12–13, Jos. 1:9, Jam. 2:17
- ❖ Nehemiah studied and inspected the broken walls
- ❖ Nehemiah encourage the people to rise and build.
  - The people responded because Nehemiah spoke with conviction and an assignment

#### **Points to remember**

- ❖ God often begins an assignment with a burden on the heart
- ❖ Prayer prepares the leader for the assignment
- ❖ God opens doors for the work He calls us to pursue
- ❖ When the assignment matters most, the people must arise and build

## Lesson 2 –

### Pursue the Assignment Despite Opposition – Nehemiah 3–4

#### Everyone Has a Role in the Assignment – Nehemiah 3

- ❖ God's assignments require participation from the entire community  
Neh. 3:1–5, 1 Cor. 12:12, Eph. 4:16
  - Families, priests, and workers each repaired sections of the wall. The assignment progressed because everyone participated.
  - Are you doing your part?

#### It is Wise to Know Your Enemy

- ❖ Sanballat the Horonite – Sanballat was likely the governor of Samaria and the chief opponent of Nehemiah who mocked the Jews and attempted to stop the rebuilding because a strengthened Jerusalem threatened his political influence. Neh. 2:10, Neh. 4:1–3, Neh. 6:1–4
- ❖ Tobiah the Ammonite – Tobiah was an Ammonite official who ridiculed the rebuilding and later attempted to undermine Nehemiah through alliances with influential people inside Jerusalem. Neh. 4:3, Neh. 6:17–19, Neh. 13:4–7
- ❖ Geshem the Arabian – Geshem was an Arabian leader who joined Sanballat and Tobiah in opposing Nehemiah and spreading accusations that he intended to rebel against the Persian king. Neh. 2:19, Neh. 6:5–7
- ❖ Shemaiah the False Prophet – Shemaiah attempted to deceive Nehemiah with a false prophecy designed to frighten him into hiding and discredit his leadership. Neh. 6:10–13
- ❖ Noadiah the Prophetess and Other False Prophets – Noadiah and other false prophets tried to intimidate Nehemiah and discourage the work by creating fear among the people. Neh. 6:14
- ❖ Nobles of Judah Allied with Tobiah – Some nobles in Judah secretly communicated with Tobiah and reported Nehemiah's actions, creating internal opposition in the community. Neh. 6:17–19

#### Opposition Comes When the Work Matters – Neh. 4:1–6

- ❖ Opposition often increases when God's work begins to advance – Neh. 4:1–3, Jn. 15:20, 1 Pet. 5:8
  - Opposition exposes your advancement
  - Sanballat and Tobiah mocked the rebuilding effort, hoping to discourage the people. Instead, the people prayed and continued working.
- ❖ Note that Sanballat's anger wasn't for righteousness but foolishness – Neh. 4:1
- ❖ You can't allow opposition to stop you from your commitment

**Prayer Strengthens the Pursuit – Neh. 4:7–15**

- ❖ Prayer strengthens believers when opposition intensifies Neh. 4:9, Eph. 6:10–11, Ps. 46:1
  - Nehemiah prayed and organized defenses around the city. The people trusted God while continuing the work.
- ❖ You've got to pray and persevere

**Determination Finishes the Work – Neh. 4:16–23**

- ❖ God's work requires determination to complete the assignment Neh. 4:17–18, Gal. 6:9, Heb. 12:1
- ❖ The builders worked with tools in one hand and weapons in the other, demonstrating their commitment to finish the assignment.
  - They trusted God fully while remaining prepared to face the resistance that comes when the assignment matters most

**Points to remember**

- ❖ Everyone must participate in the assignment
- ❖ Opposition confirms the importance of the work
- ❖ Prayer strengthens believers in the pursuit
- ❖ Determination completes the assignment

## Lesson 3 –

### Pursue the Assignment Without Distraction – Nehemiah 5-7

#### Internal Problems Can Threaten the Assignment – Neh. 5:1–13

- ❖ Internal conflict can weaken God’s work if it is not addressed – Neh. 5:6–7, Mic. 6:8, Jam. 2:1
  - Some wealthy Jews were exploiting their fellow citizens during the rebuilding.
  - Nehemiah confronted the injustice so the work could continue.
- ❖ When the assignment matters most, unity matters
  - You cannot rebuild walls while tearing down people

#### Integrity Strengthens the Assignment – Neh. 5:14–19

- ❖ Leadership integrity protects the credibility of the work – Neh. 5:14–15, Pro. 11:3, Titus 1:7
  - Nehemiah refused privileges that could burden the people and instead served them sacrificially.
  - When the assignment matters most, people must see the integrity of the leader

#### Distractions Attempt to Stop the Assignment – Neh. 6

- ❖ The enemy often tries to distract leaders from their assignments – Neh. 6:3, Col. 3:2, 1 Cor. 15:58
- ❖ Distraction through meeting (vs. 1-9)
  - Sanballat attempted to lure Nehemiah into meetings designed to stop the work.
  - Nehemiah responded, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.” – vs. 3
- ❖ Distraction through discrediting Nehemiah’s leadership – vs. 10-13
  - Leaders must know their limits –
    - Nehemiah was a civic leader and not a priest
    - Shemaiah told Nehemiah to hide in the temple, but Nehemiah was not a priest and had no authority to enter – Num. 18:7, 2 Chr. 26:16–18
- ❖ The enemy tried to use fear to cause Nehemiah to compromise his credibility – vs. 10
  - ➔ EVERYTHING IS NOT AN EMERGENCY IN LEADERSHIP. WE MUST KNOW THE DIFFERENCE
- ❖ We must use discernment in the midst of distractions – vs. 12; 1 John 4:1; Heb. 5:14; Mat. 7:15

#### God Completes What He Begins – Neh. 6:15–16

- ❖ God honors those who faithfully pursue the assignment – Neh. 6:15–16, Phil. 1:6, Ps. 126:2-3
  - The wall was completed in fifty-two days.
  - Even Israel’s enemies recognized that the work had been done with the help of God. – Acts 5:38-39



## Lesson 4 –

### Pursue Spiritual Renewal After the Work – Nehemiah 8–13

#### God's Word Revives the People – Neh. 8:1–8

- ❖ Spiritual renewal begins with the teaching and understanding of God's Word – Neh. 8:5–8, Ps. 119:105, Rom. 10:17
  - Ezra read the Word publicly before the people
  - The Levites helped the people understand what was being read
  - Revival is not emotional first—it is instructional
- ❖ You cannot sustain what you build without the Word – Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4
  - The same people who built the wall now needed the Word
  - Structure without Scripture will not last

#### Joy Strengthens the Assignment – Neh. 8:9–12

- ❖ The joy of the Lord provides strength for God's people – Neh. 8:10, Ps. 16:11, Phil. 4:4
  - The people wept when they heard the Word
  - They were reminded that joy—not sorrow—would sustain them
- ❖ Strength for the assignment comes from spiritual alignment
  - Joy flows from understanding and obedience

#### Obedience Brings Continued Renewal – Neh. 8:13–18

- ❖ Obedience to God's Word leads to ongoing spiritual growth – Neh. 8:14–17, Jam. 1:22, John 13:17
  - The people rediscovered the Feast of Tabernacles
  - They responded by doing what was written

#### Repentance Restores the Relationship with God – Neh. 9

- ❖ Spiritual renewal requires confession and repentance – Neh. 9:2–3, 1 Jn. 1:9, Ps. 51:10
  - The people separated themselves and confessed their sins
  - They acknowledged both their failure and God's faithfulness
- ❖ Revival begins with honesty before God
  - You cannot move forward while hiding what needs to be corrected

**Commitment Strengthens the Community – Neh. 10**

- ❖ Renewal requires renewed commitment to obey God – Neh. 10:28–29, Jos. 24:15, Matt. 6:33
  - The people made a covenant to follow God’s law
  - They committed to live differently moving forward
- ❖ When conviction is real, commitment will follow
  - True renewal produces visible change

**Spiritual Reform Must Be Guarded – Neh. 13**

- ❖ Spiritual progress must be maintained through continual obedience – Neh. 13:11–14, Gal. 5:1, Heb. 12:15
  - Nehemiah returned to find disorder and compromise
  - He corrected what had been neglected
- ❖ If you don’t guard it, you will lose it – Rev. 3:11, 1 Cor. 9:27
  - He restored proper worship, giving, and separation
  - He held the people accountable to their commitment
- ❖ When the assignment matters most, maintenance is just as important as momentum
  - What God starts must be continually protected and upheld

**Points to remember**

1. God’s Word produces spiritual renewal
2. Joy strengthens believers for the assignment
3. Obedience sustains what God begins
4. Repentance restores the people of God
5. Commitment strengthens spiritual progress
6. Renewal must be guarded through obedience