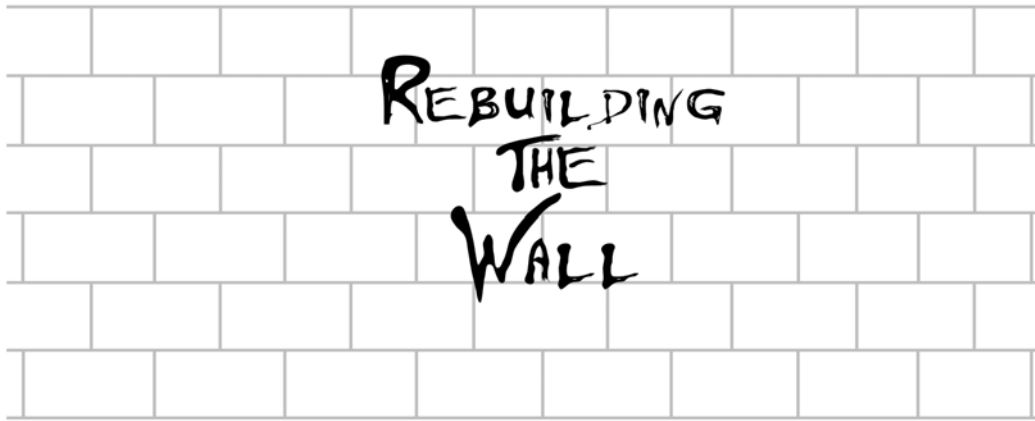


CHRISTIAN, DOES YOUR LIFE LOOK LIKE SOMETHING THAT  
GOD IS BUILDING? NEHEMIAH 6:16



A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

## STUDY 4 – INSPIRING

*Nehemiah 2:9-20*

### Study BACKGROUND

**Last Time** – We studied how Nehemiah figured out God’s will for the next part of his life. By seeking closeness with God and letting God grow compassion in him, Nehemiah was able to develop and detail a plan to help the Jews living in Jerusalem. When God blessed that plan, Nehemiah knew for sure he was to move forward and begin accomplishing it.

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**Nehemiah** did not rush ahead of God or lag behind from where God was leading him. He prayerfully planned and waited for God to provide an opportunity. He wisely and carefully spoke to the king about the details of his plan to help those in Jerusalem. When God answered Nehemiah's request by having the king show him favor, he immediately moved through the open door to begin accomplishing his God given mission in Jerusalem.

**Today**, we'll learn about *moving* in order to accomplish a work for God; we will talk about *preparing* before we lead others; and we will close our study with the ingredients needed to *inspire* others to make a change in their lives toward God.

## Topic #1: MOVING

**Nehemiah 2:9-11** Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. 11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

**Nehemiah** had to leave the comforts of palace life in order to embark on his journey to Jerusalem and achieve the mission he was called to. Upon his arrival, he had to face the authorities governing the territory where Jerusalem was situated. Nehemiah was able to keep moving forward with his plan because of a number of things that were working in his favor.

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### ***Group Questions***

- What are some of the things that were working in Nehemiah's favor?
  1. A close relationship with God caused Nehemiah to be willing to be used of God in His plan for Jerusalem
  2. Nehemiah's planning obtained the much needed letters from the king
  3. God had even caused the king to supply a military escort which showed the local government that Nehemiah was not acting on his own behalf but with the full support of the king of Persia
- (Verse 10) What was the response of the local authorities to Nehemiah's arrival? They were exceedingly grieved (greatly disturbed).
- Why do you think they were so bothered that official help was coming for the Jews? What do most people in power want? *More power.* These guys were looking at losing control of their domination over the currently subdued Jewish population in Jerusalem.
- If you were in Nehemiah's position, what would you do after receiving this not so warm of a welcome, would you *stop* with your plans, would you push forward even more forcefully, or do something else?
- (Verse 2:11) What do you think Nehemiah did for the first 3 days he was in Jerusalem? Maybe he took time to think, pray, get acquainted with some of the people, become familiar with his surroundings, see the living conditions of the city, something else?

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## Topic #2: PREPARING

**Nehemiah 2:12-16** And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. 13 And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. 14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. 15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. 16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

### *Group Questions*

- (Verse 2:12) Why did Nehemiah not tell anyone what God had put in his heart to do in Jerusalem before making his inspection of the wall and the city? When leading people to do a work, a plan of action must accompany the call for help; without direction, workers become discouraged and lose their motivation to do the work.
- (Verse 2:16) Why was it a good thing that the local rulers did not know what Nehemiah had been up to? They were already fearful of losing their control of Jerusalem. Had they been fully aware of Nehemiah's plan, they could have captured him before he inspired a movement and put an immediate stop to what he was about to do.

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### Topic #3: INSPIRING

**Nehemiah 2:17-18** Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. 18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

Nehemiah *moved* from the palace in Persia to live and work in broken down Jerusalem. He came with the written authority of the king of Persia and the presence of military force. He inspected and *prepared* after he arrived. The greatest strength Nehemiah came to Jerusalem with was a deep conviction that God wanted him there; and it was this conviction that caused him to *inspire* a people, and create an unstoppable movement.

#### ***Group Questions***

- (Verse 2:17) How did Nehemiah begin his motivational "speech"? He called their attention to the dire need they were in and used the pronoun "we" to include himself in the situation along with the Jews who had already been living there.
- (Verse 2:17) What does Nehemiah's call to action appeal to? The Jews sense of patriotism and nationalistic pride.
- (Verse 2:18) What two things did Nehemiah tell the Jews that would inspire a movement? 1) that God Himself had ordained this plan; and 2) the king of Persia was also supporting the work.

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- (Verse 2:18) How did the people respond to Nehemiah's call to action? They were united in their agreement to build the wall and the city. And they put their actions behind their words – they set their hands to do it.

**Nehemiah 2:19-20** But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? 20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

**Nehemiah didn't even acknowledge his opponents' inaccurate accusation** because he knew the king had given him permission to do this work. However, Nehemiah's response did redirect his mockers' attention to the truth that God Himself would be the One responsible for the success of Jerusalem's reconstruction and God's opponents would have no legacy in it.

## Life CHANGE

### PRINCIPLE 1 - MOVING

Nehemiah had to move to Jerusalem in order to obey what God wanted him to do next in his life. He let go of comfortable living in a Persian palace. He parted with friends and maybe some family living in Persia at the time. Not only did Nehemiah have to let go of a life he knew and relationships that were important to him, but once he arrived in Jerusalem he had to deal with uncertainties, uncomfortable situations, strange surroundings, and sometimes hostile people.

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## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Am I willing to *move* if I believe God is calling me to some other place? If God did call me to a different place, what would be the most *difficult* thing to let go of? If I am unwilling to trust God and go where He is calling, what does that say about my *relationship* with Him? What's the *alternative* to not answering His call?

## PRINCIPLE 2 - PREPARING

Nehemiah prepared to address the Jews about their lives by inspecting the wall and the city ruins. By seeing the terrible condition of the city firsthand, he was not only impassioned in his plea but also accurate in his assessment of the work needed to rebuild. Nehemiah did not tell anyone what he believed God wanted him to do until he got a clear picture of what would be needed to accomplish the work. Nehemiah knew that a plan of action must come with his call for help because without direction, workers become discouraged and lose motivation to complete a job. Nehemiah also wisely kept the opposition under control by not revealing any information too soon. Each Christian may not be called to lead a huge movement, but God does want each of us to influence others around us to be in relationship with Him.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

FOR ALL CHRISTIANS: Am I familiar enough with the *plan* of salvation to talk to someone who I know needs Christ? Do I *identify* with the person I'm talking to and offer Christ as the solution to their needs? Does my life's *message* match my good news message?

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FOR LEADER CHRISTIANS: How can I better identify with the needs of the people I am leading? Do I plan out steps to lead people to a destination prior to communicating vision to them? Do I equally inform all parties to reduce opposition?

### PRINCIPLE 3 - INSPIRING

When Nehemiah spoke to the people in Jerusalem, he inspired a movement. Nehemiah's message identified with the pain and humiliation of his fellow believers. Then he told them that God was with his plan to rebuild and that the king supported the work. The Jews agreed to answer the call and did not just say so but put their hands to the task. Nehemiah's message had the correct ingredients to inspire a people to make a change in their lives. Nehemiah *connected* with the Jews, spoke to their *need*, told them that *God* was on their side, and that even the king supported the effort. God wants to use Christians to inspire change in others' lives.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

How well do I *inspire* others to follow God? Do people see me as *genuine* and in touch with everyday people's struggles? Does my life show God's *power* and blessing?

GOD WAS ABLE TO WORK THROUGH  
NEHEMIAH TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO  
MAKE A CHANGE IN THEIR LIVES;  
WILL I LET HIM USE ME?