



7-DAY DEVOTIONAL PRAYER GUIDE ABOUT HEART:

“A Prayerful Longing to See God’s Glory”

Gleanings from select scripture passages in the Book of Nehemiah

by Rev. Lee Butler



WRITER’S BIO

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NOTES

Day 1 Trusting in God's Plan
Lee Butler

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11

A US Marine was trapped in a cave with the enemy quickly approaching. He prayed and asked God to spare his life. He noticed a spider building a web over the front of his cave. He thought, "What I need is a brick wall and the Lord has sent me a spider web." To his amazement the enemy passed by the cave entrance and his life was spared because the spider web gave the appearance as if no one had entered for quite some time. (Story from Steve Champeau, "The Utah Veteran") Nehemiah's prayer reflected three ways he trusted God and his example is a great encouragement for church revitalization.

We must acknowledge our current reality.

Our fear of the future often drives a denial of reality. Nehemiah didn't deny the reality of Jerusalem. He acknowledged it and sought God for the sake of his homeland. We must learn to trust God in spite of circumstances.

We must turn to God for His plan.

We need to seek God first instead of waiting until our plan goes wrong. Nehemiah praised God for His faithfulness and confessed the sin of his people. We must trust God's plan for His people.

We must stand on His promises.

We need to be more aware of God's promises. Nehemiah prayed the promises of God. We must trust God to keep His promises.

God may work in ways that we don't anticipate, but He ways can always be trusted.

Prayer

Lord, help us to trust You as we seek to see Your church and our lives revitalized for Your glory! Amen!

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Day 2

Learning to Be Patient

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Read Nehemiah 2:1-8

"And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me." Nehemiah 2:8 (NAS)

A four-year old boy asked his mother: "Are we there yet?" His mother asked him to be quiet and stop asking that question to which he responded: "Will I still be four when we get there?"

Nehemiah teaches us a lesson in leadership that is so hard to learn and even more difficult to practice... wait for it... *Patience*. While it is true that revitalization calls for intentional relationships and action, it also calls for us to remain in a posture of waiting for God to reveal His timing. The temptation for some in situations like Nehemiah faced is to launch a quick response in the name of justice for God's people. We must be careful to discern God's timing as He works in our lives and in the life of our churches. The change that is needed in many cases must be brought with compassionate and strategic patience as well as intention. Nehemiah prayed for FOUR MONTHS and waited for God's timing to be revealed!

As a result of Nehemiah's prayerful and patient response to the situation, God developed in his mind a well thought out plan which emphasized Nehemiah's heart to help his people and this plan impressed the king. The fact that the king granted Nehemiah's request for the materials and permission to do the work confirmed God's timing and plan.

God's ways are perfect, and His timing is perfect! When God reveals His timing, His provision is sure to follow!

Prayer

Lord, help us to discern Your ways and Your timing. Help us to have patience as we navigate the paths of revitalization. Amen!

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Day 3

Encouraging the People

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Read Nehemiah 2:17-20

“Then they said, ‘Let us arise and build. So, they put their hands to the good work.’” Nehemiah 2:18

In his study Bible, Dr. Charles Stanley comments, **“Nehemiah could not have accomplished what God put on his heart unless he had encouraged the Lord’s people in the task.”**

Although it may seem like an obvious thought, we must always remember that the people of the church must support the work of the church. The active obedience of His people bears witness to the community that God is at work transforming hearts and lives for eternity.

We often want to do things ourselves because we foolishly believe we are the ones best suited to do them “right.” While God will surely give us plenty of opportunities to serve Him according to His will, He has also called His people, the body of Christ to serve Him. The people responded when Nehemiah encouraged them by sharing the needs of the moment as well as what God had been doing up to that point.

God has not called pastors to bring revitalization to churches without the loving and prayerful support of the congregation. As leaders we need to make the needs of the church known and help encourage the people to meet the needs by sharing what God has already been doing.

Many churches face a difficult and uncertain future, but they can face it best when they are encouraged by God’s man who loves to see the opportunities for the glory of God to be made manifest through the lives of His people!

Prayer

Lord, help us to bring encouragement to Your church as we share the hope we have in You to restore our spiritual vitality and bring You glory in our communities. Amen!

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Day 5 Pursuing a Purpose
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Read Nehemiah 6:16-7:3

“When all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.” Nehemiah 6:16

Rome may not have been built in a day, but Nehemiah finished the wall around Jerusalem in 52 days! Even so, this did not mark the end of “revitalization in Jerusalem.” God had accomplished the rebuilding of the wall but His plan to rebuild the faith of His people was not yet complete. Practitioners in the work of revitalization often remark, “Revitalization is a process, not a program.” How much more is this true of God’s work in our lives?

Mark Clifton encourages leaders with the reminder that Heaven alone will reveal the results of our Kingdom work done while on earth. This work on earth will not be completed and we will not be perfected until Jesus returns. In the meantime, we must remain focused on the reason that we seek revitalization in our churches. We must persevere in our efforts to be used of God to reflect His glory in our communities. Nehemiah’s neighbors “lost confidence” (gave up) in their plan to stop the work because they saw it was accomplished by God’s power.

The work of revitalization is not that of completing a program, it’s pursuing the purpose of reflecting of the glory of God as He works in our communities.

Prayer

Lord, help us not grow weary in lifting up Your name so that all will see Your glory. May we reflect the Light of the world as we follow You. Amen!

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Day 7

Empowering Leaders

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Read Nehemiah 3:1-22

"Moreover, next to him the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles did not support the work of their masters."
Nehemiah 3:5

Perhaps everyone is not a leader. Perhaps not every leader assumes empowerment. Revitalization requires leadership. Lack of leadership has hindered many efforts towards revitalization in the local church. What should our prayerful response be in regard to this situation?

Though we can learn various leadership skills from Nehemiah, he shows us a key component in responding to God's call to bring fresh life into our churches. We must help our churches empower leaders to serve in areas in which they are gifted and are passionate about serving. This requires intentionality and prayerful consideration. Three practical steps in this process are: 1. Illustrating the intersection of the need at hand and giftedness of those who can meet the need 2. Providing the opportunity to respond to the need and a compelling vision to follow 3. Celebrating the work that has been accomplished. Many responded but some did not.

The ones who did respond were passionate about repairing and defending the areas in which they lived, but up to this point they had not rebuilt the wall. Nehemiah's leadership reflected the practical steps above as he led the people to meet the needs at hand. They did so in record time and they celebrated before moving on to the next part of their mission.

God desires His people to passionately respond to needs around them according to the gifts He has given to them.

Prayer

Lord, teach us what it means to empower the leaders of Your church to serve as You would have them serve. Help me be the leader you desire me to be for Your glory. Amen!