

“DEEP WATERS” – A Men’s Leadership Study in Nehemiah
Lesson Three: Builders of the Wall
Nehemiah 3:1–32

Opening Question: Name the people who sat next to your family in church this past Sunday. (That was tough, wasn’t it?) Okay, let’s try another one. **Name the people who live east of your home in your neighborhood.** (Perhaps that was a little easier).

The purpose of this little exercise in futility of most of us is to establish that, for many of us, remembering names is very difficult. But people are more than faces – they are names as well. In this chapter of Nehemiah, we are introduced to people – not just faces, but names...73 in all, if my counting is correct. People were very important for Nehemiah. A good leader will know those people that he leads.

I must admit that this is something that I have to work at all the time. It is difficult to remember names.

Date of this chapter: perhaps as many as three to four months have passed. Nehemiah had to make the long journey from Susa to Jerusalem – a distance of about one thousand miles.

This chapter describes the reconstruction of 45 sections of the wall, beginning on the northern side and going counter-clockwise from west to east. The focus is upon the gates.

Verses 1–2: The Sheep Gate was near the Pool of Bethesda in the Northeast corner of the city.

Tower of the Hundred – could refer to its height (100 cubits, approximately 150 feet), the

number of steps leading up to it, or the military unit housed there (a force of 100 soldiers)

Tower of Hananel – these two towers protected the Northern side of the Temple which was most vulnerable

Eliashib and the priests were to set the example

Priests – First Group to Respond – Religious Leaders must take the Lead

Verses 3–4 – In verse 4, the Hebrew word translated “repaired” means “to make firm or strong.” It does

not mean a total restoration. Evidently, here was a place where the wall was not totally destroyed. And so only a restoration was required.

Sons of Hassenaah; Meremoth; Meshullum; Zadok – Individuals and family members

Question: Name a project at your home where you might include your family members – sons, daughters – to help bring it to completion. What blessings might come from that time together? Or, let me put it another way: What project does your wife have that you might come and help her with?

Verse 5 – “But their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors”

There are always some people who feel they are too good to get their hands dirty in a project.

It is unfortunate that these individuals were the leaders of the community of Tekoa. What an embarrassment they must have been to the citizens of that little community south of Jerusalem. Yet we read that the members of that community built two sections of the wall (verses 5 and 27). They would have made Jeremiah proud!

Question: As a leader how do you respond to someone who does not want to be a part of the project at hand? How did Nehemiah and the people of Tekoa handle this situation? (They ignored these people, did not let their negativity impact their desire to help; they did not get bogged down in trying to persuade them either, and there was no begging. Once the offer is extended, if some do not respond, you work with those who do respond)

Verses 6–12 – Another listing of individuals who helped;

Men from Gibeon and Mizpah – cities on the northern side of Jerusalem

One goldsmith – a jeweler, if you will

One perfume-maker – both these positions were by men who did intricate things with their

hands, not used to sledges and hammers – but both helped

Two governmental leaders mentioned, including one that got help from his daughters (evidently

he had no sons – so this is an intergenerational)

Verses 13–32 – a continuation of the people who helped

Key phrase to note: “next to him” or “next to them” or “after him” or “after them”

Used 28 times in this chapter; found in 21 of the 32 verses

Key Leadership Principle: Nehemiah had the ability to get everyone involved

- Nehemiah had spent countless hours putting the plan together
- Nehemiah had calculated the resources they were going to need
- Nehemiah had also calculated the supervision that would be needed to see the project to completion

Four reasons for giving residence assignments (from Getz)

1. People who were assigned to sections of the wall near their homes would be more personally involved and more highly motivated.

2. People would not have to travel to another part of the city to do the job, wasting valuable time.
3. In case of attack, these people would not be tempted to leave their posts, but would stay and protect their families.
4. The task would be a family effort, using all available talent.

Cyril Barber: "By arranging for each man to work close to his own home, Nehemiah made it easy for them to get to work, to be sustained while on the job, and to safeguard those who were nearest and dearest to them. This relieved each worker of any unnecessary anxiety. It also insured that each person would put his best effort into what he was doing." (Getz, p. 53)

More Leadership Principles:

1. Nehemiah was a good manager

1 Timothy 3:4-5 - He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

2. Nehemiah got people involved

There was a task for everyone to do.

Nehemiah "cut the problem down to size where everyone felt needed."

President Eisenhower once said, "Leadership is the ability to get a person to do what you want him to do, when you want it done, in a way you want it done, because he wants to do it." (Campbell, p. 25)

This is what a church is to do: I appreciated how the Finance Committee for the Operation Fishnet helped make the project all inclusive. No one would be left out.

3. Nehemiah was good at encouraging people

Applying these principles to the Church: (Campbell, p. 33)

1. The work of God should be carried on in an orderly and organized fashion

1 Corinthians 14:40 - But everything should be done in a sitting and orderly way.

2. There must be a division of labor in the Lord's work

Ephesians 4:11-13 - It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

3. The Lord's work required the involvement of all kinds of people from different walks of life

1 Corinthians 12:7 – Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Nehemiah 3 through at least twice this week. (Don't worry about the names)

1. What major task is facing you at home? At your work place? At your church?
2. What resources will be needed to accomplish that task at home? At your workplace? At your church?
3. How might you encourage others to help you accomplish that task?
 - Your family members
 - Your fellow employees
 - Your church family