

Read - Neh. 2:9-4:23; other references as given.

1. Nehemiah was accompanied by several Persian officers and horsemen during his journey to Jerusalem (Neh. 2:9). Bible scholars estimate this journey took approximately two to three months. (Note: Ezra's return, 14 years earlier, took four months with a much larger group [cf. Ezra 7:8, 9].) No doubt Nehemiah was excited to arrive safely at Jerusalem (Neh. 2:11). What was the first response to Nehemiah's arrival (Neh. 2:10)?

2. Nehemiah likely spent the first three days in Jerusalem recuperating from the long and strenuous journey (v. 11, cf. Ezra 8:32). After three days, Nehemiah arose in the night to inspect the wall (vv.12-16). (Note: it was probably the first moonlit night.) He told no one what God had directed him to do for Jerusalem (v. 12).
 - a. Why do you think he was so secretive about his activities during this time (vv. 12-17)?

 - b. From the time of Nehemiah's arrival to the completion of his inspection of the wall, his actions reveal several important principles about effective leadership. Please list at least three (Neh. 2:10-16).

3. After Nehemiah had completed a thorough inspection of the southern portion of the wall (i. e., the Valley Gate, the Dragon's Well, etc.), he called all the people together and communicated his vision to them (Neh. 2:17, 18). List at least three things Nehemiah said to the Jews that would have encouraged them to enthusiastically support the rebuilding of the wall (Neh. 2:17, 18).

4. Nehemiah said, "**Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach**" (Neh. 2:17). The clarity of Nehemiah's challenge presented the Jews with a clear objective—to work together to rebuild the wall. Occasionally leaders (pastors, ministry leaders, employers, parents, etc.) become frustrated with their people even though they have never communicated clearly defined expectations. Are you certain that those who are looking to you for leadership know what you expect of them (e.g., fellow workers, children, etc.)? If you are uncertain, ask them to tell you what they think you expect of them.

Sample Study _____ **Nehemiah** _____

5. Another important characteristic of godly leadership is the ability to handle criticism effectively. It would have been easy for Nehemiah to react negatively to Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem's attack on his motives. Nehemiah used it as an opportunity to testify for God when he said, "**The God of heaven Himself will prosper us**" (Neh. 2:20).
 - a. Nehemiah's enemies attacked two specific areas of his leadership (Neh. 2:19). Examine their two questions and try to identify the specific areas of attack that every leader might experience (Neh. 2:19).
 - b. How is the Lord's bondservant supposed to respond when someone falsely accuses or wrongs him (2 Tim. 2:24, 25)?

6. When believers react defensively toward the criticism of others, they reject an important means that God uses to impart spiritual truth. Rather than making it easy for others to point out weaknesses and faults, the individual's defensive nature (cf. Gen. 3:8-13) hinders his spiritual progress by setting up an emotional defense system that keeps others away.
 - a. Do you regularly react negatively (e.g., justify your actions, attack other people, pout, etc.) when someone points out something you have done wrong?
 - b. What specific things could you do to become more receptive to the criticism of others?

7. Nehemiah's record of the initial reconstruction of the wall (Neh. 3:1-32) is probably a summary of the notable individuals and families who contributed to the work. His summary of the work begins on the northeast side of the wall and proceeds counterclockwise. Many Christians do not apply themselves to a diligent study of certain passages such as this because they do not believe there is much spiritual benefit to be gained. What important truth should God's people remember when they study a portion of Scripture such as this one (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)?

8. Reconstruction of various portions of the wall was assigned to specific groups and families. The wall had lain in ruins since its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar about 130 years earlier. *Why do you think* Eliashib, the high priest, is mentioned first, and why was he assigned to rebuild the Sheep Gate (Neh. 3:1)?

Sample Study *Nehemiah*

1. Two men, Sanballat and Tobiah, were very displeased that Nehemiah had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel. (Note: These two men were government officials living in the area. Perhaps they saw Nehemiah as a threat to their control of the people.)
2.
 - a.
 1. Nehemiah needed to make a personal assessment of the condition of the wall and formulate a specific plan so that the people would have confidence that he knew what he was doing. If he had revealed an uneducated conceptual plan before surveying the wall, there is little doubt that he would have undermined his credibility. The wall had lain in ruins for approximately 130 years, and he needed the wholehearted support of the people to accomplish the task.
 2. Nehemiah was already aware of resistance to his presence in the area (cf. Neh. 2:10), and he did not need anyone to misrepresent him or his plans' objectives.
 - b.
 1. A leader must have a thorough knowledge of the work to be accomplished. Nehemiah did this by inspecting the wall himself. This allowed him to speak with authority and gain the confidence of the people.
 2. A leader must take care of his physical well-being so that he can effectively meet the challenges ahead. Nehemiah did this by resting three days before he began his work (Neh. 2:11). A leader who is emotionally exhausted is usually ineffective.
 3. A leader must know how and when to share his goals and objectives. Nehemiah made a thorough examination of the wall, brought the people together, and shared his goal of rebuilding the wall.
3.
 1. He explained the need (i.e., bad situation, reproach) before he shared his vision to rebuild the wall.
 2. He identified with the people (e.g., "**You see the distress that we are in...**" "**let us build up the wall.**")
 3. He told the people how God had led him to this point and how King Artaxerxes had endorsed the work.
4. Answers will vary.
5.
 - a.
 1. Nehemiah's enemies attacked his judgment, "**What is this thing that you are doing?**".
 2. They attacked his motives, "**Will you rebel against the king?**".
 - b. The Lord's bondservant should not be quarrelsome but be kind to all and patient when wronged.
6.
 - a. Answers will vary.
 - b. Answers will vary but could include the following:
 1. Pray for the wisdom to be more teachable.
 2. Study the Biblical passages that specifically address the characteristics of humility.
 3. Try to accept the criticism of others as a gift from God.
 4. Attempt to focus on the message rather than the manner in which the message was delivered or the messenger who delivers God's message. This will help you overcome the immediate shock of being hurt by the criticism.
 5. Make a conscious decision not to defend yourself when someone criticizes you.
7. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
8. It was fitting for the high priest to set an example of supporting the work. If he had been unwilling to contribute, there is little doubt that others would have been reluctant to help (e.g., the Levites, v. 17; the priest, vv. 26, 28). The animals that were brought to the temple for sacrifice were brought in through the Sheep Gate, so it was logical that Eliashib should take responsibility for its reconstruction.