

Nehemiah had a terrible problem almost 3,000 years ago. God's people had ignored everything that was good and right. So the Lord allowed them to be conquered and taken captive by the mighty Babylonian Empire. There, they were slaves and exiles – and they mourned for their fallen nation. Their story teaches you and me some incredible secrets to success. Ladies, here are 13 life lessons believers can take away from the Book of Nehemiah.

Do your job well.

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, Follow your heart.

Honest hard work is something God seeks from all of us. God's Word tells us that working hard with faith in mind can lead to great things He has planned for us. DO NOT GIVE UP!

FOLLOW YOUR HEART.

One day, Nehemiah's brother visited him and told him that their hometown of Jerusalem was in ruins. The walls protecting it had been pulled down. The city gates had been burned. The people were unprotected from marauders that roamed the countryside, robbing and looting – and worse. In deep mourning, Nehemiah prayed for the mercy of the Lord, that they might rebuild the walls of the city. In order for that to happen, the Persian King would have to let God's people go home. The Lord blessed Nehemiah, giving the lowly cupbearer favor with the king.

Reflect & Pray

What are a couple of “destroyed wall” situations that are troubling you? How will prayerfully asking for God’s help and guidance help you start the rebuilding process?

God, I need Your help. I can't fix these problems alone. Help me to understand the situation, and then to seek Your help and guidance in resolving the challenges before me.

Seek the Lord's guidance.

Nehemiah was given his freedom and allowed to go rebuild Jerusalem's walls. There First Chronicles 16:11 says, “Seek the LORD and His strength, seek His face continually.” One of the best ways to seek the Lord's guidance is to pray and listen. Prayer is important, not only because it strengthens our relationship with God, but also because it connects us spiritually with Him and the world around us. When you aren't in a committed relationship with God and don't value the importance of prayer, it's easy to get distracted by everything going on in the world around you. When prayers aren't answered the way we want them to be, the conversation easily goes from “we” to “me”. But when you routinely pray, and listen to what God is saying, our focus shifts from the personal to the needs of others, and you'll better understand what God is telling you.

What are you seeking or needing God's guidance with?

Seek the Lord's help.

Ask God for help when you have an impossible situation. Nehemiah writes: “I sat down and wept and mourned for days and fasted and prayed constantly before the God of heaven, and I said, O Lord God, let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to the prayer of Your servant. We have sinned against You. Yes, I and my father's house

have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, statutes, and ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. All of life, especially the battles we face in the realm of faith, should be bathed in prayer. God loves you. He is waiting to hear from you.

Go to your Father and ask for help...write it out

Be alert.

Watch for His answers! And the Lord answered Nehemiah, saying: “If you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the farthest parts, yet will I gather them.” If you ask the Lord for something, be ready to act when He answers your prayer. One of the best ways to watch for God’s answers is by getting to know Him. Jesus placed great emphasis on the Holy Spirit. He actually told the disciples it was better for them that He leaves so they might receive the Spirit. The Bible tells us, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away” (John 16:7)

Follow through.

It’s one thing to start a job. It’s tough to finish. Nehemiah wrote: Then I said to them, You see the bad situation we are in—how Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates are burned with fire. Come, let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a disgrace. The Lord opened the door for Nehemiah to return home and rebuild the walls. So, Nehemiah set to work to get the job done – enlisting anybody who would help.

God has done.

Never be afraid to talk about what God has done for you! Nehemiah wrote: Then I told them of the hand of my God which was upon me for good, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, Let us rise up and build! So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

One great way to tell what God has done is to praise Him. Start a gratitude journal.

Be ready for opposition.

One form of opposition we have to face daily is attacks from the enemy. As Christians, it's important that we are mindful of the enemy's presence and his attacks, so that we are not weakened by his false promises, and led to sin. If we want to protect ourselves from the enemy, we must first turn to God. Only He can protect us from Satan, and our will against Him.

Dare to fight back.

Nehemiah didn't tremble in fright. He writes: I answered them, The God of heaven will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem. Sometimes God will simply run a protective shield around you where nothing will be able to get through to attack you. Other times something will start to slip through to come directly against you, and then God will move ahead of you to take it out. This is where God will take your enemy head on and do battle with it. God will also use opportunities to fight the battle through you.

Prepare for the worst.

Nehemiah was no warrior, but he realized he had to be ready to fight. He wrote: And when our enemies heard their plot was known to us and that God had frustrated their purpose, we all returned to our work. Half worked and half held spears, shields, bows and arrows. Everyone worked with one hand and held a weapon with the other. Each had a purpose as a believer is to build the Kingdom of God. Your role in His Kingdom will require your natural gifts and talents. As Christians, it's important to start the exploration of calling with the call to follow Jesus. The call to belong to Christ is everything. When we belong to Jesus, we're finally able to make God look glorious in our lives. This will also empower you to live a greater life in Christ. There's no way you can follow God's purpose in your life if you don't know who you are in Christ.

Be determined.

There are various types of hope that we can hold onto when we feel like our world is falling apart. Psalm 62:5 says, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him." Restful hope allows you to sleep at night because you know tomorrow is in God's hands. When you realize that tomorrow is already taken care of by God alone and the hope you have in Him, then you can find rest. It's easier to sleep tonight if you know tomorrow is in God's hands.

OUR FAITH, FAMILY AND FUTURE ARE WORTH FIGHTING FOR.

Building a foundation of hope for our families will help carry them through the storms of life. In order to do this, we must first submit yourself to God. He is the source of our hope. When we come to Him in humility, He restores us. Next, strengthen your faith. Allow God's previously fulfilled promises to renew your hope. God has given us written record of countless ways He has provided hope for believers in centuries in the past.

God always has a vision.

When people work hard to accomplish a great goal, the temptation is to stop and rest. God's people should stop and celebrate victories, just as Nehemiah and his people did. But God is never finished with us. After we give thanks to Him for bringing us to a new place on our journey, we must pause asking, **"What, now, is your will?"** We are always on a journey with Him. We cannot become what God wants us to be if we don't listen to Him

Prayer is essential.

Prayer is a powerful tool for communicating with our Heavenly Father. We must be ready to hear God's voice. He can speak to us at any time. If we are not turning our hearts toward God to seek His guidance, how can His vision reach our hearts? **The prophet Habakkuk climbed up onto the broken walls believing that God had a vision for him and his people. Habakkuk was willing to wait for that vision.**

Prayer is also an opportunity to become one with the Creator and Giver of all things. Prayer helps us to find strength for today and hope for our future. **We should actively pray and trust in its power to change our circumstances for good.** Your faith life directly correlates to the quality of your prayer life. Prayer has the power to change not only the people and things around you. Prayer also has the power to change you from the inside out. When you're in need of strength, remember that God is the number one healer and can guide you in endless ways. If your heart and life are centered on God, His Word and His Holy Spirit, you can rest assured that He will direct your path.

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