

How To Get Things Done (and get along, too!)

An Inductive Study through Nehemiah



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10. What do you think you'll have to *adjust* to bring about these changes?

Change

Adjust

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

11. Now list the *action* steps you will need to take to make these changes:

Change

Action

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

12. Will you take the action to make the change? Explain:

Remember:

To do the same things over and over again and expect a different result is insanity.

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6. On the second day of reading God’s word, the Jews had a different reaction. What was it? (vs.13-16)

7. In order to do what God’s Word commanded, list some practical things—besides what the verses say—the Jews would have had to do to carry out God’s word:

1.

2.

3.

8. What if the Jews had just made a list of what they should do, but never quite got around to *doing* it. What do you think would have happened?

9. Have you *accepted* that God wants some changes in your life? Think of a few things you know God wants you to change in your life:

1.

2.

3.

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2. The logical side of Jim understood there was no way out. What *adjustments* do you think Jim would have to make?

Emotional:

Relational:

Physical:

Psychological:

3. What *actions* would Jim need to take in order to make the adjustments complete?

Emotional:

Relational:

Physical:

Psychological:

4. If Jim never implemented these *actions*, how do you think he would *adjust* to the move?

5. In Nehemiah 8, we learned that the Jews had heard the Word of God again after living without it for a couple of generations. They not only heard it, they also _____ (vs. 8) it and their reaction to it was _____. (vs. 9)

What Happens When the Word Comes In.

Focus Passage: Nehemiah 8



Introduction

Jim’s family was moving. Next year he would have been a senior at the high school he had attended the last three years. In fact, this was the only school district Jim had ever attended, and he knew some of the kids since kindergarten. By diligence and long hours of practice he had won first chair sax in the jazz band for the next school year. Two months ago he had started dating Emily, a sweet girl who was in his church youth group, and he really felt this relationship could go somewhere.

But, his dad’s employer had said move it or lose it. There was no way his dad could give up this job.

To say that Jim was upset by this plan to move was an understatement.

1. If you were Jim, what would you do?

After weeks of silence, anger, heated talks, depression, and, yes, even some tears on Jim’s part, he came to *accept* there was no way out. They’d be moving in just a few, short weeks, at the end of his junior year.

“C’mon, Joe, can’t you hold the hold the light steady for even one second? I’m trying to see how to adjust this last bolt,” blasted Kevin, irritated that his partner wasn’t helping enough.

“Hey, I’ve been under this engine for three nights just like you have, so don’t blame me ‘cause you can’t get the crazy thing running.”

“That’s just like you -- can’t even work on something with a friend without turning it into a problem!”

“Problem, huh? The problem is that we spend all this time on things you want to get done, and half the time you’re hacked off about why these things never work. You know, Kevin, you’re not exactly the easiest person in the world to work with.”

That was all it took. Kevin slams the wrench down and, while muttering under his breath, stomps away like a little child who won’t play with the neighborhood kids.

Getting things done -- finishing a project -- is one thing. But getting things done *and* getting along with those we’re working with is quite another. After all, it’s not just about accomplishing the mission, but accomplishing the mission with the team in tact.

No story in recorded history better illustrates the role of a leader in seeing both elements come together in the right way than the story of Nehemiah. As God's construction specialist, Nehemiah was charged with rebuilding the walls of the city in order to better protect the Israelites and allow them to worship Jehovah in an undistracted manner. Sounds clear enough. But throw in tens of thousands of newly transplanted Jews as well as hostile neighbors and spies, and Nehemiah has more than he bargained for. He's suddenly looking at more than a simple retaining wall built on a Saturday as a family project. Nehemiah is faced with undertaking the project *and* unifying the people.

So how does he do it? What happens? You're about to find out in this Digging Deeper Bible Study through the epic story of Nehemiah, God's anointed leader who understood the awesome privilege of helping people get things done and get along, too!

17. Nehemiah was able to resolve a mess by...

1. pointing the people to what? (vs 9 & 13)
2. having what kind of character? (vs 14 - 18).

18. When life gets messy, how will you remember to use Nehemiah's tactics to clean it up?

Remember:

**People don't care how much you
know until they know how much you care.**

14. Has the same reason ever caused you to behave a certain way? Explain:

15. Now compare and contrast what you said earlier about handling the Jen and Lydia mess with the way Nehemiah handled the mess between the Jews:

	Yours	Nehemiah's
Emotions		
Thoughts		
Actions		

16. In trying to resolve the Jen and Lydia mess, how do your decisions compare to those of Nehemiah? Explain:

Chapter One

**How to Get Things Done
and Get Along Too**

Focus Passage: Nehemiah Overview



Leaders. We all need them. We all have them. Whether negatively or positively, leaders impact our lives in more ways than we can imagine. Think about it -- from Jesus to Hitler, leaders have made great contributions as well as tragic mistakes.

Have you ever wondered what traits identify a great leader?

1. Name five characteristics that come to your mind when you think of a great leader:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2. Nehemiah is a man God chose as a leader. In Nehemiah 1:4-6, list what Nehemiah did after he heard that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3. How do these things compare to the characteristics you listed earlier?

4. What do you think these actions show about the kind of leader Nehemiah was?

5. Why do you think God would choose this kind of leader?

6. Look at Matthew 20:25-28. What did Jesus have to say about being a leader?

9. What were Nehemiah, his brothers, and servants doing? (vs 10) What does this say about Nehemiah's commitment to making things right?

10. *How* did Nehemiah ask and *what* did he ask them to give back? (vs. 11)

11. How did the people respond this time? (vs. 12)

12. What was Nehemiah's reaction to the people's decision? (vs 12-13)

- 1.
- 2.

13. What did Nehemiah do that other governors before him had not done? (vs. 14-16) Why did Nehemiah do this? (vs. 15)

2. What things were happening to contribute to this mess? (vs.2-5)

3. Get out a dictionary—what is “usury?”

4. Why was it *not good* what the people were doing to each other?

5. What was Nehemiah angry about and accusing the nobles and officials of? (vs. 6ff, also see Lev. 25:39-42; Eze. 22:12-13)

6. Compare Nehemiah’s response to Jesus’ response in John 2:13-16. What is similar about these two situations?

7. With this intense passion to see wrong fail and right prevail, what steps did Nehemiah take to help resolve this situation? (vs. 7-11)

8. How did the people respond to Nehemiah’s statements? (vs 8) Why do you think they responded this way? What do you imagine they were feeling?

As we study the book of Nehemiah, we will see Nehemiah’s passion to not only get something done (rebuilding the wall), but also get it done with the right attitude, united with others.

7. Have you ever felt as passionate about a situation as Nehemiah was? Maybe you wanted to help change something that you felt could be done better; maybe something was broken and you *really* wanted it fixed; or maybe it was a fractured relationship that you desperately wanted mended.

Name a situation you felt compelled to do something about:

Did you try to change the situation, or just let it go? Why? If yes, how did you go about it?

8. As you look at your own life, what “attitude adjustments” need to take place for you to become the kind of leader that Jesus described and Nehemiah exemplified? How can you be a humble servant today, and get along with others while doing it?

**Remember:
Everything rises or
falls on leadership.**

Instead, Nehemiah insightfully recognized his re-builders' real problem and moved to remove the obstacle. The method of rebuilding - from unguarded to very guarded - changed. But the mission - rebuild the wall - never did.

10. Have you ever begun a mission for God—maybe talking to someone about God, or starting a Bible study at school, or serving someone? What have you begun?

11. What steps have you taken to accomplish the mission?

12. What obstacles have come up against the completion of your mission?

13. Specifically, how can you follow Nehemiah's example to help you work through difficult situations now or in the future?

Remember:

**God can turn stumbling blocks
into stepping stones.**

3. After praying, what did Nehemiah tell the King he needed? (2:5,7,8)

1.

2.

3.

How do you think Nehemiah felt after the king granted him his requests?

4. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, how did he begin his task? (2:11-16)

Why do you think he was so secretive about what he was doing?

What are some negative things that could have happened if he had not first assessed the situation and privately formulated a plan?

5. What four things did Nehemiah say to the people in Jerusalem? (2:17-18)

1.

2.

3.

4.

Nehemiah passed on the vision and delegated the work in order to get others involved.

6. Have you ever taken on a large project and tried to do it all by yourself? If so, how did it work out?

Did you wish you had talked to others about helping?

7. What could be some reasons Nehemiah got others involved?

8. Why do you think these people were so eager to follow Nehemiah? (2:18)

9. The whole third chapter of Nehemiah speaks of people's involvement in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls:

Who did *not* support the work of their masters?

Who had his daughters helping him?

Meshullam, the son of Berechiah, repaired what two places?

What group of people repaired two different places?

4. Do you think the re-builders had a real cause for concern? Explain:

5. Whether the threat was valid or not, Nehemiah realized he had a problem. What was the problem?

6. List all of the things Nehemiah did to solve this problem: (vs.13ff)

7. When faced with outside opposition and his re-builders' fear, Nehemiah still kept to his mission, which was...

8. When the re-builders knew that guards were stationed, how did they respond? (vs. 15)

9. If Nehemiah had answered the re-builders' fear by saying, "Look, we've prayed, we've set up a guard, that's all we're going to do, now get back to work!" How do you think the re-builders would have responded?

Backbones and Drawing Boards

Focus Passage: Nehemiah 4



Let's say you're on a trip with your youth group. You've brought along a liter of Mt. Dew, which you've managed to consume in its entirety in the last 3 hours. The driver of the vehicle you're in says the next stop won't be for another hour. What are some emotions you're feeling?

The re-builders of Jerusalem's walls may have had some of those very same feelings, but for a different reason, and to a much more intense degree.

1. How far along was the re-building? (vs. 6)
2. What were the re-builders' neighbors saying about this wall's reconstruction? (vs.11)
3. How many times did the re-builders complain about what their neighbors were saying? (vs.12)

38 men and 14 groups of people completed about 4 1/2 miles of the wall in 52 days.

God's plan was carried out by a godly leader who continuously prayed, planned, examined, identified, and delegated as he led the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem's wall and then live within their land.

10. Read Nehemiah chapter 5 and give examples where Nehemiah did the following:

- Prayed
- Planned
- Examined
- Identified
- Delegated

11. Look at your own life. Choose a situation/project that you need to tackle and use these five words to analyze how you're looking at it.

12. As you have leadership roles to fulfill, how will you remember to lead as Nehemiah did?

**Remember:
A journey of 1000 miles
begins with one step.**

Failure vs. Faith

Focus Passage: Nehemiah 11-4



Dealing with failures in our own lives and in the lives of others we know is a tough task. We may have the tendency to ignore sinful decisions or avoid the responsibility of dealing with them. Then we just go on with life in our own strength, trying to forget about it. But is that really the best way to deal with failures? Nehemiah was faced with having to respond to the failure of his people before God. Let's see how he dealt with failures, and how we can learn from his example.

1. Who did Nehemiah question about the Jewish remnant and also about Jerusalem? (1:2)
2. What did they tell Nehemiah? (1:3)
3. What was Nehemiah's reaction to the news? (1:4)

Do you think it could have something to do with Nehemiah's first reaction after hearing about Jerusalem's walls? Explain.

15. What kinds of things do you need to be honest with God about to achieve the boldness that Nehemiah had?

16. Name a circumstance, emotion, or relationship that you need boldness in dealing with. Share how you have been tempted to allow these things alone to determine your actions and attitudes. Pray that God would help you to trust Him and boldly respond in a godly way.

17. What could you do this week to help God's plans along? Who could you encourage that may feel some type of opposition?

Remember:
You'll never enjoy the ocean as long as you're afraid of making waves.

11. As you read chapters 4 and 6:
What kind of circumstances was Nehemiah in?

What emotions do you think Nehemiah was feeling?

What challenges was Nehemiah facing in the different relationships in his life?

12. What were Nehemiah's actions in those circumstances, emotions, and relationships? (4:6, 4:21, 6:3)

13. Do you think you would have reacted as Nehemiah did if you were in the same place? Explain:

14. How do you think Nehemiah could act as he did?

4. Why do you think he responded that way?

What does this say about his relationship with God?

How else could he have responded?

5. Think about receiving news of people that you know with past failures...

- Maybe someone you know is no longer a virgin
- Maybe you heard about someone who had an abortion
- Maybe someone from work has abused alcohol or drugs
- Maybe your sister/brother failed a class because they cheated
- Maybe your teammate has a record of telling lies

What has been your reaction to the news?

6. Have you ever reacted like Nehemiah did to the news of someone's failure? If so, describe how you felt in the situation:

The Jews had rebelled against God and failed Him. He had punished them by allowing them to be conquered and enslaved. Nehemiah heard the news about this, and took it to heart. He remembered all the ways they as a people had failed God, and he was broken before God. However, these past failures caused him to focus on God's faithfulness instead of turning away from Him.

7. How about your own life? Are you constantly reminded of personal past failures and consequently avoid dealing with your past sinful choices? If so, what are two that plague you most?

8. What can you learn from how Nehemiah dealt with sinful failures of the past?

9. The Bible says that “...*man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart*” (1 Sam. 16:7). If you wept and mourned, fasted and prayed to God about a situation, what would that say about your heart condition?

10. What is your heart condition today?

11. What steps will you take this week to address your past failures and depend on God’s faithfulness?

Remember:

You can be free of bondage to past failures because of God faithfulness!

NOTE: This was not intended to be a full study on dealing with past failures and forgiveness/reconciliation issues. If you feel it necessary, we advise you to seek out someone you trust to spiritually guide you in more specific decisions you need to make as it relates to your personal situation.

8. How would you describe the tone of Nehemiah’s prayer?

What was Nehemiah asking God to do?

9. Do you think this prayer was acceptable to God? Why?

10. Have you every prayed to God like this? What was the result?

Some people think that when they talk to God, they have to “sugar-coat” everything. Yes, He is GOD and we need to respect Him, but it is obvious by Nehemiah’s prayer that we can also pour our hearts out to God and really say some honest things.

Nehemiah was bold in his prayers as well as in his actions.

Here’s a definition:

“**Boldness** is allowing the person of God, the work of God, or the Word of God to determine my actions instead of circumstances, emotions, or relationships.”

Boldness certainly could be used to characterize Nehemiah. He realized he was the person God had chosen, he realized it was a work of God he was doing, and he had obviously received the word from God to do it. It all added up to the action of rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls.

3. Have you ever had to stand up for a godly decision in the face of opposition?
Explain:

It has been said that more Christians have died for the faith in the last 100 years than all the Christian martyrs before that. (See www.persecution.com)

4. Why do you think some Christians are persecuted for what they believe?

5. Persecution can take many forms, and it does not always mean some type of physical suffering. A student in my youth group once expressed a desire to become a youth minister. His parents were opposed to the idea because of the long hours and little pay. What do you think of their opposition?

6. Have you ever seen this kind of opposition?

7. What was the first thing Nehemiah did when faced with opposition? (4:4)

Chapter Four

The Best Prayer You'll Ever Pray

Focus Passage: Nehemiah 14-11



Prayer. There must be thousands of books written about how, when, and what to pray. If asked, most people would probably admit to praying some time in their life.

To a Christian, prayer is a vital part of building an incredible relationship with God. Yet, we can let days and weeks go by without talking to God. Can you imagine being around your best friends yet not saying a word to them? For a day? A week? That would be a pretty self-centered relationship, wouldn't it?

1. Why do you think some Christians don't pray much? Give some excuses people use for not praying:

In Nehemiah 1, we find a heartfelt prayer to God from His humble servant.

2. Read Nehemiah 1:4-11. What is one word you would use to describe Nehemiah's attitude of prayer?

3. Compare your attitude of prayer with Nehemiah's. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

4. How does Nehemiah address God in vs. 5? How do you address God in your prayers?

5. In vs. 6, Nehemiah calls himself God's _____.

Have you ever thought of yourself in that way?

How do you think it changes the way you pray to think of yourself in this way?

6. While praying day *and* night, Nehemiah told God he was doing something. What was it?

Have you ever included this in your prayers?

How does confessing your sins help you see things from God's perspective?

Chapter Six

I'm Not Coming Down
and I'm Not Going Back

Focus Passage: Nehemiah 4&6



Progress will always produce opposition. A vision will always attract a critic. Simply put, where there's movement, there's friction.

When Nehemiah and his crew started to rebuild, they faced opposition. Let's identify this opposition and explore how Nehemiah handled it.

1. It was obvious to Nehemiah that God wanted him to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Name 4 situations where Nehemiah faced opposition in chapters 4 and 6?

1. (4:1-3)

2. (4:7-8)

3. (6:1-3)

4. (6:10-13)

2. Sanballat and Tobiah opposed the plan. Name the ways they opposed the plan in chapter 4:

7. If you followed God's leading and were "out of your comfort zone," did you feel that God was with you, helping you? Explain:

8. The next time you feel inward pressure from God, what will you do?

Be encouraged to:

- 1) Take an honest look inside.
- 2) Ask yourself, "What breaks my heart?"
- 3) Listen for God's direction.
- 4) Act upon it in spite of fear and risk.

9. What is God asking you to do now?

Remember:

Pressure is often the package
in which power is wrapped.

7. In 1:8-9, Nehemiah quoted back to God something God had said He would do. What was it?

Why do you think Nehemiah used Scripture in his prayer?

How does/would this help you in praying with God's perspective in mind?

Nehemiah's prayer centered on agreeing with God about:

1. The character of God (1:5)
2. The condition of man (1:6-7)
3. The commandments of God (1:8-9)

8. Now write your own personal prayer based upon Nehemiah's model. As you address God, write of His *character*. Be specific in your *condition* before God, just as Nehemiah did. Use Scripture to make your requests to God, quoting His *commandments* back to Him:

Remember:

The key to praying humbly is in
identifying and agreeing with
God's perspective!

It's an Inside Job

Focus Passage: Nehemiah 2:1-3



Everyone seems to admire a beautiful diamond. There's just something about it that communicates love and admiration. Maybe someday you will either receive or give that "special someone" a diamond ring.

Here's a little earth science for you: Do you know what the conditions must be for a diamond to be formed?

"Diamonds can only be formed under extreme geological conditions. These conditions are when the temperature is greater than 800 degrees Celsius and pressure is 50,000 times atmospheric pressure." (www.which-diamonds.com)

Wow! It's amazing what beauty comes out of such pressure!

Nehemiah is dealing with some real pressure, too. His heart was broken over the situation in Jerusalem. No one told Nehemiah he was "the man" and he should go put the walls back up around Jerusalem. No, it was all *inward* pressure. God gave Nehemiah a deep down pressure and passion to see the walls restored.

1. This inward pressure/passion may demonstrate itself in different ways. As we've already seen, what did this pressure cause Nehemiah to do? (1:4)

2. What did this passion do to his outward countenance, as noticed by the king? (2:2)

3. How did Nehemiah describe where this passion was coming from? (2:3)

Nehemiah had to realize that rebuilding Jerusalem's walls was no simple Lego-land deal. It would take rock, lumber, men, food, water, time, and a whole host of things to get the job done. His desire to continue leading in the task of rebuilding the walls reflects his heart's desire.

4. Have you felt this kind of inward pressure or passion before? If so, what are some inward pressures you have felt?

5. Would you say any of these inward pressures were from God? Why or why not?

6. Has your response to these pressures/passions ever taken you "out of your comfort zone"? Maybe you've prayed out loud in a group... defended your position on purity...reacted in a right way when others on your team did not. What have you done that was "out of your comfort zone"?