

## Becoming A Leader

*"But now I said to them, 'You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!'"* Nehemiah 2:17 NLT



- Have you ever said to yourself, "I'm not a natural leader, but I would like to develop more leadership qualities?"
- Do you desire to be more of a spiritual leader with your family, church, and community?

Everyone can grow as a leader even if they are *not* a born leader. The book of Nehemiah shows us the qualities of an effective leader.

After 70 years of captivity to the Babylonians, the Jews (the tribe of Judah & Benjamin—the Southern Kingdom) had been given freedom to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding their destroyed city, temple, and broken lives. **In Nehemiah's day, the temple had been completed for nearly 70 years, yet the walls of the city were still in ruins.** Jerusalem was defenseless without its walls and no one had taken the initiative to rebuild them. What the Jews lacked most was leadership; there was no one to show them where to start and what direction to take as they tried to rebuild their city. As soon as Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he began a "back to the basics" program. Despite opposition from non-Jews living near Jerusalem, including plots to assassinate him, Nehemiah orchestrated an astounding re-construction of the city that takes only 52 days. He also cared for the people's spiritual needs by rebuilding broken lives. His enemies are stunned into silence, recognizing God's hand at work.

Nehemiah is a model of commitment and God-honoring leadership. His book contains many useful lessons for us today. Are you ready to grow as a leader?

### Central Lesson

**Leadership can be Learned - It begins with **CARING** about a problem & prayerfully working to **CORRECT** it.**

**Scope:** The books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are written during the same period describing a single flow of history aimed at Judah, the Southern Kingdom, who is returning from 70 years of Babylonian exile.

**Chronicles** - Retrospection—looking **BACK** at their history.

**Ezra** - - - - - Restoration—looking **UP** as they rebuild the temple.

**Nehemiah** - - Reconstruction—looking **FORWARD** as they rebuild Jerusalem.

**Author:** **EZRA**, a priest and teacher in Judah (Ezra 7:11-12, 21). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah were **originally one book in the Hebrew Bible**. Scholars believe that Ezra included the personal diaries of Nehemiah because it has major sections written with Nehemiah speaking in the first person singular "I." Ezra added the remaining parts that are narrative. Ezra is not specifically mentioned as the author, but, Jewish tradition recorded in the ancient Talmud names Ezra as the author.

**Purpose:** The book of **Nehemiah** focused on Judah's *political* and *geographical* restoration whereas **Ezra** dealt primarily with Judah's *spiritual* restoration (temple, sacrifices, ceremonies, etc.). In ancient culture, the rebuilding of the walls was essential if Jerusalem was to be considered a city.

Nehemiah begins where Ezra ended. **Nehemiah is the last book of Jewish history.** After the book of Nehemiah, there is **no revelation from God for the next four hundred years until the era of the New Testament.** All of the major and minor prophetic books were written sometime during the Jewish history recorded in 2 Kings (or 2 Chronicles) through Nehemiah. The book shows the faithfulness of God in returning His people to their homeland after years of exile and preserving the messianic lineage.

**Historical Setting:** A historic overview of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

538-515 B.C.	483-473 B.C.	457 B.C.	445-425 B.C.
First return under Zerubbabel	The story of Esther between Ezra 6 and 7.	Second return under Ezra	Third return under Nehemiah
Ezra 1-6	Book of Esther	Ezra 7-10	Book of Nehemiah

### Outline of Nehemiah:

- I. Reconstruction of the **WALL** (Chapters 1-7)
- II. Revival of the **PEOPLE** (Chapters 8-10)
- III. Reforming of the **NATION** (Chapters 11-13)

### Major Lesson: Leadership can be **LEARNED**.

1. **Evaluate**—ask good questions (1:2) "...I asked..."
2. **Authentic Concern** (1:4) "When I heard this, I sat down and wept...."
3. **Seek God for Success** (1:5-11, esp. v. 11) "...Please grant me success today..."
4. **Manages His Emotions**—especially fear (2:1-5, esp. v.2)
5. **Schedules and Manages His Time** (2:6) "...I told him how long I would be gone."
6. **Strategic Planning** (2:7-8) "...let me have letters...to let me travel safely..."(2:7)
7. **Anonymous Assessment** (2:11-16) "After dark I went...to inspect..."(2:13, 15).
8. **Vision Casting and Motivation** (2:17-18) Nehemiah cast vision by (a.) underscoring the problem, (b.) suggesting a solution, (c.) stressing the benefits.
9. **Recruitment** (2:17-18) "...They replied at once, 'Yes, let's rebuild the wall!'" (2:18).
10. **Stays Focused on the Mission**—guard against distractions (2:19-20).
11. **Delegates**—assign tasks & work together as a team (Chapter 3).
12. **Responds Well to Unjustified Opposition & Insults** (Chapter 4). Nehemiah's example: (a.) don't trade insults, (b.) don't get discouraged, (c.) don't respond to insults—pray, tell God how you feel, (d.) make wise adjustments to your work, (e.) persistently keep doing your work.
13. **Promotes Team Unity and Equity**—resolve internal strife and build team relationships (Chapter 5).
14. **Guards Against Personal Attacks & Intimidation** (Chapter 6:2, 9, 13-14, 19).
15. **Maintains Good Records** (Chapter 7:5).
16. **Stays Nourished Spiritually** (Chapter 8:8, 10).
17. **Makes Important Agreements in Writing** (9:38).
18. **Maintains a Balance Between the Spiritual, Business, Social Areas of Life** (Chapter 10:39) "...We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God."
19. **Celebrates Successes** (Chapter 12:43).
20. **Correct & Discipline Inappropriate Behavior** (Chapter 13:11, 17, 24-27, 30).

### Central Lesson

**Leadership can be learned - It begins with **CARING** about a problem & prayerfully working to **CORRECT** it.**

- Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.

1. **Evaluates**—ask good questions (1:2) *“...I asked...”*
2. **Authentic Concern** (1:4) *“When I heard this, I sat down and wept...”*
3. **Seek God for Success** (1:5-11, esp. v. 11) *“...Please grant me success today...”*
4. **Manages His Emotions**—especially fear (2:1-5, esp. v.2) *“...I was terrified...”* (2:2) *“...With a prayer to the God of heaven...”* (2:4)
5. **Schedules and Manages His Time** (2:6) *“...I told him how long I would be gone.”*
6. **Strategic Planning** (2:7-8) *“...let me have letters...to let me travel safely...”* (2:7) *“...to give me timber...”* (2:8)
7. **Anonymous Assessment** (2:11-16) *“After dark I went out...to inspect the broken walls and burned gates.”* (2:13, 15).
8. **Vision Casting and Motivation** (2:17-18) *“...Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!...”* Nehemiah cast vision by (a.) underscoring the problem, (b.) suggesting a solution, (c.) stressing the benefits.
9. **Recruitment** (2:17-18) *“...They replied at once, ‘Yes, let’s rebuild the wall!’ So they began the good work.”* (2:18).
10. **Stays Focused on the Mission**—guard against distractions (2:19-20) *“...they scoffed contemptuously...”* (2:19) *“I replied, ‘The God of heaven will help us succeed...’* (2:20).
11. **Delegates**—assign tasks & work together as a team (Chapter 3). Notice the repeated use of the word *“...next to them...”*
12. **Responds Well to Unjustified Opposition & Insults** (Chapter 4). Nehemiah demonstrates how to respond well: (a.) don’t trade insults, (b.) don’t get discouraged, (c.) don’t respond to insults—pray, tell God how you feel, (d.) make wise adjustments to your work for protection and to guarantee a successful completion of your objective, (e.) persistently keep doing your work.
13. **Promotes Team Unity and Equity**—resolve internal strife and build team relationships (Chapter 5).
14. **Guards Against Personal Attacks & Intimidation** (Chapter 6) *“...I realized they were plotting to harm me,”* (6:2) *“...They were just trying to intimidate us...”* (6:9) *“...sending threatening letters to intimidate me.”* (6:13-14, 19).
15. **Maintains Good Records** (Chapter 7) *“So my God gave me the idea to call together all the nobles and leaders of the city, along with the ordinary citizens, for registration. I had found the genealogical record of those who had first returned to Judah....”* (7:5).
16. **Stays Nourished Spiritually** (Chapter 8) *“They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.”* (8:8) *“...for the joy of the Lord is your strength!”* (8:10).
17. **Makes Important Agreements in Writing** (9:38) *“...we are making a solemn promise and putting it in writing.”*
18. **Maintains a Balance Between the Spiritual, Business, Social Areas of Life** (Chapter 10:39) *“...We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God.”*
19. **Celebrates Successes** (Chapter 12:43) *“...the joy of the people of Jerusalem could be heard far away.”*
20. **Corrects & Disciplines Inappropriate Behavior** (Chapter 13) *“I immediately confronted the leaders and demanded, ‘Why has the Temple of God been neglected?’”* (13:11). *“So I confronted the nobles of Judah...”* (13:17, 24-27, 30).