

November 4/5, 2023
"Rebuild"
Pastor Jeff Manion



SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2023 SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Intentional activities to deepen our relationship with God and mold us to be more like Jesus.

NOVEMBER PRACTICE Meditation

Day 1 Nehemiah 4:1-4 | The Challenge of Midway

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing?" Nehemiah 4:1-2a

Nehemiah is devastated when he hears the walls of Jerusalem are crumbled and dilapidated. He then initiates a plan to rebuild them. He gets off to a great start! Nehemiah gains support from the King of Persia, and help from both Jews living in and outside of Jerusalem. However, midway through the project, their enthusiasm turns into exhaustion, discouragement and fear. The project is in danger of coming to a stop. There is a world of difference between starting to move and continuing to move.

Problems stack up midway through the rebuild. It starts with exhaustion from the task of turning rubble into a wall. Then surrounding warlords feel threatened and mock and shame them. On top of that, these warlords plot to attack from all sides. Some of the Jews feel tempted to quit. This week we will see that we too may become discouraged in our rebuilding. We may be exhausted, scared or even bored. Our problems may stack up. But we must make it through the middle to get to the end. As Paul writes in Galatians, we have to continue to do the right thing so we can see a harvest in the end ([Galatians 6:9](#)).

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY There may be an area in your life you have offered to God to rebuild but you are tempted to quit. Pray for his help to keep moving. "Father God I admit I'm tired and weary. Please help me not to quit midway through rebuilding _____. Help me move forward and reap the rich harvest that comes from trusting you. Amen."

Day 2 Nehemiah 4:7-9 | Trust and Take Action

They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. Nehemiah 4:8-9

There is a real threat to the progress to rebuild the Jerusalem wall. Sanballat, a local warlord, ridicules and shames the Jews thinking they will quit. But Nehemiah prays for help, and they continue building the wall to half its height. Now Sanballat and his associates are furious and plot an attack on the walls. Sanballat from the north. Tobias and Arabs from the south. Ammonites from the east and Ashdod from the West. Enemies surround the rebuilding project. If they succeed, the rebuild will end.

When the Jews hear of the planned attack, Nehemiah models for us what to do. First, he goes to God in prayer and then takes responsible action. After praying, he posts a guard on the walls to protect the builders. We can do the same thing when we experience forces attempting to disrupt our rebuilding. We can first pray, then sign up for Financial Peace University to get our budget in line. Pray, then call for a doctor's appointment when we're facing infertility. Pray, then update our resume even though we were let go from our job. When under attack pray for guidance and help, then take action.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY You may be facing an attack in a current rebuild. First, pray and ask God for his help and guidance. Then take the next step. Share your situation and what action you believe you should take with a trusted friend, mentor or small group leader. Ask them to hold you accountable and support you in prayer.

Day 3 Nehemiah 4:10-12 | One Thing after Another

Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, “Wherever you turn, they will attack us.” Nehemiah 4:12

Nehemiah records three words that show how the assault on the Jews just keeps coming and the tension builds. “Meanwhile...Also...Then.” It’s one thing after another stacking up. They are only halfway done with the wall and don’t have any energy left. Enemies surround them and plan to attack. The threat from the outside is fueled by the exhaustion from the inside. The people are paralyzed in fear and panic. This is a critical moment for the rebuild project. It could all end right here.

The middle of any rebuild often feels like this. It isn’t just one big thing but all the small things that stack up, one after another. It could be our teenager is acting out, we can’t agree on how to discipline and the progress we’ve made in counseling seems to have stalled. Or it could be the dishwasher breaks just as we get an emergency fund started, then the car engine overheats, and then the dishwasher breaks again. We want to curb our drinking but first co-workers, then a friend, and then a neighbor invite us for a drink. It’s our own version of “Meanwhile, Also, Then.” Like Nehemiah, it’s time to pray and ask God for his help to get through.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY When one thing after another stacks up we can rely on God to bring us through. Listen to the Ada Bible Worship Team sing [“This is Our God.”](#) Focus on the truth of God’s help no matter what we face: “Remember that fear that took our breath away? Faith so weak that we could barely pray. But He heard every word, every whisper... Never once did He fail, and He never will.”

Day 4 Nehemiah 4:13 | Vulnerable

Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. Nehemiah 4:13

Nehemiah and the builders of the wall face the threat of attack from angry warlords who don’t want them to rebuild. They are at the midway point, so some parts of the wall are strong while some are still weak. Nehemiah assesses the situation and makes a plan to defend the lowest and most vulnerable places. He knows any attacks will be directed at those parts of the wall.

Once again Nehemiah models a principle for us to follow. Like the wall, we all have weak spots. When we’re in the process of rebuilding something in our lives we need to ask, “Where would I attack me?” In other words, we need to be honest with ourselves about our vulnerable places and take action to defend ourselves. Our plan to curb spending could be derailed by our envy of what others have. Our plan to begin serving God could be squashed by our need for constant affirmation. Our desire to be a better friend could be weakened by our habit of saying things we shouldn’t. When we recognize our vulnerabilities we can ask God for help when we’re tempted to think, do or say the wrong thing ([Luke 22:40](#)).

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY Spend some time journaling about your weak spots. What are the risks of not addressing them? How do they hurt others? How do they derail your growth as a Christian? Consider how you can defend yourself from an attack on those vulnerabilities and commit to praying and asking God for his help.

Day 5 Nehemiah 4:14 | For Others

“Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.” Nehemiah 4:14b

Nehemiah hears that an attack will come from all directions. So he puts a plan into action and positions “some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows” (Nehemiah 4:13). He knows they will fight stronger and harder for their own families. It’s easy to run and hide for self-preservation. But Nehemiah urges the people this fight isn’t just about them but their families.

Like the Jews rebuilding the wall, our rebuilds may involve more than us. Therefore, our devotions might not just be for us. God may show us something that will encourage a co-worker that day. Our financial health in our 20s may significantly matter to our family when we’re 40. Marriage counseling in our 30s might affect the way our children relate to their future spouses. God wants to use us to impact the world around us. We can do that by offering what’s broken in our lives to God for repair, thus impacting each other.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY Consider areas of your life that may need a rebuild and how that could impact the people around you in ten years. Prayerfully make a plan and take the first step to start that rebuild. “God, I offer this rebuild to you. I trust what you are doing in my life will help me grow to become more like Jesus and will help others around me grow too. Use my life for your purposes. Amen.”