



## "REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

### THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH Lesson 3

In our last chapter, Nehemiah completed a long and dangerous journey to Jerusalem, accompanied by the king's captains and horsemen (2:9) for protection. He assessed the ruins of the walls and gates and then challenged the people to "rise up and build" (2:18). Nehemiah had a great burden on his heart to restore the walls, not simply for a beautification project, but as a matter of principle. This was now a national emergency! The people of Jerusalem were being ridiculed because of the shambles and ruins, which brought a reproach to the name of the Lord. God was being ridiculed, and Nehemiah couldn't bear to stand by and watch. He was a man with deep convictions, a passionate heart, and a courageous prayer warrior. We can learn a lot about leadership and character from Nehemiah.

This week we will be studying Nehemiah chapter 3. When you first read it, you may think it's just a boring list of names that matter little to the story. I did. But as I began to study, I found out how wrong I was! Although Nehemiah's main objective may have been to document the names of those who worked on the project for an official record, we can learn so much more. Raymond Brown wrote, "The lists are not a dull recital of forgotten names; they preserve the story of heroic people who played their part in the continuity of the people of God. Their service will not be forgotten." Almost everyone responded to Nehemiah's call for help. There were 38 individual workers and 42 different groups specifically named. There were many more un-named workers who were just as important.

Before you begin, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you discerning eyes and hearts to be able to see and understand the great nuggets in His word. He wants to speak to us. May we learn many lessons of leadership, teamwork, unity, and cooperation.

#### First Day

1. Read Nehemiah 3:1-32. Briefly summarize this chapter.

2. What different trades and jobs are mentioned?
3. What different types of people are mentioned?
4. Name some repeated words or phrases.
5. Did everyone work and cooperate?
6. What gates are mentioned? Where does it start? Where did it finish?
7. Make a note of any questions you have as you read this chapter. (We hope to answer them by the end.)
8. What are your first impressions of this chapter? Write your thoughts.

Let's end here for today. I hope little things are jumping out at you as you read. Try to notice the specific details that are given, while asking the Lord to show you what He wants you to see. God bless you, ladies!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."  
1 Corinthians 12:12

### Second Day

**Work on memorizing your memory verse. How does it tie in to our chapter?**

1. Read Nehemiah 3:1-32 again. Who is the first builder that's mentioned? Why is he significant?

Eliashib was Jeshua's grandson and most likely was in his 80s. Although he set a great example as a spiritual leader by putting feet to his faith, we know that later he became a problem and caused Nehemiah a lot of trouble (13:4).

2. Why is it important that the spiritual "leaders" be willing to work?
3. If you are a leader of any kind, are you willing to be an example and work, or do you merely like to tell others what to do? Do your kids see you as an example of a woman with a good work ethic?

The Sheep Gate was in the northeast section of Jerusalem. The story moves counterclockwise around the city, beginning and ending at the Sheep Gate. This is the gate where the people would bring animals into the city and the sheep for their temple sacrifices. The gate was near the temple, so it made sense that the priests would take special interest in that area. The Sheep Gate was the only one said to be "consecrated" or dedicated to the Lord in a special way. It is fitting

that this gate is mentioned first, perhaps symbolizing the motto "God first." Nehemiah describes each section, gate, and tower on the wall and who worked to rebuild it.

4. Notice how many times the phrase "next to them" is used. What do you think this symbolizes?

It wasn't only Jerusalem's citizens that were participating in this project. People from 8 different places within a 15 or 20 mile radius came to help. There were volunteers from Jericho, Tekoa, Gibeon, Mizpah, Zanoah, Beth Hakkerem, Beth Zur, and Keilah. They didn't have to come. It really wouldn't have benefited them personally at all. They still had lots of work to do in their own cities and on their own land. They gave up a lot to come and partner with the people of Jerusalem.

As we read about rebuilding the walls, think about building the walls of the church, in a spiritual sense. They were coming together and showing unity, partnering together for the work of the Lord. Many see this as a great example for the church to follow today. Many believers donate money for churches or missionary organizations to help further the kingdom. They give to people they don't really know, or wouldn't directly benefit from. We should all be "working together" to help others and come alongside and support them in their ministry. Recently, I was privileged to go on a mission trip to Haiti, where I saw that exact thing. Many people have come alongside a mission organization to help build churches, feed children, and plant churches. It was exciting to see God's people come together in unity to do God's work. There was a lot of "next to them's..." going on! Many people donated money, labor, materials, or clothes. Others stayed back and "watched the stuff" as their spouse donated time and went there to work.

5. Are you giving of your time, talents, or money to help others serve the Lord? Are you "next to" anyone? How else can you "help" besides sending money? List some creative ideas or ways to help others further the kingdom.

6. What we read in this chapter is so similar to what Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Read these verses and explain the principle Paul is teaching.
  
7. If you had to describe yourself as one of the body parts Paul mentions, what would it be, and why?
  
8. Why do we need each other? (Does God expect us to do everything?)
  
9. Are you being an active member of the body of Christ? Are you using your gifts, working together in the body with unity, or are you isolating yourself, thinking that what you do doesn't really affect anyone else?
  
10. How does disunity in the body of Christ dishonor the name of the Lord?

I pray that you are an active "body part" and using your gifts to build His Church. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133:1

### Third Day

**What's your memory verse?**

1. Read Nehemiah 3:1-32 again. The word "repair" is frequently used. It means "to make strong and firm." What do you notice in verse 5?

Just like today, there always seems to be a kink in the armor! The Tekoites came from a town about 11 miles from Jerusalem. The people were more than willing to work, but the "nobles" or "exalted ones" (leaders) refused. The phrase "would not put their shoulders into it" suggests it was more likely pride rather than laziness that stopped them from working. They probably saw it as beneath them to work at such a menial job.

2. Not only were the people of Tekoa willing to work, they were willing to go above and beyond. What can we learn about them in verse 27?

Warren Wiersbe quotes British humorist Jerome K.: "I like work. It fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours." There are those in the church today who are "unwilling" to work, while others do more than their fair share. Sometimes we think we are too important or too qualified to serve someone else. We don't want to get our hands dirty. But this is contrary to the principles that Jesus taught.

3. Read John 13:1-17. How is Christ the best and most noble example of serving others?

4. Are you humbling yourself and serving those around you? Is the Lord asking you to "wash the feet" of someone today? Are you willing?

5. What do you notice in verse 12? What does that suggest?  
(Hint: Read Joshua 24:15)

6. Notice how many groups and individuals were doing repairs "in front of their house." (vs. 10, 23, 28, 29, 30) Why do you think Nehemiah placed them there? What does this say about his leadership?

Nehemiah knew that people would be more willing to do a good job when it was in front of their own homes. Brown wrote, "For years these people would look at their section of that wall as they went in and out of their homes. They did not want present work to bring them future embarrassment. They were determined to bring their best to it." This was smart thinking on Nehemiah's part. He also knew that time wouldn't be wasted in travel, and they would defend their own home more readily if they were attacked.

7. What word stands out in verse 20? Is that a word that would describe you as you work for the Lord? Do you work to the best of your ability? How does that bring glory to the Lord?

The word "diligently" means "to burn or glow." Baruch did his work as best and as efficiently as he could. He was truly an example of 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or *whatever* you do, do all to the glory of God."

8. What do Romans 12:11 and Proverbs 18:9 say about that?
9. Is your ministry a "family" affair? Is your family unified in your service to the Lord? Are there any changes you'd like to make?
10. In verse 8, we see "one of the perfumers" going to work on the wall. What does that tell us about his willingness to do whatever was needed?

11. We are definitely called to use the gifts He has specifically given us, but sometimes we also need to do "just what needs to get done." How willing are you to step in when people are needed?

Have a good day, ladies. Sure have lots to think about, don't we?

### **Fourth Day**

**Work on your memory verse.**

1. Begin by reading chapter 3 again.

Let's take a minute and discuss the importance of the gates. The Life Application Bible says, "Jerusalem was a large city and because many roads converged there, it required many gates. The wall on each side of these heavy wooden gates was taller and thicker so soldiers could stand guard to defend the gates against attack. Sometimes two stone towers guarded the gate. In times of peace, the city gates were hubs of activity. City council was held there, and shopkeepers set up their wares at the entrance. Building the city walls and gate was not only a military priority, but also a boost for trade and commerce.

"One of the main roads through Jerusalem entered the city through the Fish Gate. The fish market was near the gate, and merchants from Tyre, the Sea of Galilee, and other fishing areas entered the gate to sell their goods. The Refuse Gate was the gate through which the people carried their garbage to be burned in the Valley of Hinnom. The Horse Gate was at the far eastern point of the wall, facing the Kidron Valley. The water gate was near the Gihon Springs on the east side of Jerusalem. The East Gate led directly to the temple and is probably what we know today as the Golden Gate. Christian tradition connects the Golden Gate with the coming of the Messiah to Jerusalem."

2. Building this wall probably seemed like an impossibly huge task. Are you facing an overwhelming task today? What does this story teach you about accomplishing it?

3. Have you been part of a "team effort" in some way? Did your team work together well? What did you learn from it?
  
4. In order to cooperate well with others, what character traits are needed? Do you see those traits in yourself?
  
5. As a leader, how do you get a team to work together? What are some important things to keep in mind?
  
6. John MacArthur said, "Essential to unity is diversity." What do you think that means? Do you agree?
  
7. I read a question in a book recently that really stopped me in my tracks. So ... I decided you needed to read it to. How would you answer this? "How would you assess your own participation in the ministries of your church? Are you a tireless laborer or a slacker? If someone wrote a summary similar to Nehemiah 3 regarding who is doing what in your church, would you be listed favorably or unfavorably? Why?"

**Warren Wiersbe points out a few interesting things to notice from this chapter. Here's just a few:**

1. God uses all kinds of people for His work.
  2. Leaders must set the example.
  3. Some people will not work.
  4. Some people do more work than others.
  5. Some do their work at home.
  6. Some people work harder than others.
8. From what we see in chapter 3, is the work of the church the same today?
9. Why is it important for a good leader to recognize these facts?

Tomorrow we'll wrap up this chapter. It's so important to see that this project could not have been done by one individual. It took a great leader, with a whole lot of cooperation. They all did the job they had been assigned to do. May we all be diligent to do the job that He "assigns" us in the body of Christ.

### **Fifth Day**

**Write out your verse from memory.**

1. I would like to sum up this chapter with some interesting points written by Raymond Brown. (I'm sorry I keep quoting everybody, but their thoughts are too good not to write, and I don't want to steal them!) He gives nine principles that characterized their work for God:
  - a. The Builder's Priority: The priests set the example
  - b. Their Unity: The teamwork of the people
  - c. Their Individuality: They all had different gifts
  - d. Their Unselfishness: All towns came together to work

- e. Their Disappointments: Not everyone would work (nobles)
  - f. Their Commitment: They worked diligently and completely
  - g. Their Enthusiasm: They completed their part, and then kept working
  - h. Their Privilege: They saw themselves as part of a special work
  - i. Their Reward: They knew they were building to the glory of God
2. If we were to look at our homes as a building project, what walls needs repair? The wall of prayer, the wall of devotion, the wall of service, the wall of unity, the wall of unselfishness, the wall of commitment, or the wall of joy? Feel free to create your own wall. Read Proverbs 14:1.
  
  3. Is your household characterized by cooperation? Whether the answer is yes or no, how can the spirit of unity be brought in and lived out? How can we teach our kids the concept of cooperation?
  
  4. What spoke to your heart the most from Nehemiah chapter 3? Were you challenged in any way?
  
  5. Write a prayer to the Lord, asking Him to teach you to be a better leader, follower, and team player.

**"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all,  
Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."  
Ephesians 4:4-6**

