

Courage to Lead From Nehemiah

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Introduction.

A. The brain needs the word of God and oxygen to work well.

1. Let's breath deeply.
2. Let's learn.

B. Nehemiah is a favorite portion of the Bible for me.

1. Leaders bring vision, faith, and courage to coordinated efforts.
2. Nehemiah is a clear demonstration to these ideas.
3. I read these passages to find insight when God speaks to me. (Nehemiah 2:12)
4. Leadership begins when God does something in the heart of a leader.
5. Leadership continues when a leader gets others involved. (Nehemiah 2)
6. God accomplished something. (Nehemiah 3-6)

I. God does something in the heart of a leader. (Nehemiah 1:1-4)

A. Courage to care begins when someone gets concerned about others.

1. Nehemiah is concerned about the people in Jerusalem.
2. It's been 30 years since Ezra had returned to Jerusalem and Nehemiah cared.
 - a. He cared about Jerusalem.
 - b. He cared about the people.
 - c. He cared about the glory of God.

1. David knew his kingship was for the welfare of the people. (2 Samuel 5:12)

2. Nehemiah knew the same.

3. We need to care about the cause of Christ.

4. Jesus often had compassion on the people.

5. We need to ask God to keep our hearts fresh.

3. What practical insights can we learn about leadership from Nehemiah?

a. Ask, listen, and pray.

b. When Jesus saw the crowd he emphasized praying for laborers. (Matthew 9)

B. Courage to take responsibility. (Nehemiah 1:5-11)

1. Nehemiah confessed the sins of Israel as well as his own sins.

2. There is difference between being given responsibility and taking responsibility.

3. No one had given responsibility to Nehemiah here.

4. Can you identify with this desire to take responsibility?

5. I am dealing with this myself, having been asked to lead Navigators, yet I need to take this responsibility before God.

a. Nehemiah helps me by praying, and by claiming the promises of God.

c. Nehemiah also plans.

1. I prayed through Isaiah 54:1-3 concerning the barren woman.

2. God spoke to me about enlarging the place of my tent.

3. I took responsibility for this vision and was later given responsibility.

6. Four months pass between Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1.

a. He probably didn't fast the whole time but focused on prayer.

b. God did something in Nehemiah.

c. What is God doing in you?

1. Is there courage to care and courage to take responsibility?

2. This is leadership.

7. Two lessons on courage.

a. To take personal action.

1. He talked to the king.

2. People follow testimonies as with David. (1 Chronicles 11)

3. Personal risk demonstrates our commitment to our ideas.

4. Nehemiah prayed for success in the presence of the king, probably every day as he was cupbearer to the king.

5. Circumstances might be different but God plans the circumstances of our lives.

6. He tests us by circumstances to see if we will look to him for wisdom to use our circumstances for his glory.

7. When Nehemiah took courage to speak to the king God granted him favor.

b. To organize others. (Nehemiah 2:9-12)

1. This was a great challenge to me working in Africa.

2. How important is God's work and how convinced are we?

3. Nehemiah's example shows how he takes time to investigate.

4. This is an important principle in recruiting.

i. Listen, learn, and understand.

ii. Then call people to work together.

iii. God gives courage when we follow his leading.

iv. Articulating the vision in a compelling way is crucial.

v. Helping others to see their part of the vision. (Nehemiah 3)

5. Nehemiah not only had a vision but he helped others to see their part.

6. I get excited about casting vision.

7. We think of Nehemiah as a man of action but there's great emphasis on prayer.

8. There are also lists in Nehemiah of all the returned exiles.

a. Chapter 4.

b. Chapter 10.

c. Chapter 11.

9. If we don't help people to carry out their part they will not listen to us.

C. Courage to see the job through to the end.

1. Chapter 4 through chapter 5 contains a series of attacks on the project.
2. Ridicule and the threat of force are external problems.
3. Internal problems are two:
 - a. Low morale. (Nehemiah 4:10-12)
 - b. A lack of unity due to poor finances. (Nehemiah 5:1-13)
4. How does Nehemiah deal with these problems?
 - a. He responds with both spiritual and practical solutions.
 1. He prays. (Nehemiah 4:9)
 2. He posted people strategically to build or to fight. (Nehemiah 4:13)
 3. As leaders we need to respond to our own challenges with spiritual and practical solutions.
 4. Nehemiah used the problems to galvanize his people.
 5. Disunity is always a problem in ministry and Nehemiah challenges his people to deal with the issues head on.
5. Nehemiah is attacked personally.
 - a. Yet he devoted himself to the work.
 - b. He refused to be distracted, seeing his work as great. (Nehemiah 6:3)
 - c. In my work in Africa my wife and I decided to direct our work to Africa and not get distracted. Right after this we received many invitations to minister in other countries, which we declined.
 - d. We all need to persevere in our work.
 - e. At key points my wife and I were tempted to quit.
 1. In 1976 we had difficulty getting a work visa and after much struggle I felt the need to escape when I finally read 1 Samuel 1, where Hannah prays about her barrenness. Her prayer touched my heart and I wept before the Lord.
 2. On my flight home the airport manager helped me get through the red tape of delayed flights, etc.

2. Later I reviewed the promises the Lord had given us regarding the ministry in Nigeria and recalled that all authority had been given to Jesus.

4. If I had failed to return to Nigeria I would have missed God's best for my life.

f. What has God called you to accomplish?

1. If you need some fresh clarity get into the word of God.

2. God will do something in you so you can do something in others.

3. If God has already done something in you persevere in faith to accomplish the goal.

4. If you are already engaged in the work you need to trust h Him to finish the work.