

GAME ON | WEEK 2 | TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

INTRO:

NFL BODY SIZES AND TYPES FOR THE VARIOUS POSITIONS.

- Have you ever considered how NFL teams are made up of wildly different sized guys with very different skillsets?
 - Consider this slide of average body size per position.
 - Look at how different they are.
 - Some of them look athletic... others maybe not so much?
- Now, just for fun, what would a team of all running backs look like?
 - What would be their strengths and weaknesses?

THE ALL-RUNNING-BACK TEAM

I asked AI to simulate that ridiculous scenario: an entire NFL team made up of nothing but running backs. And not bad ones. Two of the five best running backs in the league, 18 legitimate starters, and a bench full of third and fourth string guys.

Every position had to be filled by a running back. Quarterback. Offensive line. Defensive line. Kicker. The superstar backs were still incredibly talented. But with running backs blocking for them, the team only averaged 2.6 yards a carry. On defense, opponents ran for 210 yards a game (or 6.1 ypc). For reference, NFL average is just over 4 ypc.

There was one position where they were actually really great: kick returner. That job fit their gifts. Vision, speed, making people miss. Three return touchdowns in the season.

So, what was their final record? My all running back team went 0 and 17 in the simulation.

Here's what stands out on the final report. The team didn't lack talent, they had tons of it. The problem was that they didn't have the right people in the right roles.

You can put one of the best running backs in the world at offensive guard, but that doesn't make him a guard. You can put 53 super talented people on the same team, but if they all have the same gift, you don't have a good team.

That's why Paul says in [1 Corinthians 12](#) that the body isn't made up of one part, but of many.

The church doesn't need everyone to be the same. We need every person doing their part. Different gifts, different roles, same mission.

NOTE: Different function doesn't mean different value.

It means we need each other.

NEHEMIAH'S WALL BUILDING PROJECT - CH 3

- Consisted of roughly 45 sections of construction including 10 gates
- There's about 40 work crews listed
- What we'll see in a few minutes is the diversity of the people working together on the project.

QUICK REVIEW

- Ch 1:
 - Nehemiah hears about the condition of Jerusalem and in particular its walls and gates being in ruins
 - Nehemiah spends days in prayer and fasting
 - Nehemiah recognizes that the Lord has put him in a position to do something about it
 - Nehemiah spends the months between ch1 and ch2 preparing.
- Ch 2:
 - 4 months pass before Nehemiah brings it up to the king
 - He is granted letters of authorization and provision to take with him
 - He travels to Jerusalem and inspects the wall secretly at night
 - Eventually he shares the vision and the game plan — the people of Israel buy in and are ready to work.

Now we're ready for chapter 3:

Nehemiah 3:1–13 NIV

¹ Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. ² The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zakkur son of Imri built next to them. ³ The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. ⁴ Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. ⁵ The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors. ⁶ The Jeshanah Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid its beams and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. ⁷ Next to them, repairs were made by men from Gibeon and Mizpah—Melatiah of Gibeon and Jadon of Meronoth—places under the authority of the governor of Trans-Euphrates. ⁸ Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfume-makers, made repairs next to that. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. ⁹ Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section. ¹⁰ Adjoining this, Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house, and Hattush son of Hashabneiah made repairs next to him. ¹¹ Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. ¹² Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section with the help of his daughters. ¹³ The Valley Gate was repaired by Hanun and the residents of Zanoah. They rebuilt it and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. They also repaired a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Dung Gate.

Amazingly, this goes on for another 19 verses. But we've actually captured enough details to tell the story needed today.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?

- WHAT DOES [NEHEMIAH 3](#) HAVE TO TELL US ABOUT TEAMWORK IN PARTICULAR?

I'VE GOT 3 BIG IDEAS THAT WE CAN GLEAN FROM THE TEXT AND RELATE TO FOOTBALL/TEAMWORK.

- 1: THE MAKEUP OF THE TEAM
- 2: THE FOCUS OF THE TEAM
- 3: THE ATTITUDE OF THE TEAM

THEN WE'LL LAND WITH HOW WE CAN CONNECT TO IT IN OUR CONTEXT TODAY, PARTICULARLY IN THE CHURCH (although there are clearly lessons to be gleaned wherever teamwork is needed).

1: THE MAKEUP OF THE TEAM

NOTICE THE DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE, TALENTS, EXPERIENCES, AND BACKGROUNDS

- Eliashib the high priest
- Other priests and levites
- City and district leaders
- Tradesmen and regular laborers
 - Goldsmiths
 - Perfumers
 - Merchants
 - Temple servants
- People of the city
- People from other cities
 - Jericho
 - Tekoa
 - Gibeon
 - Mizpah
 - Zanoah
- People from the country/pasturelands
- The daughters of Shallum
- Former scoundrels — the 2nd chancers.
 - V11: Malkijah son of Harim
 - In Ezra he was included in a list of men who married foreign (pagan) wives and was rebuked for it
 - Noteworthy here is that he makes good of second chances given him
 - Once shamed, now celebrated for his work — his name hits the scriptures twice!

LIKE AN NFL TEAM, NEHEMIAH'S 'TEAM' IS MADE UP OF MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE AND TALENTS

- We could try to speculate as to how they all came together and complimented one another's efforts.
 - But we know this principle to be true elsewhere in the scriptures:
 - [1 Corinthians 12:12](#) "12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."
 - [1 Corinthians 12:14](#) "14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many."
 - [1 Corinthians 12:18-22](#) "18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,"
 - There is a blessing and a strength when the team is made up of diverse talents, gifts, and abilities.
 - But just having diversity alone isn't the strength, it's the unity and focus that makes them effective.
 - *Different gifts alone don't make a team strong. Different gifts, unified around one mission, do.*
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2: THE FOCUS AND UNITY OF THE TEAM

ON ANY GIVEN PLAY, YOU NEED 11 GUYS TO WORK TOGETHER

- If ten execute their job perfectly, but one missed assignment — the play can fail, sometimes catastrophically impacting the game.
- In Nehemiah's project, 97% completed wall would still leave a gap that exposes the city to its enemies.
- Everyone had to come together to get the job done.

WHILE THE PEOPLE WERE DIVERSE IN SEVERAL WAYS, THEIR FOCUS BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER — UNITY IN PURPOSE

- This is the subtle amazing detail of the chapter: Everyone from all walks of life and social status CAME TOGETHER for one purpose.
- Where you see this focus and unity clearly is when we remember this project consisted of roughly 40 crews tackling roughly 45 sections of construction.
 - Nearly 30 times in the NIV we read the phrases 'next to him,' 'after him,' or 'next to them.'
 - These aren't separate projects, just different assignments working together.
- A key detail to remember is that they had to join/interlock the pieces of walls together
 - So they weren't working in isolation
 - There had to have been cooperation and joint planning
 - The beginning section (sheep gate) is also where the wall concludes — the whole thing locks together
- The gates would've required sequenced trades and tradesmen.

- Text outlines: laying the beams and setting the doors with their bolts and bars
- That's practically: stonework, carpentry, and metalwork all in order and in turn
- Those trades had to work together to finish their assignment.
- NOTE: Not every assignment was equal
 - Some crews just completed the section near their house.
 - Others like Hanun and the people of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate plus 1000 cubits of wall (roughly 1/3rd of a mile)
 - Not only that, but some crews did multiple works/sections
 - Unity in purpose did not mean identical assignments, but rather everyone doing what they could (and some could do more than others for various reasons).

3: THE ATTITUDE OF THE TEAM

WINNING/HEALTHY TEAMS HAVE GOOD ATTITUDES.

- TRAITS/ATTITUDES OF GOOD TEAMS
 - **Selflessness** — there's no i in team
 - Notice how Eliashib the high priest is willing to work (it's not beneath his position).
 - Notice how several provincial rulers are also willing.
 - These are all men that were used to giving orders, but here we see them working alongside their brothers.
 - We could also label this is an example of HUMILITY.
 - **Passion or Zeal** — we could call this 'heart'
 - Baruch (v20 NIV), zealously repaired a section of wall
 - I don't know why Baruch gets this credit/praise from Nehemiah, but certainly he worked hard with the right attitude and it caught Nehemiah's eye and received his praise.
 - Multiple scriptures reference this idea ([Col 3:23-24](#), [Eph 6:7](#), [Eccl 9:10](#))
- SELFISHNESS AND PRIDE CORRUPT A TEAM
 - Gifted players with bad attitudes usually destroy a team and it's why so many managers are willing to cut or trade away those players for lesser talent, but better attitude/character guys.
 - In [Nehemiah 3:5](#) we find these guys — the nobles of Tekoa
 - The people of Tekoa put in the work, but their nobles, would not lower their shoulder or stoop to serve their lord.
 - Whatever their problem was the end result of their selfishness/pride is practically the same — alignment with your enemy — by undermining the team.
 - In their case, someone else had to do their portion of the work. It was conduct detrimental to the team.
- THE PEOPLE OF TEKOA SERVE AS A HELPFUL EXAMPLE
 - Their nobles wouldn't do the work

- The people go ahead and do another section of the wall — they make up the gap

BRING IT HOME | RESPONSE:

WINNING (GOOD) TEAMS:

- 1: HAVE A HEALTHY MAKEUP - DIVERSE STRENGTHS THAT COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER
- 2: ARE UNIFIED IN PURPOSE - THEY COLLECTIVELY ARE FOCUSED ON THE RIGHT THINGS
- 3: THEY HAVE GOOD ATTITUDES

IN YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE SEVERAL AREAS WHERE THESE CORE PRINCIPLES OF TEAMWORK NEED TO SHOW UP

- In your marriage and family
 - Your various strengths and skills are meant to complement each other.
 - Shared focus and unity is vital — can't be working towards opposite goals
 - Healthy attitudes will strengthen your marriage — pride and selfishness will destroy it
- In your business or workplace
 - If you're the leader — strive to create a healthy, God-honoring culture — set the example
 - If you're the employee — work hard as unto the Lord and keep a clear conscience — remember that in principle, you win when your team/company wins
- The CHURCH — the body of Christ
 - We are made up of various people from all walks of life with different talents, abilities, resources and experiences that we bring.
 - Like a body made up of different parts — we are to work together for a common goal.
 - Unity, humility, selflessness (and love) are to be attitudes and characteristics that mark us

WHAT'S OUR VISION? WHAT'S OUR GOAL? WHAT'S YOUR ROLE?

- THE ASSIGNMENT: Make disciples of all nations — fully devoted followers of Christ
- GOAL:
 - MISSION: To advance the kingdom of God by sharing his word and gospel locally and globally.
 - DISCIPLE: To teach and model what it looks like to follow Jesus — bring people to the obedience of the faith
 - EMPOWER: To teach, train up and equip everyone to do the work
 - We want to see Mayville and Dodge County come to faith in Jesus.
 - We want to see families saved and whole.
 - We want to see generations worshipping Jesus together.
 - We want to see outcasts get found and find community.
- ROLES:
 - Just as a body has many parts, so does a church.

- The important thing is that everyone finds their role and works diligently (unto the Lord) to accomplish that
- Some roles help Sunday morning run well — others are out in the community, bringing Jesus to people
- Some roles get noticed, some are behind the scenes — all are vitally important
 - Whether you run camera for the livestream, hold a crying baby so a mom can be a part of the service, teach a child Bible stories, keep the coffee pots full, greet guests as they walk in, lead a small group, etc. etc. etc. ALL ARE IMPORTANT
- If you don't have a role — I challenge you to find a spot and serve
- If you don't think you fit in the one you have — find a different one
- If you think you're too young/too old:
 - old vets mentor rookies
 - rookies learn and help the team where they can
 - Again, all are needed