

Bible Study 1 - IT'S TIME TO BUILD - It Begins with a Burden - Text: Nehemiah 1:1–11

Think about something you have seen that bothered you enough that you felt you needed to do something about it. What is the difference between simply noticing a problem and carrying a genuine burden for it?

INTRODUCTION — IT BEGINS WITH A BURDEN

George Müller did not begin his ministry to orphaned children with a building, a large organization, or financial resources. He began with a burden. He saw children living in desperate poverty in Bristol, England, and eventually reached the point where he could no longer simply see the need and walk away. That burden ultimately resulted in a ministry that cared for more than 10,000 children. Nehemiah's story begins in much the same way. He does not begin with a wall. He begins with a burden for something that is broken.

1. God Allows Us to See What Others Ignore - Nehemiah 1:1–3

Nehemiah asks his brother Hanani about Jerusalem and the Jewish people who had survived the exile. The report is devastating: “The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.” What makes this significant is that Jerusalem had been in this condition for years. People had become accustomed to the rubble. That can happen spiritually as well. We can become so familiar with broken situations that we stop believing anything can change.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think people can become comfortable living around “broken walls”?

What kinds of brokenness can become so familiar that we eventually stop noticing them?

2. What is the difference between criticism and a God-given burden?

How can we recognize whether we are simply complaining about something, or God is inviting us to become part of the solution? _____

3. What has God been allowing you to see?

Is there a person, family, ministry, neighbourhood, generation, or need that keeps coming back to your attention? _____

Complete this sentence: “God, I believe You may be opening my eyes to _____.”

2. God Breaks Our Hearts Before He Uses Our Hearts - Nehemiah 1:4

When Nehemiah hears the report, he responds: “I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was

fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” Before Nehemiah ever touched the wall, God touched Nehemiah's heart. Sometimes we want God to change a situation before we allow Him to change us.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Why do you think Nehemiah's first response was weeping, fasting, and prayer rather than immediately taking action?** What might God have been doing in Nehemiah before He did something through Nehemiah? _____
- 2. How does asking “Who are we building for?” change the way we think about ministry?** Who are some of the people God may be calling our church to reach in the years ahead? _____
- 3. When was the last time something in God's Kingdom genuinely moved your heart?** Could a burden you are carrying be something God wants to use? _____

3. Great Movements Begin in Prayer, Not Activity. Nehemiah 1:5–11

The first thing Nehemiah builds is not a wall. He builds an altar of prayer. Before he speaks to the king, he speaks to the King of kings. Before he develops a strategy, he seeks God. Nehemiah's prayer gives us four important principles for our own prayer lives.

A. Focus on Who God Is B. Confess Our Sin C. Remember God's Promises D. Ask God for Favour

Discussion Questions

- 1. Which part of Nehemiah's prayer—worship, confession, God's promises, or asking for favour—do you most need to strengthen in your prayer life? Why?** _____
- 2. What is the difference between praying before we make our plans and asking God to bless plans we have already made?** How can we become better at listening for God's direction? _____
- 3. Is there something in your life right now where you need to pray and wait for God's direction before taking action?** What would trusting God's timing look like? _____

THREE RESPONSES

- 1. SEE — Ask God to Open Your Eyes** - “Lord, what have I stopped seeing that You want me to see?”
- 2. FEEL — Ask God to Burden Your Heart** - “Lord, let my heart be moved by what moves Yours.”
- 3. PRAY — Seek God Before You Act** - “Lord, show us what You want to build—and prepare us to build it.”