

**The Book of NEHEMIAH**  
**Introduction / Chapter 1**  
**“Leadership & the Power of Prayer”**

**Introduction:** The name **Nehemiah** means “*Jehovah comforts.*” The events of Nehemiah Ch. 1 commence late in the year 446 B.C., the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Persian king, Artaxerxes (464-423 B.C.). Nehemiah is the king’s cupbearer and will become the governor of Jerusalem from 445-433 B.C. The principal characters in this book are Ezra and Nehemiah. Though the temple had been rebuilt, as recorded by Ezra, the walls of the city were still in ruins because of the indolence of the people. Eleven times in the text it is recorded that Nehemiah was engaged in **prayer**.

**Key Verses: Neh 6:15-16-** *So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God. Neh 8:8-* *So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.*

**Book Outline: The Request (Ch. 1—Ch. 2:8); The Rebuilding (Ch. 2:9—Ch. 7); The Revival (Ch. 8—Ch.10); The Reformation (Ch. 11—Ch. 13)**

**I) CONCERN is the Seed of Power (v1-3)**

**(v1) Chislev** – This is in Nov. / Dec. 446 B.C., 4 months before Nisan (Mar. / Apr.) in the reign of Persian king Artaxerxes (ca. 464-423 B.C.; cf 2:1). Shushan – Also known as Susa, this city was situated east of Babylon, about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf. Shushan was one of the Medo-Persian strongholds, a wintering city for many officials, and the setting of Esther. It is believed that Esther was the stepmother of Artaxerxes, which may have helped the Jewish people receive continued favor in the Medo-Persian Empire, which includes Nehemiah.

**(v2) *Concern defined:*** *A marked interest of regard usually arising through a personal tie of relationship,* (Nehemiah’s Jewish brethren). An uneasy state of blended interest, uncertainty, and apprehension, in regards to Jerusalem, their “sacred city” the “City of David” also known as “Mt. Zion”.

**(v3)** The Jewish brethren said that the survivors were in great distress and reproach, the Hebrew word *distress* is “*ra*” which means the people were miserable, sad, and evil prevailed. The Hebrew word for *reproach* is “*cherpah*” which is *harsh treatment, disgrace, and shame*. Who or what are you concerned about today? A family member \_\_\_\_\_; a friend \_\_\_\_\_; a co-worker \_\_\_\_\_; an enemy \_\_\_\_\_. As God has placed them upon your heart will you begin to pray for them every day? \_\_\_\_\_ What about our nation and state, are you concerned? \_\_\_\_\_ Will you pray for our nation and state? \_\_\_\_\_

**II) COMPASSION is the HEART of PRAYER! (v4)**

> ***Compassion defined:*** *A sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it.* Nehemiah wept over Jerusalem and so did Jesus in his time **Luke 19:41-44** - *Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”* Nehemiah mourned, fasted and prayed over this tragic situation. Jesus did the same for all of humanity and encouraged us to follow His example - **Matt 9:36-38** - *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”* Are you praying for laborers? Have you prayed that you would be a laborer? Let’s read the prayer of the early church in **Acts 4:24-33**. What is a keyword in this prayer for evangelism? **BOLDNESS! (v29)**

### **III) CONFESSION is the Soul of Results! (v5-7)**

> **CONFESSION defined: A disclosure of one's sins for reconciliation with God.**

(v5) Observe how Nehemiah addresses God, it's according to who God is: *Great and awesome; and the promises God has made: keeping His covenant and being merciful.* We also see our personal responsibility to **love** Him and **keep** His commandments.

(v6) First, notice the consistency of Nehemiah's prayer life, "**day and night.**" Next let's practice the soul searching task of confession; Nehemiah confesses the sins of His people as well as his own sins.

(v7) Let's list the individual sins confessed: (1) Acting corruptly before God – To be morally degenerate and perverted characterized by improper conduct (as bribery of the selling of favors); adulterated or debased by change from an original or correct condition; (2) Have not kept the commandments, statutes, ordinances – The listing of God's do's and don'ts in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Let's look to the New Testament in regards to the "confession of sin" in **1 John chapter 1**. Continual confession of sin is an indication of genuine salvation. The term "confess" means to say the same thing about sin as God does' to acknowledge His perspective about sin. Confession of sin characterizes genuine Christians, and God continually cleanses those who are confessing.

### **IV) COMMITMENT Confirms the Almighty (v8-11)**

> **Commitment defined: An agreement or pledge to do something in the future.** Thomas Jefferson defined commitment when he wrote, "We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." The great motivator Vince Lombardi said, "Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

(v8-10) Nehemiah was committed to God he knew the promises of God's Word and had faith to fruition!

(v11) Nehemiah understands his relationship with God "a servant" and he fears His name," which is to have reverence for. Nehemiah's petition was to "prosper" in his situation and that "mercy" would precede him. **Turn to Joshua Ch. 1.** Always remember and practice what Jesus promised in **John 15:7-8** - *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples*

**Conclusion:** Follow these four principles – **Concern, Compassion, Confession & Commitment** – for a powerful prayer life!