

Nehemiah: A Picture of the Intersection of Faith and Action...

(9 of 9) – July 6, 2025

Thinking about Prayer!

Nehemiah 1:1-4, 1:4, 2:4, 4:4-5, 9, 5:19, 6:9, 6:14, 6:15-16;

Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1; Philippians 4:6-7

Nehemiah tells the story of God bringing a great victory. The walls of Jerusalem were restored and continual prayer is a vital part of the story. Nehemiah wasn't simply a good leader – he was a man of prayer. And considering how he called out to God in prayer in vastly varied situations ought to motivate us to pray!

1. We're called to pray about everything all the time.

We're to have an attitude of prayer and to continually return to prayer. (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18, Luke 18:1)

Instead of giving way to anxiety, we're to give everything to God in prayer. As we pray about everything, we'll find ourselves experiencing God's perfect peace that's so deep and strong it's beyond our human understanding. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Continual prayer is expected. Followers of Jesus are to be people of prayer. God loves us. We can lift up our hearts to Him and know that He hears and He answers. (Matthew 6:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:17)

2. Considering how Nehemiah prayed should motivate us to pray.

God used Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem that had been utterly destroyed. (Nehemiah 1:1-4)

How do I respond when I receive really bad news? How do I respond when I receive awful news that I feel in the pit of my stomach? How do I react? Bad news arrived from Jerusalem. The people were in trouble and the city in ruins.

Common responses to horrible news include: anger, denial, withdraw, fear and despair. Yet Nehemiah's response can be summarized with a single word: *Prayer*. Ask – *How do I respond? Like Nehemiah? With fear? Or faith?* (Nehemiah 1:4, 11)

We should follow this example and pray – *God help! Guide me! Give me wisdom and words!* (Nehemiah 2:4)

Ask – *Is it muscle memory to pray when something like this happens? It's muscle memory to step on the break when we see a red light. Is it the same with prayer?*

This prayer says – *God, take care of them, stop them!* Getting caught up in answering the opposition would have distracted him from the work on the wall. Ask – *When I'm wronged, do I leave my desire for vengeance in God's hands?* (Nehemiah 4:4-5, Matthew 5:44, Romans 12:19)

A picture of the intersection of faith and action. They prayed and set a guard. (Nehemiah 4:9)

Ask – *When I'd like to be recognized, do I personally seek the praise of others or leave it in God's hands?* (Nehemiah 5:19)

If slanderous reports got to the king it could have been very bad. *Did Nehemiah get distracted?* No. He prayed! (Nehemiah 6:9, 14)

3. God answers prayer.

Nehemiah was a courageous leader with incredible resolve but don't overlook the fact that He continually turned to God in prayer! This is not only the story of a courageous leader, if Nehemiah is the ultimate hero of the story, we're missing the point.

How was Nehemiah able to stay the course in the midst of an incredibly difficult project? This is the story of how God brought deliverance through a man who prayed continually. *Are you motivated to pray?* I know I am. (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Luke 18:1)

Ask – *What's my first impulse when I receive bad news? When I'm unfairly opposed? When I'm looking at a seemingly impossible situation? When it feels like the bad guys are getting away with it?* Our response should be saturated with prayer.

Prayer is a line of communication and communication is assumed in a relationship. If a relationship with God isn't present, it needs to begin. (John 1:12, 1 John 5:12, Nehemiah 6:15-16)