

**“Be United”**  
Nehemiah 2:11-3:32

4/12-13/08

6 pm; 9 & 10:45 am

*Series, “Life Rocks!”*

## **INTRODUCTION**

When we’re building or rebuilding our lives, our family, our business, one of the most difficult steps in the process can be asking for help: admitting you can’t rebuild all on your own. We usually need to recruit people as part of our rebuilding team.

You may not think of asking for help as “recruiting,” but what you’re doing is like recruiting. You’re taking one step at a time to put together a team that will coach you to a position of strength.

For example, let’s say someone is struggling with **depression**:

Let’s say you start by going to a **pastor** to talk about it. The pastor listens and asks questions, and then offers spiritual guidance from the Bible. But, thinking there may be other factors at work, the pastor recommends you see a **medical doctor** and get a physical. Also, in hearing your story, it’s likely you’re going to need someone, a **counselor**, who can help you unravel and process things from the past that you haven’t known how to deal with.

Now your **“team”** includes a **pastor**, a **medical doctor** and a **counselor**.

You have family and friends that you ask to **pray** for you. They’re now on your “team.”

You may ask two friends to meet with you every other week so you can talk about and process what you’re discovering and working through. They **listen** and **encourage** you to hang in and help you see the progress you’re making.

Now you have a **pastor**, a **medical doctor**, a **counselor**, **pray-ers**, and a small team of **encouragers**. A team of five.

As you go along, and gain strength, you may not need a **doctor** any more, and you may not need a **counselor** any more. Maybe you add an **exercise partner**, and someone who can help you with **nutrition**. You start attending a **small group Bible study** to help build your trust in God.

*So you see*, the team is built over time, it changes over time, and your life is rebuilt over time.

As we open to Nehemiah 2:11, we’re going to see this process at work in rebuilding a protective wall around Jerusalem, and, in the process, rebuilding people’s lives.

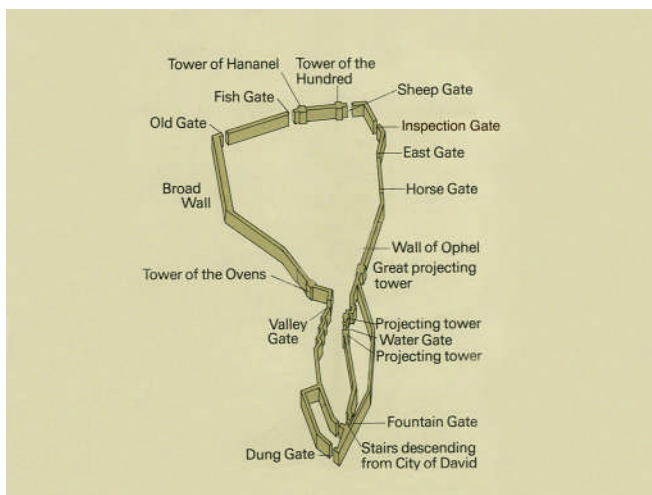
**OPEN** to Nehemiah 2:11 (**PAGE** 752)

*To build your dream team ...*

**I. Evaluate Your Situation** (Nehemiah 2:11-16)

**READ** Nehemiah 2:11-16

### I. Evaluate Your Situation



The wall was about 1½ miles around.

Show route Nehemiah took. (v. 13-15)

Nehemiah was evaluating the situation: How bad is the wall? Can they rebuild it on the same location? How much of the materials can be reused? How many gates have to be built? Etc.

He's evaluating the situation

When we realize that we need to rebuild, one of the first things we need to do is to take the time to evaluate our situation.

It helps to get alone and start to write it down. Here's one way to get started:

*Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?*

**Who** is involved? (me, spouse, someone at work, God)

**What** is going on? **What** is the problem? **What** kind of effects is it having upon me? **What** triggers the issue? **What** have I done to try to deal with it already?

**When** did it start? **When** does it trigger?

**Where** am I when the problem hits? (location? person?)

**Why** do I think I have this problem? (its source) Why am I seeking help?

**How** would I describe how I feel? **How** long has it been going on? **How** do I proceed?

You need to wrestle this through as best you can, over a few weeks, if necessary, so you can communicate it to someone else.

Sometimes you're so worn by the situation you have no mental or emotional energy; you need someone to help you to do this. If so, ask someone you trust to help you answer these questions and get started.

### I. Evaluate Your Situation

*To build your dream team ...*

### **II. Recruit Help**

**READ** Nehemiah 2:17-18 “**Then I said to them, ‘You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.’**  
**18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, ‘Let us start rebuilding.’ So they began this good work.”**

A. Nehemiah states the problem clearly (even though it's obvious) (v. 17a):

1. There is a physical problem: the city is **in ruins**: the wall is broken down, gates burned
2. This also causes a safety problem. They are vulnerable to enemies; they cannot protect themselves.

This would be like having no locks on the doors or windows where you live ... and all the thieves and evil people in town knew it!

3. Because of the physical and safety problems, there is an issue that affects them emotionally, mentally, socially: they are **in disgrace** (v. 17b)

B. Nehemiah proposes a solution that will deal with the physical, safety and “disgrace” problems: **rebuild the wall**. (17b)

But, notice that he didn’t come to rebuild the wall *for them*. He didn’t ask the King to send 500 laborers with him so that they could rebuild the wall.

The problem belongs to the Israelites, so the Israelites must be the ones to put forth the effort to deal with their problem.

And since the disgrace is the Israelites’, as *they* fix the problem, *their* disgrace will be lifted.

This is very important to accept. We must take ownership for our own issues. We can’t always fix them on our own, i.e., we need others help. **BUT**, we must take responsibility and put forth the effort to fix the problem.

## **ILLUSTRATION**

Many years ago when I did a fair amount of pastoral counseling, I had a few different situations that went like this:

Someone came in looking for help to deal with a problem. After I asked some questions and the problem was clear, I’d then ask them to do a few things to address the problem (an assignment), encourage them, and then ask them to come back and we’d see how it was going. Great. Fine. Clear. Understood.

They’d come back in a week, but had done nothing. We rehearsed the situation again, clarified the problem again, gave an assignment again, and agreed to get together in two weeks and see how things were going.

They’d come back the next week, but had done nothing. So, we repeated the process: rehearsed, clarified, assignment, get together. Only this time, with the clarification that things weren’t going to get better if they didn’t put forth the effort to complete the assignment.

They’d come back a week later, and, nothing done. At that point, I’d say that I didn’t know what else to tell them. I told them, three times now, what my assessment was, and what they needed to do to start moving towards a solution. I didn’t know what else to say; I had no more advice. They should probably seek help elsewhere... counselor, doctor, therapist.

My assessment was they were unwilling to put forth personal effort to deal with the problem.

We live in a day where we want pills to cure whatever ails us. Now, please hear me, sometimes we do need a pill! But, rarely is the pill ALONE the cure we need.

We have to put forth the effort to build a team, to recruit help, and to personally work on the solutions.

This is what helps us become healthy. Otherwise, we will live with a “victim” mentality, and always have excuses why our situation is so unique. And we’ll live our entire lives with the same issues.

Now, the people of Israel knew rebuilding their wall was not going to be a simple task:

- The wall was about 1½ miles around,
- about 15-18 feet thick (solid, not hollow) and,
- about 30 feet high.



(From *The Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 07)

It’s a BIG project!

C. Nehemiah brings hope by telling them what God has already done (v. 18a)

He prayed, God told him to go to Jerusalem, the king let him come, gave him timber for the wall, appointed him governor! *God is at work already!*

When we recruit others to help, they bring more perspective and information and encouragement to the situation than we can bring ourselves.

D. The people decide to go for it! (v. 18b)

*To build your dream team ...* **II. Recruit Help**

**III. Expect Opposition** (Nehemiah 2:19-20)

**READ** Nehemiah 2:19-20

We'll take a whole message to deal with this theme next week, but... expect something to go wrong when you decide to move ahead.

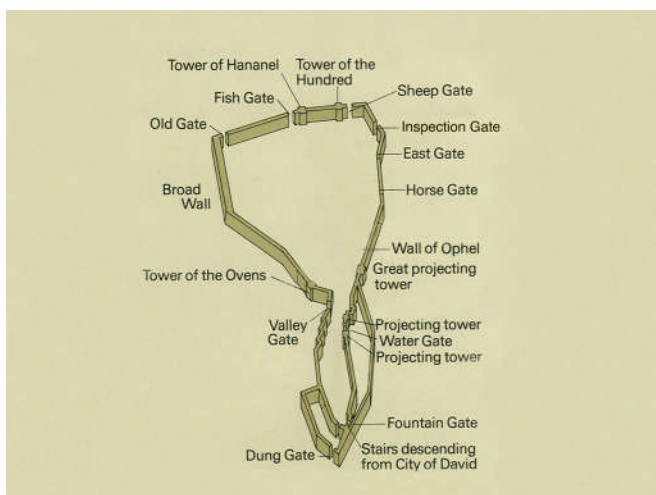
More next week.

*To build your dream team...*

**IV. Start Working!** (Nehemiah 3)

I'm not going to read the whole chapter, but I do want to point out some items that are very interesting.

*First, let's look at the wall itself:*



A. The Wall (they worked on the whole wall all at once)

Nehemiah 3:1 begins with “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**.

v. 3: The **Fish Gate**

v. 6: The **Jeshanah Gate** (“**Old Gate**” on map; “Jeshanah” is translated “old”).

v. 8: **Broad Wall**.

v. 11: **Tower of the Ovens**.

v. 13: The **Valley Gate**

v. 14: The **Dung Gate**

v. 15: The **Fountain Gate**; steps going down from the City of David.

v. 26: **Water Gate** toward the east and the **projecting tower**.

v. 27: **the great projecting tower to the wall of Ophel.**

v. 28: **Horse Gate**

v. 29: **East Gate**

v. 31: **Inspection Gate**

v. 32: **Sheep Gate.**" (full circle)

(There are more items mentioned in chapter three than I could fit on the map, but you can find where they are because they are listed between the locations that are on the map).

So, Nehemiah describes the entire wall. Everyone worked simultaneously. In its entirety, he mentions "... 42 sections, including the gates ... without a single gap." (K-D, Nehemiah, p. 196)

## B. Everyone participated

### Spiritual Leaders

High Priest  
 Priests of Surrounding Regions  
 Priest of Jerusalem  
 Temple Servants  
 Levites (the tribe assigned to Temple Work)  
 Guard of East Gate

### Regions

Residents of Jerusalem  
 Men of Jericho  
 Men of Tekoa  
 Men of Gibeon  
 Men of Mizpah  
 Residents of Zanoah

Trades

Goldsmiths  
 Merchants  
 Perfume Maker

Community Leaders

Eight Rulers (mayors/city council members)  
 Daughters of Ruler

Most are identified just by name.

Everyone pitched in, no one made excuses for why they couldn't work. It didn't matter what their vocation was, nor their gender, nor their position in society. No one said, "*but building isn't my spiritual gift.*"

Everyone, that is, except the **nobles of Tekoa**.

But notice: the people of Tekoa did not follow their nobles' poor example. They not only worked on the wall, they are the only group that repaired two sections of the wall (3:5, 27).

In terms of building lives, every one can make a contribution – whether it's helping one individual, a family, on the job, in the church.

**ILLUSTRATION**

"In the early 1980s Linda found herself divorced and raising two young children alone. Having a career outside the home was no longer an option, but a shocking necessity. She found her niche in an accounting firm, working as an office manager.

During that time period, she met a wonderful Christian man at church. After dating for several years, Linda and Dean were married. Since both had been through the painful process of divorce and experienced the ramifications firsthand, God placed in their hearts a special calling for divorce prevention. The suffering they had experienced in the first half of life would not 'go to waste.'

"Linda and Dean joined a service-focused small group at their church composed of previously divorced couples who also had a heart for those contemplating the destruction of their marriages. They understood from their own experiences that others facing this situation needed a mentor. Group members knew these hurting couples needed someone

who had lived through the nightmares of divorce to challenge them with God's perspectives on taking the course of action they were pursuing.

“Since coming together, Linda and this loving team of lay people have been used by God to save numerous marriages in crisis.” (Unlimited Partnership, p. 54-55)

God doesn't waste anything! He will take what has happened in our past and use it to help others!

Where should you get started?

## CONCLUSION

### I. Evaluate Your Situation

### II. Recruit Help

### III. Expect Opposition

### IV. Start Working

*“Father in Heaven, thank You for showing us in Your Word how to rebuild our lives, and to help rebuild the lives of others. Please show me my place on the wall! In Jesus' Name, Amen.”*