

RESTORING THE

WALLS

God's Pathway to Personal Renewal
Studies in the Book of Nehemiah

STUDY GUIDE

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JACK W. HAYFORD

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*This guide parallels the 22 messages in the audio album,
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INTRODUCTION

We first approach Nehemiah as a historical fact. Israel had been captured by Babylon. Jerusalem was destroyed, and most of the people were deported. But God promised that Jerusalem and Israel would be restored. The books of Nehemiah and Ezra record how this restoration took place. Nehemiah was an historical figure, a man, used by God to help rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

In our study, however, we find that this is more than just an historical account. The destroyed walls and gates of Jerusalem also represent the damage worked in our human personality by sin in our past.

Nehemiah came to rebuild the walls because he had a deep love and concern for the people who were living in shame and insecurity. He had God's promise in the prophecy of Jeremiah that God would restore Jerusalem. **Nehemiah is thus seen as a type of the Holy Spirit, who comes to establish God's will and purpose in our lives.**

Essentially, the study of Nehemiah answers the questions: **Now that I'm saved, how can I get my life put back together?** Can it ever be done?

There are some believers who have walked with the Lord for many years but still struggle with bad habits, attitudes or sin that they just can't seem to overcome. There are others who have been saved for only a short time and are already experiencing conflicts and doubts in their walk with Christ. If you find yourself in one of these categories, this study was designed for you, to help you gain a better understanding of **who you are** in God's sight.

What takes place in the Book of Nehemiah is analogous to what the Holy Spirit is ready to do in our lives when we, who have been reborn, are willing to not only have **new life** in the Lord, in terms of redemption and forgiveness of sins, but to have it **transmitted into our whole being**—our thoughts, emotions, and character.

The Book of Nehemiah unfolds a clear picture of the nature and work of the **Holy Spirit assisting the believer in rebuilding life's broken places**. Though we as believers in Jesus Christ are spiritually reborn, there is still often damage upon our soul from the past that is carried over. Without the Holy Spirit's restoration of our human personality, we remain **vulnerable to the attack of the adversary upon our intellect and emotions**, and our testimony of faith comes under **reproach** by those who do not see its evidence in our lives.

Nehemiah—whose name means comforter or consoler—**is a picture of the Holy Spirit who has come to repair, rebuild and restore**. The biblical basis for making this analogy can be found in Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11, and 2 Timothy 3:16. Jesus said that He would send us a Comforter—the Holy Spirit. Nehemiah is an Old Testament picture of a New Testament truth.

Our spirit, reborn through Jesus Christ, is the center of our being, like the temple in the center of the city of Jerusalem. Though the temple was rebuilt, the walls of the city were in shambles. In the same way that Nehemiah helped to rebuild the walls of the city, the **Holy Spirit comes to rebuild the human soul** to stability, order and dignity.

Pastor Jack Hayford's insightful study in the book of Nehemiah takes you through this process of **partnership with the Holy Spirit**. We suggest that before you begin this using this outline, you read through the book of Nehemiah, then re-read the book as your study progresses.

LESSON 1

GETTING MY LIFE BACK TOGETHER

How can I get my life put back together? I've received Jesus as my Savior, but how long will it take me to get better? I'm forgiven, but not whole. How can my personality be made whole?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 1:1-3

- I. Introduction to our study
 - A. The analogy in the book of Nehemiah shows us God's desire to restore the human personality.
 - B. Background to the book
 1. It is a history book of Israel's post-exilic period, written approximately 450 B.C.
 2. Israel's history during the captivity:
 - a. 606 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took captives from Judah.
 - b. 586 B.C. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Babylonians. The Persian government subsequently overthrew the Babylonian government.
 - c. 536 B.C. The personal government, under Cyrus, King of Persia, allowed 50,000 to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.
 - d. 516 B.C. The rebuilding of the temple was completed.
- II. Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem — 450 B.C.
 - A. Nehemiah hears that his brethren in Jerusalem are in affliction and reproach:
 1. Affliction — vulnerable to oppressors
 2. Reproach — embarrassment to themselves
 - B. Jerusalem's walls are destroyed, and even though the temple is rebuilt, the city is in rubble and the gates are burned with fire.
 1. The gates are burned with fire:
 - a. There are 10 gates to Jerusalem
 - b. With the gates destroyed, anyone could come in at any point.
 - c. They had no control of access and egress.
 - d. This can be compared to how many people are not able to shut out of the minds depression and temptation.
 - e. We need a secure line of defense against the Adversary and also against our own flesh.
 2. The temple is the center of the people's worship. It can be likened to God's inner work within the believer whose spirit has been reborn (John 4:24).
 3. The inner temple (our spirit) can be alive, but in the outward working of our lives, there is still brokenness, just as the walls of the city were broken as a result of the past.

- a. The walls of Jerusalem were broken as a result of sin and judgment from the Lord.
 - b. Our souls can be broken from sin and violation of God's established order.
- III. The book of Nehemiah is a picture of the restoration of the human personality:
- A. God's desire is to bring our soul to wholeness, just as Nehemiah's desire was to see Jerusalem restored.
 - B. The soul is the command center of the personality:
 1. Mind — thinking, reasoning processes
 2. Emotions — feelings
 3. Will — action as a result of thinking and feeling

Questions

1. Why are the people in Jerusalem vulnerable and embarrassed?
2. Jeremiah prophesied that the captives would return to Jerusalem in how many years?
3. What was the people's worship center in Jerusalem?
4. The spirit of man is restored in salvation. This is analogous to what in Jerusalem?
5. The soul is the seat of thought, emotions, and will. Does how we respond in the soul determine our salvation?
6. The question of whether we will be a reproach to ourselves or if we will be afflicted by our enemies is determined by which area—the soul or the spirit?
7. Can we worship God in our spirit and yet have brokenness in our lives?
8. In Jerusalem, we have an analogy of a person who is saved. "Gates burned with fire" indicate that the person is not able to control what in his life?

SUMMARY: When we are born again, our *spirit* is regenerated, but oftentimes there are areas of hurt in the *soul* level of the personality. God desires us to come to a **total wholeness**, and this ongoing process takes place through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to us.

LESSON 2

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT

What is the difference between soul and spirit? The Word shows us the difference, offering us understanding as to the construction of our being and how the Holy Spirit has come to restore our personality.

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 1:4-9

- I. Nehemiah is a picture of the Holy Spirit.
 - A. His name means “comforter” or “consoler.”
 - B. He has come to rebuild and repair.
 - C. Jesus said that He would send us a Comforter.

- II. The biblical basis of this analogical analysis:
 - A. It is scriptural to look at an historical book to get prophetic insight.
 1. Romans 15:4: “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”
 2. 1 Corinthians 10:11: “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”
 3. 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...”
 - a. Reproof — to expose those things, to bring them to light
 - b. Correction — to set straight
 - B. The whole Word of God was written in order that we could learn:
 1. Nehemiah is an Old Testament picture of New Testament truth
 2. He is a picture of the Holy Spirit restoring our lives and leading us into all truth.

- III. The construction of our being:
 - A. We are a three-part being—body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

 - B. The soul level is constituted of three parts:
 1. Intellect — how we think
 2. Emotions — how we feel
 3. Will — choices we make

 - C. These three areas which constitute the soul become impacted and broken down by many different things:
 1. At the mind level:
 - a. Doubts

- b. Confusion
 - c. Assailing thoughts and imaginations
 - d. Reasonings contrary to the Word
2. At the emotion level:
 - a. Fears
 - b. Lusts
 - c. Anger
 - d. Bitterness
 3. At the will level:
 - a. Resistance is weak
 - b. Attempts at progress are hindered
 - c. Confidence is crippled
- D. The nature of your spirit:
Your spirit is that part of you that, deep inside, loves God unashamedly, unabashedly, certain of total commitment to Him. That happened when you were saved, and you know it. You have that deep, settled confidence, “I am the Lord’s.” But you (your soul) looks at the broken places in yourself and says, “If I am the Lord’s why am I still like this?” So it was for the people of ancient Jerusalem who said, “Here is our temple of worship,” but, looking around the rubble of their walls, asked, “If we are the Lord’s, why are we still like this?” This picture of the human personality in need of restoration gives rise to a cry from the inner man: “Oh, God, work wholeness in my personality.”
- E. The Holy Spirit has come to help us in these weakened areas of our personality (Romans 8):
1. He desires to form us into the image of God’s Son.
 2. His desire is to rebuild our soul and strengthen us from those things that attack us.
 3. God has chosen, by His Son, to establish a home in us.

Questions

1. According to 1 Corinthians 10:11, why were the experiences of Israel written down?
2. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, Scripture is given by inspiration of God for what purpose?
3. What does the name “Nehemiah” mean, and how does this related to the work of the Holy Spirit?
4. What three things constitute the soul?
5. What things can cloud the mind?
6. In the area of emotions, what emotions are destructive? Why?
7. What are the results of emotions such as anger and bitterness?

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8. What is the difference between your soul and your spirit?
9. According to Romans 8, what has the Holy Spirit come to do for us?

SUMMARY: Just as Nehemiah was grieved when he heard of the situation of his brethren in Jerusalem, so the Holy Spirit is grieved when we have been broken in the area of our soul. God is committed to our restoration at the mental and emotional areas of our being. God has chosen us by His Son to establish His name in us, just as He chose to set His name in Jerusalem.

LESSON 3

HOLINESS AND WHOLENESS

What is holiness? Can I be holy? What are God's expectations when He says, "Be holy, for I am holy"? (1 Peter 1:16)

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 2:1-6

- I. Holiness
 - A. Holiness is related to wholeness.
 1. Both words are related to the Old English word "hal" (pronounced "hail").
 2. The understanding of both of these words has to do with completeness.
 - B. Two scriptures that are often misinterpreted with regard to holiness are Leviticus 11:44 and Matthew 5:48.
 1. People are so prone to condemnation that these scriptures are misunderstood to emphasize their sense of inadequacy.
 2. Nothing hinders healing in a person's life more than condemnation and guilt.
 - C. Holiness as seen in God's Word must be viewed two ways:
 1. Position of holiness
 - a. As Jesus Christ is my Savior, then I am positionally holy.
 - b. Because of His shed blood for the remission of my sins, I am justified.
 2. Practice of holiness
 - a. We recognize that we are to be holy, and that we are not.
 - b. We are aware of God's holiness and our unholiness.
- II. The holiness of God is imparted to us.
 - A. God is holy
 1. This is the attribute of God by which He protects the integrity of His own Being.
 2. God is constant in His own holiness.
 - B. We are painfully aware of our own unholiness.
 1. 1 John 3:9 says that if you are born of God, you don't commit sin.
 - a. But the tense of the word "sin" means "to keep on sinning."
 - b. This is not referring to specific acts of sin but to habitual sinning.
 2. But God has made a provision for our sinning (1 John 1:9; 2:1).
 - C. It takes time to become what God desires us to be.
 1. Nehemiah approached the king in Shushan to ask if he could leave his duties to help Jerusalem.
 - a. He requested a leave of 12 years (Nehemiah 5:14).
 - b. He recognized that his task would take time.

2. God will perfect each of us (Psalm 138).
 - a. No matter how long it takes, God is committed to our completion.
 - b. Scripture declares: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).
 - c. “For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

Questions

1. What does the Old English word “hal” mean, and what are some words in modern English that have developed from that root?
2. In order for the broken areas of our lives to be healed, how must we view our position in the Lord? What must we feel in relationship with the Lord?
3. What is the greatest hindrance to healing in our lives?
4. In what way is God holy?
5. Who is the agent that will resort us and bring us to perfection?
6. What was Nehemiah’s official position in the government of Persia?
7. What did Nehemiah ask the king permission for?
8. What is the analogy between Nehemiah’s request and what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives?

SUMMARY: It takes time for God to make us *whole* people. And this wholeness is related to holiness. Holiness is not something we do; rather we have a *position of holiness in Christ*. Through that, and because of that, there are corresponding actions. God’s desire for us to be whole is shown in Nehemiah as he asks permission of the king for a 12 years to go to Jerusalem and rebuild its walls. God is committed to take all the time needed to make us whole.

LESSON 4

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BONDAGE AND CAPTIVITY

What is the difference between bondage in sin and captivity in your weaknesses? We are talking about the problem of people who say, “I’m saved, but I don’t seem to be able to be *free*.”

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 2:6-8

- I. Nehemiah illustrates the difference between captivity in sin and bondage in weaknesses.
 - A. Nehemiah asked the king for permission to go to Jerusalem.
 - B. He also asked for supplies and letters of authority to the local governors, which the king gave to him.
 1. Letters of authority
 2. Materials for gates and walls
 3. Army of troops
- II. Bondage is...
 - A. Illustrated through the children of Israel in Egypt.
 1. They were there only because of their families; they had been born into it.
 2. The bondage lasted 400 years.
 3. Their release (exodus) took place through the blood of a lamb (the Passover).
 - B. A picture of our lostness in sin before being redeemed.
 1. We are born in sin.
 2. You can become free from the bondage of sin through the Cross and the Blood of Jesus.
 3. The Church are the ones “called out”—ekkleesia
- III. Captivity is...
 - A. Illustrated by the Babylonians
 1. Captivity took place because of their disobedience and sin.
 2. It happened after they had walked with God.
 3. They were carried away in exile, but were not slaves as they had been in Egypt.
 4. Release came through the word of the Lord and Zerubbabel coming to fulfill that word.
 - B. The believer can have captivity in his life by reason of attachments of past things.
 1. We can be presently ensnared by what has dominated us in the past.
 2. This ensnarement can be released through the Word of God.
 3. “...in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

- IV. Nehemiah pictures God's commitment to free us from bondage and captivity.
- A. He has given us letters of authority, materials, and troops.
 - B. The letters say that Nehemiah has the authority in Jerusalem, although Sanballat (who is a picture of Satan) controls the province.
 - 1. God has the authority and ability to work in our lives.
 - a. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!..." (1 John 3:1)
 - b. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name..." (John 1:12)
 - 2. Nothing can obstruct God's purpose to bring us to wholeness.
 - C. Nehemiah had the resources to do the work.
 - 1. Jesus will supply all our needs.
 - a. "For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ..." (Philippians 1:19)
 - b. "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)
 - 2. God has all the resources to put things back together in our lives.
 - a. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God..." (2 Corinthians 3:5)
 - b. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." (1 Peter 1:4).
 - c. "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

Questions

1. Why were the children of Jacob in Egypt, and how long did they stay there?
2. What was necessary to free the children of Israel from bonding in Egypt?
3. What is necessary to free us from bondage to sin?
4. What is the difference between bondage and captivity?
5. Exile is the result of sinning. What causes release and return?
6. Nehemiah came to aid in the restoration. What did he bring with him to help accomplish this task?
7. Who was Sanballat and who does he represent? What power did he have in relation to those who are committed to the restoration?

8. How does Nehemiah, with his letters of authority, compare with the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as revealed in Romans 8?

SUMMARY: Captivity and bondage are the results of sin. A person may belong to the Lord, but by reason of attachment to the past can't "get on with the program." Release from captivity comes first by the promise of God in the Bible. This promise is activated by the faith of the believer, and the believer is helped through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Nehemiah, the picture of the Holy Spirit, receives letters of authority (the Word), troops (angelic helps), and time to accomplish his work from the king (the Lord).

LESSON 5

ANGELS, DEMONS AND SATAN

What do angels have to do with people like you and me? What about Satan? How much is our Adversary, the devil, licensed to do? What are the limits to his right to do things that destroy, damage and afflict?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 2:7-10

- I. The people in Jerusalem were in affliction and reproach.
 - A. Affliction can be likened to a psychological barrier.
 - B. They were ashamed — awkward embarrassment
 - C. They were accessible to their adversary. They couldn't withstand him because the gates to their city were burned, and there was no controlling who entered.
 - D. Authority was despoiled; they had no authority.

- II. Nehemiah comes to help them.
 - A. He was given certain things by the king to help him.
 1. Time — 2:6
 2. Letters of authority — 2:7
 3. Supplies — 2:8
 4. Armed troops — 2:9

 - B. The armed troops are a picture of angels.
 1. The subject of angels is very popular, but we are not to overemphasize.
 - a. Colossians 2:8 warns about worshipping angels.
 2. Angels are sent to minister to believers, those that are salvation's heirs (Hebrews 1:14).

 - C. Angels have specific ministry mentioned in Scripture.
 1. Ministry to salvation's heirs (Romans 8:17; Ephesians 1:11)
 2. Liberation
 - a. Peter freed from prison (Acts 5:19)
 - b. Angels are assigned to break bondage in the soul, assisting the Holy Spirit
 - c. Battle won with the help of angels (2 Kings 6:16-18)
 3. Protection
 - a. Angels will keep and guard us (Psalm 91:11)
 4. Worship
 - a. Angels are called upon to bless the Lord (Psalm 103:20-21)
 - b. Angels lead in worship (Revelation 4, 5)

Questions

1. What does it mean when the Bible says that the residents of Jerusalem were “afflicted”?
2. How was Jerusalem “accessible to adversaries” and how does this relate to the human soul?
3. How long did Nehemiah think it would take for him to restore the walls of Jerusalem?
4. What authority did Nehemiah’s letters from the king have in the region around Jerusalem?
5. What type of picture is represented by the armed troops that Nehemiah received from the king?
6. What danger is there in discussing angels and the supernatural?
7. According to Hebrews 1:14, to whom are angels to minister?
8. According to the Scriptures, angels have four main areas of ministry. List them.

SUMMARY: God has given us all that we need to begin and complete the restoration process. This includes angels who have a fourfold ministry: to minister to the heirs of salvation, to liberate from captivity, to protect, and to help lead in worship. This supernatural ministry to us has its satanic counterpart which can be seen in the workings of Sanballat. but we must recognize that He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

LESSON 6

OVERRULING THE ADVERSARY

What license does Satan have to carry on his program in this world?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 2:9-10

- I. Nehemiah came to the city of Jerusalem and encountered conflict.
 - A. The king had commissioned Nehemiah with troops which are an illustration of angels (2:9).
 - B. When Sanballat and Tobiah heard of his coming, they were grieved (2:10).
 1. Sanballat is the provincial governor under Persian rule.
 2. He was grieved that Nehemiah came to help the oppressed.
 3. His desire was to keep them oppressed so he could exact further taxes, penalties and demands on them.
 4. He is totally disinterested in the well-being of these people.
 5. He is a picture of Satan.
- II. How Satan desires to thwart God's purposes.
 - A. Where Satan came from
 1. Lucifer who fell (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19)
 2. He is the serpent (Genesis 3)
 3. Satan means accuser, adversary; devil means slanderer
 4. He is a created being and is finite. He is not omni-anything.
 5. He is a personality, not an abstract force.
 - B. He is our Adversary
 1. The wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6)
 2. We are not to be ignorant of his devices (2 Corinthians 2:11)
 - C. His realm of influence is limited
 1. He only has authority on Earth
 2. Man was given dominion over this planet, but because of his disobedience, he gave that dominion to Satan.
 3. Jesus did not question Satan's right to offer him "all the kingdoms of the world" (Luke 4:5-6).
 4. Satan has power in the unbeliever's life (Ephesians 2:2)
 - D. The enemy...
 1. Is a liar (John 8:44)
 2. Is an oppressor (Acts 10:38)

3. Infects with evil by sowing evil seed (Matthew 13:39)
4. Opposes God's work in my life by stealing the seed of the Word (Luke 8:12)
5. Is a thief (John 10:10)
 - a. Tries to snatch away hope and promises
 - b. Leaves the door open for depression and fear

III. Our restoration involves overruling the enemy

- A. Nehemiah had to overrule Sanballat, but he had the authority to do so.
- B. In our own freedom, there will be confrontation with demons and darkness, but God will overrule.
- C. Truth overrules lies.
- D. Deliverance overwhelms oppression.

Questions

1. What was the reaction of Sanballat and Tobiah to Nehemiah's arrival?
2. Who was Sanballat in relation to the Persian Empire?
3. What was Sanballat's main interest in the Israelites in his province?
4. Where did Satan come from?
5. What are the powers and capacities of Satan?
6. What is Satan's plan for individuals and for all of mankind?
7. In comparison to the universe, how much power does Satan have?
8. The letters of Nehemiah controverted the authority of Sanballat. What controverts the power of Satan in our lives?

SUMMARY: We must understand who Satan is and that he has strategic plans to thwart God's work in our lives. Satan is a created being; he fell and corrupted himself through sin. He is finite; he has limited power and authority. He is our Adversary, and he is a liar, an oppressor, one who infects, and a thief. Though he has, by man's default, taken rule of this planet, we have the authority won by Jesus Christ to be victorious against his assaults upon God's purpose for our lives. We have authority over Satan through the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON 7

FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION

How can I be unshackled from condemnation? How can I overcome the gnawing sense of guilt? How can I stand in a sense of security in my relationship with God?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 2:11-16

- I. God is committed to the restoration of our soul (Psalm 23).
 - A. The parallel of Jerusalem to the human personality shows that what was once glorious has been decayed and broken down.
 - B. The Holy Spirit comes to heal our soul, just as Nehemiah came to build the walls of Jerusalem.
- II. Nehemiah surveys the situation
 - A. By night, he surveyed the situation.
 - 1. At this time, no one knew why he was there.
 - 2. He wanted to see where to first concentrate his efforts.
 - 3. He went out by night three times (2:12, 13, 15)
 - B. Nehemiah goes out at night while the people are sleeping.
 - 1. They aren't aware that anyone has come for their welfare.
 - 2. We often don't realize when God is working on our behalf.
 - 3. Often it seems as if nothing is happening, but God is always working on our behalf (Psalm 121:2-8).
 - 4. Nehemiah is actually working toward recovery as he is surveying and planning.
- III. Nehemiah's inspection of...
 - A. The Valley Gate — Represents assurance of our salvation
 - 1. This is above the valley of Hinnom which was also called the Valley of Flame or Fires.
 - 2. It is a natural picture of hell, or of a person's destiny without Christ.
 - 3. We may look upon our unsaved, past destiny as the setting of the sun on this west-facing valley because in Jesus, we are freed of it (John 8:36).
 - B. The Serpent Well — Represents dominion over the devil
 - 1. So named because a snake was probably killed here.
 - 2. God desires that we know the serpent (Satan) is under our dominion, and we no longer need heed his accusations against us.
 - 3. Through the Cross, Jesus made an open spectacle of our Adversary, the devil (Colossians 2:13-15).

- IV. Through confession, we have cleansing and freedom from condemnation.
- A. Recognize that the enemy's success in condemning is that he points to our failures.
 - B. But God forgives and forgets our sins (1 John 1:9; Hebrews 10:17).
 - C. We are justified through our faith in Christ (Romans 5:9).
 - D. Because of our relationship with Jesus, we are no longer under condemnation (Romans 8:1).
 - E. Our relationship with the Lord is secure (John 10:28; Isaiah 43:1).

Questions

1. How many gates were there to the city?
2. How many times did Nehemiah go out at night to survey the walls of the city? Why did he do this?
3. Sometimes it seems that God isn't working fast enough — or even at all — in our lives. What is really going on?
4. What was the Valley of Hinnom? What went on there, and what does that represent to us?
5. What probably happened at the Serpent Well? What does this mean, symbolically, for our lives as believers?
6. What are the two points with which God wants to impress us in the opening part of Nehemiah's survey of the walls?
7. How should believers respond when Satan keeps reminding us of our past failures?
8. What is the starting place of restoration?

SUMMARY: Nehemiah began the restoration work by surveying the walls of Jerusalem. We, in turn, need to first see our condition: that we are saved from our past, and that we have dominion over Satan. We stand secure in our relationship with God when we know and understand such scriptures as Romans 8:1 and John 10:28. On the foundation of "I am the Lord's" comes restoration of the whole personality.

LESSON 8

CONFESSION AND THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

What is the place of confession in the life of a believer in Jesus Christ? What is the relative importance of the baptism with the Holy Spirit to the ongoing restoration of the believer's soul?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 2:12-16

- I. Nehemiah toured Jerusalem by night to see what was needed to be done to rebuild the walls around the city.
 - A. The Dung Gate — Represents confession
 1. The place where refuse went out.
 2. This gate is a picture of confession in the believer's life.
 - a. Realization and confession of sin are not meant to bring condemnation.
 - b. God brings sin to light so that Jesus' blood can flush our lives free.
 - c. Confession is agreement with the Lord; it is our saying the same thing about sin as Father God says about it. (from the Greek — *homologeō* — confession means "to speak the same thing")
 - d. We are cleansed by the power of Jesus' blood (1 John 1:7-9).
 - B. Fountain Gate — Represents the Word of God
 1. This was the gate used to get their daily supply of water from the Brook Kidron.
 2. It is a picture of the life-giving flow of the Word of God.
 3. The flow of the Word of God washes and cleanses us (Titus 3:5; John 15:3).
 - C. The King's Pool — Represents the flow of the Holy Spirit
 1. History of the King's Pool
 - a. Under rule of Hezekiah (750 B.C.), a conduit was built underground from the city to the spring of Gihon (pool of Siloam in Jesus' time).
 - b. It was 1,300 feet long, cut through granite.
 - c. This was the first time the city had water.
 - d. Psalm 46 is thought to be a celebration of this.
 2. This is a picture of being filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; John 4:14; John 7:38).
 3. The literal translation is not just a one-time event, but to keep on being filled.

Questions

1. What two things do we see from the Valley Gate?

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2. What does the Dung Gate represent?
3. What is the difference between condemnation and confession?
4. What does the Greek word for confession (homologeō) literally mean?
5. What does the Fountain Gate represent?
6. Since the Word is essential for restoration, what must we establish?
7. How did the King's Pool aid in the defense of Jerusalem?
8. What, as part of a Christian's life, is symbolized by the King's Pool?

SUMMARY: The Dung Gate of Jerusalem pictures Christian confession. It is not a mourning over past mistakes, but rather agreeing with the Holy Spirit that we have sinned. Confession is not meant to shame, but to provide cleansing from sin. The Fountain Gate represents how the Word must interact with the Spirit. We must keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 9

GOD'S VIEW OF HUMAN PERFECTION

How does God feel about human imperfections? Should I fear that because of my shortcomings, God's divine displeasure will suddenly burst upon me in wrath and fury? Does the Lord still identify with me and regard me as His own in the face of my brokenness? Will He help me?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 2:17-20

- I. We need to know how God feels about us.
 - A. We are so aware of our own failures that many people live with the constant feeling that God is unhappy with them.
 - B. God wants to show us how to deal with our imperfections.
 - C. Our confidence in life is directly related to understanding His feelings about us.
- II. Nehemiah talks to the people about building the walls.
 - A. Nehemiah identifies completely with the people, including himself as he refers to them as "we".
 - B. He states where they are and where they want to be:
 1. We are distressed.
 2. We will not be a reproach.
 - C. He is a comforter to them.
 1. Jesus said He would give us another Comforter (John 14:16).
 2. The Comforter would do the same as He did (John 16:13-15).
- III. Jesus gave three parables to show His heart's inclination toward us.
 - A. The one lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7)
 1. A picture of God's loving heart going out for the individual.
 2. He has a heart of concern.
 - B. Woman with 10 coins (Luke 15:8-10)
 1. These were the equivalent to an engagement ring or the promise of marriage.
 2. For her to find the lost coin is as much a fulfillment to the intended bridegroom as to the bride.
 - C. The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
 1. A picture of God's heart reaching out to the most miserable failure.
 2. The son is restored his place in his father's family

- IV. How God views us
- A. As Nehemiah said, “We are in distress,” so God identifies with us when we are hurting (Hebrews 4:14-15).

 - B. Nehemiah told the people how the king commissioned him to see that the walls were rebuilt.
 - 1. The people’s response was, “Let us rise up and build.”
 - 2. They became confident in their stance.
 - 3. God wants us to have the same type of response to His workings in our lives.

 - C. Sanballat and Tobiah confront them with mocking accusation.
 - 1. When we begin to believe that God will work in our lives, Satan accuses us of presumption.
 - 2. Our response should be the same as theirs: “The God of heaven, He will prosper us.”

Questions

1. What is our confidence in life directly related to?
2. Did Nehemiah take a stance of superiority to the people he came to help?
3. What parallel is there with Nehemiah’s identification with the people and the Holy Spirit to us?
4. The parable of the prodigal son is a picture of what?
5. When God thinks of us, does He measure us against the standard of sinlessness?
6. After Nehemiah explained to the people that his intent was to restore the walls, what was their response?
7. How did their adversary attack after the people had decided to rebuild?
8. How should we respond to Satan’s attack?

SUMMARY: How does God really feel about us? He sees our failures and weakness, but rather than judging us, He identifies with us. Nehemiah said, “We are in distress.” This is an Old Testament picture of the Holy Spirit that shows that when we are hurting, He is hurting too. Because Jesus has paid the price for our sins, we can come boldly into God’s presence. Satan will oppose and mock us, but we must confront him with our faith in Jesus, because we know that God is committed to restore us completely.

LESSON 10

MY RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

How am I responsible for your spiritual growth, and how are you responsible for mine? The interrelationship of the Body of Christ is so seldom studied.

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 3:1-32

- I. Unity in the Body of Christ
 - A. In our present day, there is more unity and understanding in the Church than there has been in the past.
 - B. But in many parts of the Church, there still exists a spirit of independence:
 1. People who have severed and unfulfilled relationships.
 2. People who have a spirit of independence, although they are a part of a denominational church.
 - C. There is to be no schism in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:25)
 1. Unity among believers represents God's love to the world (John 17:21)
 - a. There is no genuine unity in the world.
 - b. People that unify in the world system do it around points of division; this is not true unity, but a spirit of unified animosity around a given point.
- II. Unity in rebuilding the walls
 - A. Among those joining together to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem, there were many different groups of people:
 1. 38 leaders
 2. from 8 different vocational callings
 3. 7 villages represented
 4. 7 different rulers
 5. numerous family relationships, including a man and his daughters
 6. all vocations
 7. full spectrum of age groups
 - B. The job could not have completed without the unity of all these different people.
 1. Interrelationship is necessary to get the whole job done.
 2. An understanding of submission makes the interrelationships work
 - a. Ephesians 5:21 — "Submit yourselves to one another."
 - b. Greek word for submission — hupotasso — has to do with the strategic ordering of troops for maximum victory
 - c. Submission is indicative of a spiritual relationship involving protection, consideration, sensitivity, and sensibility.

- d. Submission is given willingly; when demanded, it is subjugation.
 - e. We are members of one another (Ephesians 2:20-22)
- C. The walls of Jerusalem couldn't be restored without everyone working together, and neither will we be restored without the interrelationship of the Body of Christ.
- 1. Everyone worked together; there was no status involved.
 - 2. We are all sons and daughters of God.
 - a. No gender barrier
 - b. No age barrier
 - c. No ethnic barrier

Questions

1. What will our love for Jesus breed?
2. What problems will hinder our relationship with others in the Body of Christ?
3. What are the benefits of submission?
4. The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt through cooperative effort. How will we, as individuals, have the walls of our personality restored?
5. The often repeated phrases in chapter 3, "next unto them" and "next unto him" signify what?
7. The High Priest also worked on the wall; what does this signify?
8. If we are not currently in relationship with a body of believers, what should we do?

SUMMARY: The restoration of the walls is a joint effort that was dependent upon people working together. In order for restoration to occur, we must recognize the relationships we have and those we need with other people. These can be hindered by fear and/or by personal ambition. The Bible commands believers to "submit yourselves to one another" (Ephesians 5:21) for the protection, growth, and that the intended purpose of our lives as part of the Body of Christ to be fulfilled.

LESSON 11

THE ADVERSARY'S ATTACK ON YOUR HOPE

How does Satan attack people's hope? What are the ways in which Satan tries to destroy people's lives and their prospects of hope?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 4: 1, 2

- I. Who Satan is
 - A. He is the sinister embodiment of all darkness and hatefulness.
 1. He comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).q
 2. The evidence of his work is seen all around us.
 - B. Satan opposes the restoration work God desires to do in believers.
- II. The accusation of the adversary
 - A. Sanballat was angry and mocked the Jews (4:1)
 1. Parallels Satan's fury being unleashed in these last days (Revelation 12)
 2. Today there is a rise in the intensity of evil
 - B. Sanballat's observations
 1. "Feebleness" — weakness
 - a. He observes their weaknesses
 - b. He accuses that if their life isn't a mess, they won't trust God
 2. "Fortify" — rebellion
 - a. Laments that they will have defenses
 - b. Accuses them of rebellion
 3. "Sacrifice" — shame
 - a. Points out shame they now feel—sacrificing while the city is in ruins
 - b. Also accuses them of not sacrificing when the walls are completed.
 4. "In a day" — slowness
 - a. Mocks them for the slowness of this task
 - b. Mocks them for their weakness
 5. "Revive" — hopelessness
 - a. Points out their hopelessness
 - b. They were rebuilding out of the rubble that was there
 - c. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick..." Proverbs 13:12
 - C. The adversary's tactics are to destroy our confidence in what God works in our lives.
 1. Says you are too weak to recover.
 2. Says when you get healthy, you will rebel against God.
 3. Questions if you are a true worshiper of God because your life isn't all together.

4. Questions whether the work will ever get done, accusing that it is hopeless.
5. When you hear these accusations, respond like Jesus did: “Get behind me, Satan!” (Matthew 16:23).

Questions

1. What has Satan come to do?
2. What works of Satan can we see around us?
3. What does the army of Samaria represent?
4. What did Sanballat mean by calling the Jews “feeble”?
5. Of what does Sanballat accuse the people when he says, “Will they fortify themselves?”
6. In referring to “sacrifice,” what does Sanballat do?
7. The adversary’s tactic is to destroy our confidence in what?
8. What are some things that Satan will say to us to make us lose confidence?
9. What are some things that God desires to work in our lives?

SUMMARY: Satan has specific strategy to oppose the reconstruction process in our lives. He says we are too weak, that it will take too long to restore us, especially since we are not much to work with in the first place. He browbeats us, making us feel ashamed of the way we are. Through the Holy Spirit, we learn to stand against Satan’s tactics, knowing that Jesus has destined us to become whole, complete and perfect.

LESSON 12

DEALING WITH DOUBTS

How can you answer to attacks on your sense of personal certainty of God's purpose in your life? The attacks come pointedly, maliciously, and deliberately, but we do have answers.

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 4:3-6

- I. How you deal with the attack of the adversary is crucial.
 - A. Tobiah also harangued the workers (4:3)
 1. He lacks originality, but he's still accusing
 2. He says that they cannot build anything that is durable; it won't count.
 - B. The adversary will raise doubts about areas of our own certainty:
 1. Doubt about our ability
 - a. He accuses us of being feeble and weak
 - b. The Word of God says we are strong in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:6-10; Philippians 3, Nehemiah 8, Isaiah 40)
 2. Doubt about our destiny
 - a. The Lord desires us to learn the dimensions of His life so we can realize His destiny in our lives.
 - b. We are sons and daughters of God (John 1:12).
 3. Doubts about peace
 - a. God will keep you in "perfect peace" (Isaiah 26:3)
 - b. We are to be "anxious for nothing" (Philippians 4:6, 7)
 4. Doubts about timing
 - a. "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9)
 - b. "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God..." (Hebrews 10:36).
 - c. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." (1 Corinthians 15:58)
 - d. The enemy comes to weary the saints, but God rewards the steadfast (Hebrews 11:6).
 5. Doubts about completion
 - a. Satan will accuse that God will never finish the work He has begun in you (Philippians 1:6).
 - b. God will restore what has been lost (Joel 2:25).
 - C. We are to let the Spirit of God fill us and allow Him to continue in the rebuilding process.

Questions

1. How is “perishing” two-fold?
2. Jesus wants to bring security and peace to our lives as worshipers of God. What does the devil try to do to us?
3. What kind of destiny do we as believers have?
4. What is the answer to those things which threaten us in our comfortable relationship with the Father?
5. What are some scriptures that we can stand on when we feel that God is taking too long with us?
6. Are some of us too far gone to ever be completely healed of the brokenness that has happened to us?
7. How does Satan attack us in the area of ability?
8. What scripture would you use when Satan makes you feel like all is hopeless?

SUMMARY: Perishing is two-fold: you can overcome the prospect of perishing in hell through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, but if your life is still falling apart and you are not receiving help from the Holy Spirit, you are still, in a sense, perishing. At any point Satan would challenge us, there are scriptures upon which we can stand to resist. God has a significant destiny for each of us which will be achieved in the Holy Spirit’s timing. What God begins, He completes!

LESSON 13

THE INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON BELIEVERS

To what degree have evil spirits the power to influence believers in Jesus Christ?

Can a Christian have a demon?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 4:7-9

- I. Nehemiah is a picture of the Holy Spirit who comes to restore the human personality.
 - A. His name means “comforter” and “consoler”
 - B. He sees the distress we are in and willingly comes to help.
 1. “The Lord is my shepherd... He restores my soul.” (Psalm 23:1, 3)
 2. The recovery process is through the Holy Spirit’s help.
 - C. Our spirit, soul and body are involved.
 1. Spirit — the inner man is restored to life through re-birth in Christ (analogous to the Temple)
 2. Soul — the mind, emotions and will (analogous to the walls around Jerusalem)
 - a. Even those who are spiritually dead are operational in the area of the soul.
 - b. Being spiritually reborn does not insure wholeness of the soul.
 - c. The soul or “personality” level of our being can be damaged and broken like the walls of Jerusalem.
 - d. Satan will often put a “hook” into a person at the soul level through experiences that happened as a child.
 3. Body — we are more than a body, but we have a body.
- II. Sanballat is a picture of Satan who desires to obstruct and destroy the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - A. Sanballat heard that the gaps in the walls were being closed (4:7).
 1. He became very angry
 2. He conspired against them
 3. He planned an attack
 4. He tried to cause confusion
 - B. Nehemiah prayed and set a watch to protect them from the enemy (4:9).
 1. We are not ignorant of the Adversary’s devices (2 Corinthians 2:11).
 2. The “wiles” of the devil contain the idea of plans (Ephesians 6:11).
 3. The struggle is real (Ephesians 6:12).
 4. We are to resist the devil (James 4:7).
 5. Through the Cross, we have the resources to defeat the enemy:
 - a. The Blood of Jesus
 - b. The Word of God
 - c. The Name of Jesus

- C. The Adversary desires to come in, to slay and to destroy (4:10, 11).
 - 1. The Adversary has no power to do this to believers (Romans 8:9, 10).
 - a. Believers cannot be “possessed” by the devil.
 - b. Believers CAN be oppressed by onslaughts of the enemy.
 - 2. We need to take a stand against the enemy.
 - a. Learn to fix your mind and resist him.
 - b. Parts of us will never be fully liberated until we take a stand.

Questions

1. What will give us a balanced picture of the reality of demonic activity?
2. When and how does Satan try to get a “hook” into us?
3. Sanballat is a type of Satan. In what four ways did he react to the walls of Jerusalem being rebuilt?
4. How does the enemy try to interfere with the recovery of your mind, emotions and will?
5. How did Nehemiah respond to the threats of Sanballat?
6. What is the only way we can come against the torturous workings of hell?
7. Where was the power of the Adversary broken?
8. What resources are we to use in withstanding the plans of Satan?
9. What do we need to fix in our minds in order to withstand Satan?

SUMMARY: Although believers cannot be “possessed” by satanic forces, we can be oppressed and tormented. Satan inserts a “hook” in us and then begins to torment and manipulate us with it. The Holy Spirit has come to reveal these hooks so they can be broken, and so that we can be freely restored.

LESSON 14

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

What is the nature of spiritual bondage in believers in Jesus Christ? Believers can experience spiritual bondage that obstructs their advancement in any and all aspects of life.

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 4:12-15, 22

- I. Bondage hinders freedom of movement and obstructs our advancement.
 - A. The enemy of our soul seeks to do battle from within.
 1. Bondage results from sin and can enter in through spirit or soul.
 2. We are to cleanse ourselves and keep in holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1).
 - B. We are in a struggle (Ephesians 6:10-18).
 1. We are to put on the whole armor of God to battle against and withstand the assaults of the enemy.
 2. Satan never takes a day off from attempting to throw hell our way.
 3. A spirit lodges error as obstruction in the mind (1 John 4:6).
 4. But truth is also carried by a Spirit (John 16:13).
 - C. The flesh is often a gate for bondage to enter.
 1. Sensual gratification, disobedience, bitterness, self-pity, resentment, anger, unfor-giveness, and carelessness in eating habits can open a door for the enemy.
 - a. These things can cause depression.
 - b. They aren't demonic activities in themselves, but give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27).
 2. You will not have success in addressing these areas of the flesh by human will alone, but it takes deliverance in the Name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit in order to find freedom.
- II. Nehemiah showed the people how to be free from the entrapment of the enemy.
 - A. Nehemiah sat with his troops at the lower places in the wall, and the people were at the higher places.
 1. Nehemiah protected them from the enemy who said he would attack at the weak-est places.
 2. Nehemiah told them to stay where the wall was strong.
 - a. We are to stand where God has made us strong (Galatians 5:2).
 - b. Stand in freedom (John 8:36).
 - c. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Lord will raise up a standard against him (Isaiah 59:19).

- B. Nehemiah told them to stop trafficking with the world.
 - 1. He instructed them to live within the city with provision and protection.
 - 2. They were to dwell in the richness of the blessings God gave them.

Questions

1. What are some of the “types” often used in Scripture?
2. What is God doing with us that it take so long to “rebuild the walls” of our lives?
3. Can a believer in Jesus Christ be in spiritual bondage? How?
4. According to the Bible, how can we withstand the attacks of Satan?
5. What do the “fiery darts” of the enemy try to do?
6. What provides a major gate to bondage in our lives? In your life?
7. At what place in your life is Satan going to aim his attack?
8. What does it mean for us as believers to “live in Jerusalem”?

SUMMARY: Scripture encourages us to cleanse ourselves from bondage, and to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18) in order to withstand the strategy of our Adversary, the devil. We must stop giving in to the flesh and start living in the provision we are given by the Lord.

LESSON 15

RESISTING THE ATTACKS OF THE ADVERSARY

When I face spiritual attack, how can I be successful in resisting and overcoming the Adversary of my life? How do I beat back the enemy when he attempts to beat in on me?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 4:11-23

- I. The book of Nehemiah illustrates the enemy's attack on believers.
 - A. Sanballat and Tobiah had set themselves against the restoration of Jerusalem.
 1. The working out of God's destiny for us will not be reached without struggle and warfare.
 2. We are involved in a spiritual struggle (1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Timothy 2:3- 4; Ephesians 6:12).
 - B. Nehemiah guarded the walls of the city with his troops.
 1. We need to confront the enemy and remember the Lord is watching out for us.
 2. We are not to be fearful people (Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:6-7).
 3. Nehemiah reminded the people to not be afraid, but to remember the Lord.
 - a. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31).
 - b. The Lord is good, and a stronghold in the day of trouble (Nahum 1:7).
 - C. How to withstand the enemy:
 1. Confront fear and remember the Lord.
 2. Keep going forward.
 - a. They worked and held their spears.
 - b. They progressed with their work.
 3. Realize you are not alone.
 - a. Nehemiah's army was there with the people.
 - b. This can be equated with angels watching over us.
 4. Align yourself with praise.
 - a. In times of difficulty, we need to praise God (Acts 12; Psalm 91).
 - b. Judah led Israel, and the name "Judah" means praise.
 5. Take the Word by your side.
 - a. They worked with their swords.
 - b. They were working, but were not unprepared for conflict.
 - c. Overcoming faith comes by the Word (Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6; Romans 10:17).
 6. Keep an ear to the Holy Spirit
 - a. When they heard the trumpet, they were to come to Nehemiah.
 - b. We need to listen to the Holy Spirit for direction in battle.

7. Keep clean.
 - a. They were on guard at all times and didn't take their clothes off except to wash them.
 - b. Walk with a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit with confession (1 John 1:9).

Questions

1. What does resisting the Adversary require of us?
2. What is the significance of the fact that the people watched in the higher places while Nehemiah, who is a picture of the Holy Spirit, watched in the lower places?
3. What assails the human personality most often?
4. What are some of the scriptural grounds for confronting fear?
5. We know that Satan will attack God's work in our lives. What should we do when that happens?
6. We are not alone in our struggle with Satan. What did Nehemiah's army symbolize?
7. Judah was the leader of all the Israelite tribes during battle. What does the name "Judah" mean, and how is it significant for us as we confront spiritual battles?
8. Everyone who worked on the walls had their sword by their side. What does the sword symbolize, and how does this weapon apply to us as we face the Adversary?

SUMMARY: In order to resist Satan's plan to destroy us, we must arm ourselves and move according to the principles of spiritual warfare. Fear is our greatest enemy, and to conquer it, we must confront it. Once we gain a victory, we must continue to press forward with the Word of God as our weapon for warfare.

LESSON 16

OVERCOMING COMMON HINDRANCES TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

What are the greatest and most common hindrances to effective spiritual growth?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 5:1-6

- I. Nehemiah established principles for the people to live under.
 - A. They had been hindering themselves.
 1. Because of past sins, the walls were in rubble.
 2. Because of ignorance, they had become captives.
 - B. Nehemiah came to restore the walls of the city.
 1. Historical facts and principles emerge from this story.
 2. Some are obvious; others are prophetic.
- II. Three areas of hindrance:
 - A. Mismanagement of finances
 1. They were responding in fear
 - a. Because they needed to pay taxes.
 - b. They didn't follow God's principles of finance.
 2. They were constrained by social patterns.
 - a. They needed houses and plunged themselves into financial trouble.
 - b. They were functioning in world-mindedness: get a loan, get an extra job.
 - B. Disobedience in relationships
 1. Exacting "interest" of brothers and sisters
 - a. The Word of God puts specific restrictions on the loaning of money (Leviticus 25; Deuteronomy 23).
 - b. Interest is like unforgiveness—you owe me, I owe you—measuring up to a standard (Matthew 18:28).
 2. They had difficulties with their brethren, the Jews (1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
 - C. Ignorance of parent/child relationship
 1. They indulged their children: "If we don't take care of our kids, God won't."
 2. They were cruel, selling their children into slavery.
 - D. Nehemiah was angry over these things.
 1. He strongly corrected them (5:7-13).
 2. He modeled what they should be doing.

Questions

1. Are hindrances most often due to deliberate calculations to sin on our part?
2. What do the ruined walls of Jerusalem represent in the human personality?
3. What three things were the people doing against themselves?
4. Fear and social pressure affected what area of their lives?
5. The people were not functioning according to God's principles in regard to their finances. What are some ways in which we can learn God's principles on finances?
6. Do the practical aspects of our life have anything to do with the restoration of the spiritual part of our life?
7. What does "exacting interest" from our brothers and sisters symbolize?
8. Nehemiah preached strongly to the people. What else did he do so that the people could really understand what he was preaching?

SUMMARY: Hindrances to spiritual growth are more often the result of ignorance than outright disobedience, and there are three areas in which they most often occur: 1) finances, 2) disobedience in relationships, and 3) ignorance of parent/child relationships. Spiritual restoration deals with practical aspects of everyday life, and Nehemiah provides not only instruction but also an example of how life is to function.

LESSON 17

QUENCHING, RESISTING, AND SINNING AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

What does “quench not the Spirit” mean? How does a person quench the Spirit? What is the difference between quenching the Holy Spirit, resisting the Holy Spirit, and sinning against the Holy Spirit?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 6:1-9

- I. The place of the Holy Spirit:
 - A. We are to honor the Holy Spirit.
 1. He is not to be substituted for God in the Trinity.
 2. He is to be given His rightful place in the church.
 - B. We are not to quench the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
 1. “Quenching” is to stop the thirst for more of God in your life.
 2. “Quenching” also means extinguishing a fire.
- II. Sanballat tries to get Nehemiah to draw back, to quench his pursuit of helping.
 - A. He seeks consultation:
 1. Sanballat wants Nehemiah to come down so they can negotiate.
 2. He appeals to Nehemiah: “Let’s be responsible men.”
 - a. The purpose was to stop the work.
 - b. Sanballat sought to do him harm.
 3. Sanballat wants to meet on the plain of Ono, which means “strength.”
 - a. The essence of the Holy Spirit’s working is receiving power (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 3:16).
 - b. Will the Holy Spirit be free to empower us, or will there be a hindering of his working?
 - B. He accuses Nehemiah of rebellion
 1. Sanballat sent him four letters asking Nehemiah to come and talk.
 2. The fifth letter was an open letter:
 - a. It was published for all to read and know.
 - b. It attempted to incriminate Nehemiah, accusing him of rebellion against the king.
 - C. He attempts to induce fear.
 1. The people were beginning to wonder if they were doing the right thing by following Nehemiah.
 2. Shemeiah urged Nehemiah to hide in the temple so he wouldn’t be slain.
 - a. Nehemiah refused to do this because it wasn’t lawful.
 - b. Nehemiah declares that Sanballat and Tobiah had hired Shemeiah.

3. It was an attempt to induce fear, intimidate and isolate.
 - a. Quest for consultation: negotiate
 - b. Accusation of rebellion: incriminate
 - c. Attempts to induce fear: isolate
- III. We are not to quench the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- A. There are more testimonies today of the working of the Holy Spirit than ever before.
 1. This also has caused many people to come against the present working of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Don't stop thirsting for the Holy Spirit.
 - B. What Jesus said about the Holy Spirit:
 1. Pray the Father to give you another Comforter (John 14:16, 17).
 - a. You know what He is like because He has been present with you during My ministry.
 - b. He works like Jesus.
 2. He will teach you all things (John 14:26).
 - a. He will make the Word alive.
 3. The Comforter will testify of Jesus (John 15:26)
 4. He will reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.
 - a. He will deal with people about their own sinfulness.
 - b. He will deal with people about the righteousness of God.
 - c. He will deal with people about the coming judgment.
 5. He will guide you into all truth (John 16:13).
 - C. Don't allow accusations to stop the work of the Holy Spirit.
 1. Sanballat wanted Nehemiah to back off.
 - a. This can be likened to talking about the Holy Spirit but not living in Him.
 2. People will accuse you of talking too much about Him.
 3. People will tell you to stop exercising your experience in the Holy Spirit.
 4. We are not to accept these influences, but to give the Spirit place in our lives.

Questions

1. What does it mean to quench the Holy Spirit
2. What does the name "Ono" signify?
3. Why did Sanballat want to talk to Nehemiah?
4. What was the purpose behind Sanballat's sending letters to Nehemiah?
5. What would have happened if Nehemiah had hidden in the temple?

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6. Where do we, today, find opposition to the workings of the Holy Spirit?
7. What two things does Jesus say about the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-17?
8. Sound theology is important, but what do we need more than consultation “about” the Holy Spirit?

SUMMARY: The Bible says we are not to quench the Spirit. In order to stop the work of God in our lives, Satan will do three things: 1) Get us to “negotiate,” i.e., talk about the work of the Holy Spirit but not enter into His life; 2) Insinuate that we are rebellions; 3) Try to isolate us by inducing fear. The Holy Spirit has come to comfort us, to teach us, to exalt Jesus and to convince people of sin and the way to salvation.

LESSON 18

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN FLESH AND SPIRIT

Where is the line between flesh and spirit? When I fail, is it me, or is it the activity of satanic powers stampeding me?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 6:15-19; 7:1-73; 11:1-36

- I. There is a blending of flesh and spirit in bondage in a person's life.
 - A. The Holy Spirit comes to restore that which has been shattered and burnt.
 1. Nehemiah had built the walls and now will establish government within the city.
 2. Control and defenses will be established.
 3. The enemies are cast down when they hear of the city being restored.
- II. How Nehemiah re-established the city:
 - A. The nobles of Judah began to establish relationship with Tobiah, who had been their enemy.
 1. The elders tried to make a case for Tobiah before Nehemiah.
 2. As soon as the walls are up, they begin working toward their own confusion again.
 3. We are not to submit to unhealthy relationships.
 4. We are to accept our own responsibility for control.
 - B. To protect them, Nehemiah established controls for the city.
 1. They don't open the gates until it is hot (7:3).
 2. They were to conduct the relationship with the outside world in the day.
 3. They appointed watches (7:3).
 - a. They were to take responsibility for watching at night.
 - b. This is like night-watching prayers.
 4. People moved into the city (7:4).
 - C. They reckoned the people by genealogy.
 1. There were promises related to tribal relationships.
 2. Some of those that were acting as priests couldn't be verified in the registry of priests.
 - a. They weren't allowed to perform their duties.
 - b. They waited for word from the Lord by Urim and Thummim.
- III. We are to accept responsibility for our own self-control.
 - A. There is a new rule in our lives, and we aren't to let the old rule happen (Romans 6:11-22).
 - B. Have control of your own gates/open-close (mouth, ears, eyes) (Ephesians 4:22-32).

- C. Once you've established your life, add to it good quality (2 Peter 1:4-8).

Questions

1. How is there a blending of flesh and spirit in bondage?
2. How did Sanballat and his cohorts react to the completion of Jerusalem's walls?
3. What were some of the reasons why the elders of Judah were in correspondence with Tobiah?
4. What was Tobiah's position towards the Jews?
5. One of our responsibilities is not to submit to unhealthy what?
6. The new city gates were to be left open during the day but closed at night. What does this symbolize for us?
7. What does it mean to "set watches"?
8. According to Romans 6, how are we to handle sin?

SUMMARY: Once the walls to our personality have been established (our identity in Christ), and the gates rebuilt (control re-established), we have the responsibility of maintaining the work that God has done in our lives. We must do two things: 1) not submit to unhealthy relationships, and 2) accept our responsibility for control. We must consider ourselves dead to sinful desires, and put away the works of the flesh.

LESSON 19

PRACTICAL BIBLE STUDY AND YOU

How do I get the most out of reading the Bible? How can I become a better student of the Word of God so I can understand more of what the Bible says?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 8:1-3

- I. The walls of the city are complete.
 - A. They parallel the recovery of the human personality:
 1. Recovery of the security of the individual
 2. Recovery of the identity of the individual
 - B. For the people of Jerusalem, the building of the walls meant security and identity.
- II. The people came together at the Water Gate to read the Word.
 - A. The Word is a cleansing power, and this is symbolized by the Water Gate.
 1. We are clean through the Word (John 15:3).
 2. We are born again through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).
 - B. The people gathered to read the Word from morning until midday.
 1. They received the commandments of the Sabbath, moral laws, and more.
 2. They desired to have the order of God in their lives.
 - C. How to approach the Word:
 1. Understand that divine order is for our benefit.
 2. Come with reverence and worship.
 - a. The source of the Word of God is Divine.
 - b. Through it, we can understand God's divine intent and authority.
 3. Submit to teachers of the Word (Ephesians 4:11)
 - a. Teachers are a gift from the Lord to bring forth the Word.
 - b. Then the Holy Spirit applies it to your individual life.

Questions

1. The walls of Jerusalem symbolize what two things in the life of a believer?
2. The Bible was read to the people at the Water Gate. What is that symbolic of?

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3. Now that the walls have been completed, the people are being prepared to live in the city. Of what must they have an understanding?
4. If God's divine order is not just a bunch of rules and rituals, what is it?
5. What are some of the reasons God has commanded us to observe a Sabbath?
6. What happens when we violate God's laws?
7. In what three ways can we best approach the Word?
8. A teacher can teach the truth of the Word. Its personal application depends on Whom?

SUMMARY: The walls of Jerusalem were restored. This is symbolic of the restoring work that God does in our lives. After the rebuilding and restoration, the people heard the Word read to them. In order for us to maintain the work of God in our lives, we must read and receive the Word of God. This is done by: 1) understanding that the objective of the Word of God is to bring divine order into our lives; 2) coming to it with reverence and worship; and 3) submitting to teachers of the Word, recognizing that God has given them to us as gifts.

LESSON 20

RECEIVING AND GROWING IN THE WORD

How can I live for the Lord when I feel so unworthy? Reading the Bible makes me feel worse about myself because I feel so short of what it summons me to grow into. How can I receive the Word of God without condemnation? How can I grow in the Word?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 8:9-18

- I. Condemnation
 - A. Many people feel unworthy before the Lord even though they are trying to do what God wants.
 - 1. The desire to serve Him is the devotion the Lord is looking for.
 - 2. The Word of God needs to be received with confidence and certainty.
 - B. The people of Jerusalem had heard things about the Word and the Lord, but they did not know them.
 - 1. When they were taught the Word, they began to weep and mourn.
 - 2. Nehemiah told them to stop mourning because this was a holy day — a day of rejoicing.
 - a. “Holy days” (like “holidays”) should be days of feasting and gifts.
 - b. The people were encouraged to rejoice in the Lord.
 - 3. They were to open their hearts and receive the Word as seed to their souls.
- II. Ways people sometimes receive the Word:
 - A. Ignorance - “I don’t know” (sin)
 - 1. They simply don’t know.
 - 2. The Bible says there is forgiveness for sins of ignorance.
 - B. Presumption — “I think I know” (sin)
 - 1. Think you know but you don’t.
 - 2. Many of us are guilty of this.
 - C. Disobedience — “I know but I don’t do” (sin)
 - 1. Knowingly disobey and sin.
 - 2. Purposely decide to do the contrary.
 - D. Rebellion — “Know but do the opposite” (sin/bondage)
 - 1. So hate what the Word says, they do the opposite.
 - 2. Rebellion is likely to produce bondage in a person.

- E. The entrance of the Word of God is not meant to bring condemnation but LIGHT.
 - 1. God's Word is not meant to be constrictive.
 - 2. Nehemiah said it was a "holy day" — a day to bring wholeness.
 - a. They kept the Feast of the Tabernacles.
 - b. It had been 1,000 years since they celebrated it.
 - c. It reminded them that they were a people in transit; obeying the Word and following the leading of the Spirit.
 - 3. We are to receive the Word this way — receiving God's correction, not condemnation.

Questions

1. What is the purpose of knowing the Word of God?
2. The people wept when they heard the Word. Were they convicted?
3. For what reason did the people rejoice?
4. What is the difference between ignorance and presumption?
5. What is rebellion, and what does it produce?
6. What does the entrance of the Word bring?
7. What does the Feast of Tabernacles remind the people of?
8. Instead of basing our lives on what we have "heard," what should we base our lives on?

SUMMARY: God is not as interested in *what we are* as He is in *what we can become*. There is an objective in reading the Word: to establish divine order in our lives. The Word of God enters our soul like seed, and this seed grows in our lives and then bears fruit. God restored the Feast of Tabernacles to show the people that while they were in transition, they were to obey His Word.

LESSON 21

COMMITMENT, DEDICATION AND CONSECRATION

Should a person make a commitment to God when they doubt their ability to fulfill it? Many times a person is dubious about making any point of surrender to the Lord because of their past record of having failed in that point. But when God summons us to a commitment, He gives us the Holy Spirit unto the fulfillment of that commitment.

Text: *Read* Nehemiah, chapters 10-13

- I. Covenant relationship with the Lord:
 - A. This is not a one-time decision, but an ongoing commitment to continue to live in God's resources.
 1. The Holy Spirit helps us fulfill our covenants with God.
 2. We should not live in fear of failing the Lord.
 - B. The basis of a covenant with God is the Word.
 1. Any commitment made must be on this foundation.
 - a. It should not be made on feelings, personal rationale or zeal.
 - b. These types of commitments are based on the resources of the flesh.
 2. Dedication and consecration are based on the Word of God.
 3. In Nehemiah, the people are taught the Word of God before they make their commitment to Him.
- II. True commitments of the people in Jerusalem:
 - A. They recognized that the oaths they were taking were serious (chapter 10).
 1. They would separate themselves from the people of the land (10:29, 30).
 - a. "Come out from among them" (2 Corinthians 6:17).
 - b. Separation is not isolation.
 2. They would observe the Sabbath (10:31)
 - a. Not shop on a holy day
 - b. Observe the seventh-year Sabbath
 - c. Fifty-year Sabbath
 3. They would not intermarry (10:23-31)
 - a. They would train their children in the Lord's way.
 - b. Children would be taught to respect their parents.
 4. They would worship properly (10:32-28)
 - a. They assigned a priest.
 - b. They reinstated their giving.

- B. The subsequently violated this covenant when Nehemiah was absent (chapter 13).
 - 1. Separation (13:4-9)
 - a. They allowed Tobiah to have a place in the temple.
 - b. They established an alliance with someone who was against them.
 - c. This is a picture of a spirit that enters and begins to weave a thread of bondage in your mind.
 - 2. Sabbath (13:15-22)
 - a. People were working on the Sabbath.
 - b. They were buying and selling.
 - 3. Intermarriage (13:23-31)
 - a. They allowed their children to intermarry.
 - b. They were polluting the faith of their families.
 - 4. Worship/giving
 - a. They were no longer faithful to give.
 - b. The worship was fading.

- C. The covenant was restored.
 - 1. Nehemiah came back and with violence demanded, “Stop.”
 - a. We need never fear making a commitment to God because the Holy Spirit will help us to fulfill it.
 - b. He is a picture of the Holy Spirit’s guidance.
 - 2. He restored purity (13:8, 9).
 - 3. He restored rest and the Sabbath (13:17, 19, 20).
 - 4. He restored discipline and training of children (13:25).
 - 5. He restored obedience in giving (13:1).

Questions

- 1. Is living in a covenant relationship with God a one-time decision? Explain your answer.
- 2. Upon what do we not base our commitment?
- 3. Upon what do we base our commitment?
- 4. What did it mean when the people entered into an oath and a curse?
- 5. The people committed themselves to be separated. Did they mean they went into isolation? What did it mean?
- 6. What are some things included in observing the Sabbath?
- 7. Tobiah is given a room in the temple. What does this symbolize?
- 8. If we violate a covenant that we’ve made with God, what will happen?

SUMMARY: The best way to face the fear of failure is to realize that we can never measure up on our own. Our commitments to God must be on the basis of His Word, and we can only live out those commitments by the power of the Holy Spirit, not by our own flesh. When we live by the Word of God in the power of His Holy Spirit, we will progress in our development. The Jews gave Tobiah (who represents a type of Satan's workings) a place in the temple of restored Jerusalem. They failed. But God, through Nehemiah (a type of the Holy Spirit) corrected them and led them back to their original commitment. God will do this for us — if we stray, He will provide a way to bring us back.

LESSON 22

NEHEMIAH REVISITED

What are the elements that constitute a Spirit-filled life? What does it mean to *live in the Spirit*? How do I recognize God's working in my life through the Holy Spirit?

Text: *Read* Nehemiah 1:1-13

- I. The Holy Spirit is faithful to keep that which we have committed to Him (2 Timothy 1:12).
 - A. Nehemiah returns and restores the commitments the people have made to the Lord.
 1. He was angry (13:25).
 2. Sometimes we need the Holy Spirit's rebuke to get us back on track (1 Timothy 1:12).
 3. The Bible says that God chastens those He loves (Hebrews 12:6-11).
 - B. Nehemiah is an Old Testament picture of New Testament truths.
- II. Final review of the book of Nehemiah (key word):
 - A. Chapter 1 — The concern of the Comforter (vision)
 1. He hears of the situation in Jerusalem.
 2. He has compassionate concern and vision for wholeness to happen.
 - B. Chapter 2 — Provision and patience of the Comforter (help)
 1. He comes to help with provision and supplies for rebuilding.
 2. He is committed to spend the time it will take with us to accomplish the task.
 3. He comes with troops (this parallels angels).
 4. He has patience and identifies with our situation.
 - C. Chapter 3 — The Comforter teaches interdependence (union)
 1. The people work side by side in rebuilding the wall.
 2. We have a need for unity in the Body of Christ; we cannot be whole without the help of others.
 - D. Chapter 4 — Learning to resist the Adversary (battle)
 1. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to do battle with the Adversary.
 2. Nehemiah's troops guarded the low places, and the people guarded the higher places.
 3. They battled mockery, intimidation, hopeless, and weariness.
 - E. Chapter 5 — Overcoming obstacles of restoration (overcome)
 1. Basic points of our lives (finances, relationships) can be obstacles to our restoration.
 2. Our spiritual walk is practical, and the practicals of our lives should be spiritual.

- F. Chapter 6 — Keeping the “flow of the Spirit alive” (contend)
 - 1. We need to contend in order to live a Spirit-filled life.
 - 2. Nehemiah refused to be put into a corner or to allow compromise.
- G. Chapter 7 — Accepting responsibilities as we grow (maturity)
 - 1. God doesn’t expect us to remain as children.
 - 2. We are to partner with the Lord.
- H. Chapter 8 — Receiving the Word without condemnation (liberty)
 - 1. The Bible is the law of liberty.
 - 2. The Word is not intended to bring us into condemnation but into freedom.
- I. Chapter 9 — Confession and consecration (remember)
 - 1. The people confessed their sins and separated themselves.
 - 2. They remembered and praised God’s faithfulness.
- J. Chapter 10 — Covenanting to be faithful (commitment)
 - 1. They made a fresh commitment to living by the Lord’s commandments.
 - 2. Commitment can be made without fear.
- K. Chapter 11 — Living in the city (reestablish)
 - 1. To reestablish Jerusalem, one in every ten came to live within the city walls.
 - 2. The people blessed those who willingly offered themselves to live in the city.
- L. Chapter 12 — Worship and dedication securing the walls (worship)
 - 1. The dedication was made with worship.
 - 2. Ongoing worship will establish us.
- M. Chapter 13 — The Comforter’s correction unto covenant (rejoice)
 - 1. Be grateful for God’s correction, direction and instruction.
 - 2. The Lord will not forsake the work of His hands.
 - 3. What He started, He will bring to completion.

Questions

- 1. When did the people violate their covenant with the Lord?
- 2. How did Nehemiah encourage the people to return to their covenant?
- 3. After we have been restored — the walls of our personality re-established — what responsibility do we have?
- 4. What does the Holy Spirit want to do for us?

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5. The book of Nehemiah pictures what Person of the Godhead restoring and rebuilding the human personality?
6. What are some ways in which the Adversary attacks us? How are we to resist?
7. Chapter 5 talks about the basic practical aspects of life. How can they be a hindrance to spiritual growth?

SUMMARY: We see that God brings us to a level of maturity so that we can make and keep our commitment to Him. If we fail, He is faithful to correct us and bring us back to the commitment we have made in faith. Chapter 1 deals with the *concern* of the Comforter, who then, in chapter 2, comes to *help*. The Holy Spirit teaches *interdependence* in chapter 3, and succeeding chapters teach us how to *resist Satan* and what *practical* areas of life hinder or help our spiritual restoration. We learn the difference between what is *our responsibility* versus what is God's. In essence, through the lessons found in Nehemiah, we learn how to *walk in the Spirit*.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

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