

NEHEMIAH

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

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My name is Nehemiah - I was a leader of the Jews.

Have you ever heard of me?

LEADER: someone who knows where he is/wants to go
and how to lead others to go with him
SOME PEOPLE know where going, can't relate to others
OTHERS natural at others follow, but going nowhere

Leader is something you ARE, not DO
it is a function, not a title conferred by others
that's the way it was for me

I lived after Jerusalem fell - taken into Bab
Actually, my story starts 100 years before I was born:

ZERUBBABLE

Led group of Jews back to Jerusalem from Persia
Jews prosperous, very few leave Persia
only 15,000 out of million (?)
Haggai, Zechariah there preaching
Worked on temple, stopped, 20 yr later finished

ESTER lived, preserved Jews from annihilation
85 years after Zeru God raised up another great leader

EZRA Godly scholar:

Led group # 2 back to Jerusalem from Persia
smaller group yet - 1,500 men & families
15 years before Nehemiah (85 yrs after Zeru)

Taught Bible, persevered, not much response
15 years later the spotlight was on ME

NEHEMIAH My story starts in 445 BC
15 years after Ezra went back

BORN during exile, in Bab.

grandparents taken into captivity when Jeru fell
“NEHEMIAH” = “The LORD comforts”

ARTIXERXES

CUPBEARER: leader, top advisor to king
originally to make sure no poison in drink

God used me in an unexpected way

Day started off like any other, changed whole life!

I. A LEADER IS A MAN OF PRAYER

Nov-Dec 446 BC Susa

Neh 1:1-5

PERSONALLY CONCERNED with the needs
identifies with the problem, not blame others

PRAYER: (mourning, fasting)

Goes to God first with the problem

-pleads for God’s love & mercy

-confession of Israel’s sin (so did Daniel)

-acknowledges God’s righteousness

-asks God’s help in correcting situation

claimed God’s promises to bring people back

PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL LIFE must be good, strong
can’t lead unless following the Leader of us all!

God put burden in my heart for Jerusalem

but what could I do to help?

God had something in mind!

II. A LEADER IS A MAN OF VISION

Prays for 4 months

Hard for men/pastors: being **impatient**

Discouragement at failure of others to do what they should

Thousands of miles from Jerusalem, couldn't leave job

Fear of Xerxes, his boss, who ordered work stopped

If not in happy mood around king could be killed

Frustration – caught between God & job! (church & family!)

Neh 2:1-5

Xerxes agrees, asks what needs, Nehemiah has list in pocket!

OTHERS: hopeless situation, can't be done

NEHEMIAH: dealt with problem, had vision

looked beyond immediate difficulties to result

VISION: not “my goal is to be the biggest church in the city”

But “what does God want done here?”

“Find where God is working and join Him.”

ME: GOD WORKING MSBC: Love & fellowship, teaching

FARMER must wait long time to see results, looks to future

LEADER: often takes long time to see changes in life

Those months of waiting, praying had good effect

I was also doing lots of planning in my mind

-gathering facts, deciding what needed to be done

not one decision to do it, but gradual process

III. A LEADER IS A MAN OF FORESIGHT

Neh 2:6-7

PRAYED: as if it all depended on God (sovereignty)

PLANNED: as if it all depended on him (free will)

short-range: words to say to Art.

long-range: trip to Pal, supplies needed

PATIENT: waited 4 months for chance to talk to Art.

during that time he worked out plan & details
finally God provided time to speak

Art. ask him what's bothering him
ARTAXERXES had let Jews start rebuilding
neighbors jealous, claimed rebellion
Art made them stop
neighbors attacked, burned gates, broke walls
only ART could allow Jews to build

DETAIL person – plans even before allowed to go

- how long be there
- need of wood, other building materials
- helpers to assist in work
- plans to rebuild walls
- letters of permission for travel, work

Glad to go - Still, I moved with extra caution, follow God

IV. A LEADER IS A MAN OF CAUTION

Neh 2:11-12 .

Doesn't panic, rests up from trip (took 2 months)
gets to know leaders, then gathers info needed
1 full year since desire to help, not rushing, going at God's pace
Checks out facts for self, not just what others say
Goes at night for privacy, not answer questions, rumors

GATHERED INFORMATION to make correct decision

- tackling problem no one salve for 150 yrs!
- Not content with word of others,
walked around walls at night to find get facts
Decisions only as good as facts based on
not let others influence him
do what is best for them, not most popular

meets with few close, influential, trusted, mature leaders
Lets them come to conclusion to rebuild walls!
Neighboring gentiles and rich businessmen oppose plan

SENSITIVE TO GOD'S LEADING – recognizes Holy Spirit

Caution fine in its time, but then comes time to ACT

V. A LEADER IS A MAN OF ACTION

Neh 2:17-18

CAUTION important

ACTION must come at right time!

NO caution dangerous – some pastors

TOO MUCH caution just as bad - other pastors

Motivated people (gave hope)

Challenged the people to action, motivated them

Can't motivate them without showing them direction to go

If not given right, specific directions all else fails

Must be organized as well as motivated!

VI. A LEADER IS A MAN OF ORGANIZATION

August 445 BC Jerusalem

DIVISION OF WORK

– assign group of people to each section of wall, their responsibility

-rebuild section near own homes! (not have to travel, not desert if attacked, work hard)

names on their part of wall: recognize good work, motivate to do good job

Never used force, guilt, pressure

Expected ALL to do their part, none too good to help

TRANSITION:

Things don't always go fine, no matter the planning

There is opposition when follow God -must be handled wisely:

MIDDLE dangerous time: early enthusiasm gone, end not near

VII. A LEADER IS A MAN OF FAITH & COMMON SENSE

Aug-Sept 445 BC Jerusalem

SANBALLAT (Arab) opposes – God not remove it, uses it
Nehemiah criticized – doesn't answer but prays, lets up to God

Neh 4:15-18

MAINTAIN A BALANCE IN THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS (17)

Nehemiah told them to trust the Lord completely, but also armed them to fight off any attack. Faith and works.

Nehemiah hardest worker – set example, took the lead in faith

Neh 4 = opposition from without fails

Neh 5 = opposition from within starts, more dangerous!

VIII. A LEADER IS A MAN OF COMPASSION

So busy working neglected crops so famine comes
Poor mortgaged everything, children, to keep from starving
Rich loaned money at very high rate, taking advantage of poor
Children sold into slavery so other children didn't starve
BOTHERED Nehemiah who wouldn't let it continue

TRANSITION:

One way of showing compassion is being fair, honest
Very important for a leader!

IX. A LEADER IS A MAN OF INTEGRITY

Set example: never took pay check, made money for job, but fed 200 people a day

Lead by setting servant example!

INTEGRITY: not take advantage of leadership position
(servant, not above others to personal benefit
-more concerned about people than self
-saw self as servant of the people
-built God's kingdom, not his own

LEADER AS A SERVANT Example of Jesus

Mark 10:45

Matt 20:25-28

LEGITIMATE FOR LEADER TO BE SUPPORTED

1 Tim 5:17-18

TRANSITION: A leader can't be greedy, in fact he must oppose those who are greedy!

X. A LEADER IS A MAN OF IMPARTIALITY

Nehemiah righteously indignant, but controlled anger – make them give it all back!

COURAGE: confronted powerful rich Jews head on
(needed their support to succeed)
showed from Word couldn't charge interest

Denounced evil wherever it appeared
even among wealthy & influential who helped build wall

TRANSITION:

When attacked by enemies without, greedy people within,
must keep going ahead by keeping eyes on the GOAL
Only way to defeat enemies within and WITHOUT

XI. A LEADER IS A MAN OF MISSION

Sept-Oct 445 BC Jerusalem

SCHEME 1: ASSASSINATION threatened against Nehemiah, lure him to trap outside walls

SCHEME 2: SLANDER false accusations to undermine authority, accuse of selfish motives (Nehemiah prays)

SCHEME 3: TREACHERY bribe priest to lure Neh into part of temple only priests can go so God will kill him- pretended wanted to hide Neh for his own safety

Jews related to Gentiles by marriage complain (make \$)

MISSION: Neh kept his mind/eyes on goal

-not threats, distractions, etc.

-Never got discouraged, kept eye on goal & met it

-keep HOPE in eyes of people, or others give up

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GOAL

Subordinate all of your life under your goals

Make the hard-nosed decisions necessary

TRANSITION Fortunately leader doesn't have carry all alone: God provides others to help carry the load

XII. A LEADER IS A MAN OF TEAM SPIRIT

October 445 – 444 BC Jerusalem

Physical rebuilding done, not time for spiritual rebuilding to start
First revival recorded in Bible (Nehemiah?)

EZRA leads revival

Nehemiah not alone – he is political ruler, Ezra spiritual

TEAM WORK necessary

no one man can do it all, or alone

plurality of leaders (elders in NT church)

GEESE FLYING SOUTH

- rotate leadership, none can stay in front all the time*
- choose leaders who can handle the turbulence*
- while one leads, others honk their affirmation*

Rebuilding of walls positive morale, Ezra teach Feast of Trump

Neh 8:5-6

Revival based on GOD'S WORD – not emotional appeals, guilt,

After first day stayed and wanted more – hunger for Word shows revival is happening - 6 hours a day stood and listened,

REVIVAL SIGNS:

APPETITE FOR WORD:

Preached all AM, people insist on PM, more next day
WORSHIP, PRAISE God spontaneously
CHANGED LIVES

People did what Bible said

- observed feasts
- supported priests financially
- pay tithes
- supply wood for temple needs
- put away unbelieving wives

People moved into Jerusalem from countryside
not as nice but important for temple, etc

TRANSITION:

Good way for story to end: it does and it doesn't
not final end but last of detailed accounts

XIII. A LEADER IS A MAN OF CONSISTENCY

443-432 BC Jerusalem

final events before the OT closes, 400 years of silence

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah leaves Jeru, called back to Persia April 1, 443 BC.

Next 11 yrs nothing recorded

faithful, consistent service to God

(where do you go from revival? - daily faithfulness!)

sometimes harder to keep revival going than starting

Continued doing all he did year 1 for next 11 years!

not good start, then fade

consistent, dependable year after year (hard!)

PEOPLE IN JERUSALEM

His brother replaced him while gone.

The people soon slipped into sin.

Revival doesn't last forever.

1 1 years until Nehemiah returns— April 19, 432

people drift back into old sins (book of MALACHI)

-Gentiles allowed into the temple store rooms to sell, etc

-not tithing (greed) – ‘stealing from God’

-not keep Sabbath so could work more, make more \$

-intermarry w/ unbelievers (next generation taking over)

MALACHI preached, prophesied

PRAY (Neh prays continually, always recorded)

Nehemiah's response: pray, set wrongs right (took action)

REFORMS when returned:

-Gentiles not allowed into temple

-tithing started again

-Sabbath observed

-no more intermarriage

CONCLUSION

APPLY TO THOSE PRESENT.....

1. PRAYER 1
2. VISION 2:1-3
3. FORESIGHT 2:4-8
4. CAUTION 2:9-16
5. ACTION 2:17-20
6. ORGANIZATION 3
7. FAITH & COMMON SENSE 4
8. COMPASSION 5:6-7
9. INTEGRITY 5:14-16
10. IMPARTIALITY 5
11. MISSION 6 - 7
12. TEAM SPIRIT 9- 11
13. CONSISTENCY 13

What can YOU learn from me?

Where are you weakest?

What is God trying to teach you about leadership today?