

Connect360: The Humble Prayer of a Leader

March 10, 2025

- *Lesson 2 in the Connect360 unit “Kingdom Assignment: The Relentless Pursuit of Obedience” focuses on Nehemiah 1:4-11.*

The book of Nehemiah opens and ends with prayer. One of the consistent characteristics of Nehemiah’s life was a dependence upon prayer. Throughout Nehemiah, we find examples of the leader praying.

When Nehemiah learned about the condition of Jerusalem after his brother’s report, he was deeply burdened. For months, he fasted and prayed, and when he sought wisdom for approaching the king, he prayed to the God of heaven (1:4). Nehemiah prayed seeking approval from God and not man (5:19).

When his enemies threatened him, Nehemiah asked God to give him strength (6:9). Sanballat and Tobiah were persistent critics of Nehemiah and rather than capitulating to their threats, Nehemiah asked God to remember him (6:14). He let God fight his battles, yet he never flinched when God called him to stand up against opposition.

The people followed Nehemiah’s prayerful example and assembled together with prayer and fasting. After reading from God’s word, they confessed their sins and repented; then God brought revival (chapter 9). God’s word to Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:14), was also true for the Hebrew captives and remains right for us today: “And my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

The report from Hanani caused Nehemiah deep sorrow for the remnant in Jerusalem. He could have easily convinced himself that even though he was concerned, there was nothing he might do. He may have rationalized that this was someone else's problem and even asked God to raise up another to intercede for them.

Yet, Nehemiah was a man of action. Perhaps he was tempted to burst into the presence of the king and demand relief for his people. However, Nehemiah also was a man of prayer. He took his burden before the Lord with humility, prayer and fasting. He waited for months for the Lord to answer while continuing with persistence to intercede, allowing God to prepare his own heart as he also prepared the heart of the king. In the fulness of God's time, Nehemiah responded to the questioning of the king about his apparent sadness.

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