

Once again, God has blessed!

Love y'all,

Pastor Heard

Part 18 – Feel the Passion!

Texts:

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (The Message) - "Seize life!"

Hebrews 4:14-16 (KJV) - "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Nehemiah 4:6 (NKJV) - "So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work."

Key No. 12 (Part 4) - Incredible Keys to Incredible Breakthroughs!

A. The Key of EXTRAORDINARY LEADERSHIP.

1. We have been teaching about Nehemiah making his mark in life by providing great leadership at a time when it was desperately needed. We, too, are all leaders in one way or another.
2. Stories of the Bible are not meant to merely entertain. They always contain principles, laws, and keys. This is why we must carefully study the

Bible and pay attention to what we read or hear. Our message today may very well hold the key for the next level of your elevation.

3. **Joke:** God's First Name

Speaking of paying attention, ole Boudreaux up and died one day. Upon arriving at the gates of Heaven, he was greeted by St. Peter: "Welcome to Heaven, Boudreaux!"

Boudreaux exclaimed, "Mai, tank ya, cher!" St. Peter explained to ole Boudreaux that there was one stipulation before allowing him to enter the gates of Heaven. He had to answer one question—and get it right.

Boudreaux scratched his head and said, "Mai, okay, cher. What dat be?"

St. Peter says, "What is God's first name?" Boudreaux answers, "Mai, cher, dat be easy, it's Howard."

St. Peter, laughing himself silly, says, "HOWARD? May I ask you, Boudreaux, how'd you come up with that name?"

Smiling proudly, Boudreaux says "Sha, dat be an easy one.....Our Fadda who art in Heavin, HOWARD be dy name."

Still chuckling, St. Peter says, "I can't argue with that one, Boudreaux! Come on in!"

4. Thus far, we have covered six tremendous leadership principles from the story of Nehemiah:

- a. He made himself available.
- b. He saw opportunity, where others only saw problems.
- c. He inspired others to follow his vision.
- d. He built and motivated a team.
- e. He stayed focused and kept the main thing, the *main thing*.
- f. He refused to allow problems to discourage him.

B. The Bible is an awesome Book! Let's examine some other tremendous principles from the life of Nehemiah.

1. Our text states that the wall, while not completed, was built to half its height. This caused excitement among the people!
2. Scripture also says that the people had a mind to work. They were motivated! Realizing that they were losing, the enemy pulled out all the stops to prevent this project from being successful.
3. Midway through a project, challenges will **always** occur that are quite different from what you faced at the beginning. New challenges require a fresh strategy, which often necessitates mid-course corrections.
4. I'm thinking of our church building program. Almost immediately after it was launched, our nation's economy plunged into the worst recession of my lifetime. As a result, only about half of the pledges from the capital fundraising program were received. Many of our people lost their jobs, homes, possessions, and were forced to take lower-paying jobs—if anything was available. We were just grateful for donations of any amount.
 - a. This forced us to make some major adjustments. Funds that did come in were used for upfront costs, such as architectural fees, property taxes, and payments on the property, with the remainder deposited in a savings account.
 - b. We prayed, postponed construction, and made some mid-course corrections. It was good that we did, since the next seven years were the roughest America has faced in many, many years.
 - c. Congregations that chose to continue their building programs, lost their buildings or had to close their doors. Numerous pastors had to resign or terminate most of their staff.
 - d. Actually, the city of Houston was among the least affected areas of our nation. I believe that by following God's direction, we are continuing to enjoy His blessing and favor. By stepping out in faith, He saw that what matters most to Him mattered to us also.

- e. While Egypt was being devastated by plagues, the Israelites in the land of Goshen **did** feel the effects. Yet they continued to be blessed while others were losing everything. Praise God—we are still here!
 - f. Have we given up? Not by a long shot! Like Nehemiah, our church will also be built with the King's resources! Because the king had commissioned and provided Nehemiah with the necessary funding, he didn't have to search for donors. Our King has also instructed us to build and will provide the resources to finish what was begun. All we have done was to make a *mid-course correction*.
4. I'm also reminded of King David in 2 Samuel 5:19 (KJV). When he asked if he should attack the Philistines, the Lord said to attack and they would be delivered into his hand. The battle was won and the enemy was completely conquered.
- a. When the Philistines attacked again (**2 Samuel 5:23-24 NKJV**), David asked if he should keep fighting. This time he was given a new direction. He must wait until he heard the wind blowing in the tops of the mulberry trees.
 - b. Listening for the sound of the wind was David's mid-course correction. He attacked and defeated the enemy with a mighty blow. But he had to wait for God's army to show up. The wind was the sound of angelic armies who had arrived to fight!
5. The wind has begun to blow for C.T. This past week, the land on the east side of our property (with the tall radio antenna) was sold. This 12.4 acre plot was purchased a few years ago for \$120,000—and sold for \$525,000.
- a. With the remaining funds from the capital fundraising campaign, we can completely pay for the land on Beltway 8.
 - b. After consistently paying the monthly notes, we only owe \$709,000 on this property. After deducting realtor and title company fees, we will clear \$487,915 on the adjoining property to apply on that note.

C. **Leadership Principle No. 7**- Nehemiah did not submit to his insecurities.

1. **Nehemiah 4:3 (NKJV)** - "Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever THEY build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."
2. Whatever THEY build. Get it? If someone else had built the wall, it would probably have been constructed well. But THEM? LOL! Tobiah not only questioned their ability, he discredited their value and worth.
3. The enemy is cruel. He has wounded every one of us in some way or other. That's the price mankind must pay for living in a fallen world ruled by a fallen lord.
4. At the subconscious level, we often do things hoping people will notice and appreciate our efforts. At times they do, but sometimes they do not. If others judge our efforts as inferior while we're trying to do our best, we could assume that our character and abilities have also been judged as inferior.
5. The enemy only has three strategies. But they work so well for him, any others would be unnecessary and superfluous. After all, if you have access to the nuclear bomb, what else would you need? His weapons are highly effective because they cause us to question our self-worth:
 - a. **Temptation:** He tempts us by saying, "Those who submit to me have better lives than yours. Why should you be inferior to them?"
 - b. **Deception:** He deceives us by saying, "I know something you don't know. Without me, you are inferior."
 - c. **Accusation:** He accuses by saying, "I'm better than you. You are inferior to me because you are flawed."
6. This was Satan's strategy in the garden to deceive both Adam and Eve.
 - a. **Genesis 3:1-7 (NKJV)** - "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" [2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may

eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; [3] but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" [4] Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings."

- b. In this case, the enemy reversed the order. He began with an accusation against God. "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" God said no such thing! They had been forbidden to eat from only two trees.
- c. He continued, "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." This was his weapon of deception--"you can be like God." But they already were! They had been made in God's likeness and image. The enemy wants us to "earn" our identity with his performance trap. Some have difficulty giving anyone a compliment because they feel so inadequate themselves. Their thinking is something like this: if a person *really* measures up, they have value. But if not, well....sorry. You have no value.
- d. Finally, temptation does its work. Scripture says, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

- e. That's when "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." Why would they do that? They were experiencing self-accusation.
7. Be like Nehemiah. Don't allow anyone to question your self-worth!
 8. How can you keep from caving in when the enemy attacks your self-worth and makes you question who you are? Learn to accept your identity in God! You are who **He** says you are—not what others may say.
 9. Do not strive to gain the attention of others. Instead, desire to please the Father whose attention and love you **already** have!
 10. Don't be a leader of others just to make yourself feel important. An insecure leader will inevitably hurt others. Lead because you want to help others—not to feel good about yourself.