

10 lessons from Nehemiah's Spiritual life (for context see page 2)

1. He **took his burden to God in prayers** of confession & promise (he did not get trapped in a downward spiral of despair. While he was sad, he chose to respond to the situation through the **lens of his faith**) Neh 1:4\*
2. As he spent time before God, God's plan and his role in it developed in his mind (He received the sense of a meaningful and purposeful call from the God of Heaven that he was the one to do something about the situation in Jerusalem, that it was worthwhile doing, that he would complete it and God would work it out). Neh 1:11
3. When the opportunity was given to Nehemiah to share his plan/tell his story to the king, he humbly and boldly asked for what he needed to carry out his plan (miraculously, the king granted his request). From this moment on, Nehemiah was in no doubt God's favour was with him. God would supply what/who was needed to complete his God-given task.) Neh 2:3-5
4. He did a realistic survey of the situation (walls and people of Jerusalem). He shared the work that needed to be done and his testimony of God's graciousness and King Artaxerxes' words. His faith encouraged and motivated the people's hope to begin this good work. Neh 2:17-18
5. He was not surprised by difficulty or resistance. Anything worthwhile is often achieved through sacrifice, suffering and struggling. Difficulty and resistance actually serve to strengthen resolve & dependence on God. He remained hopeful in the God of Heaven keeping in touch with a source of strength & power outside himself. Neh 2:20 4:14
6. He planned, organised, celebrated progress. Nehemiah organised the people so that different families were responsible for rebuilding different sections of the wall. **Hopeful people** soon had the wall to half its height (4:6).
7. Nehemiah and the people knew that what they were doing mattered and their contribution was important. It kept them going when things got tough. (Nehemiah **identified himself as God's servant**. He sought to live his life in obedience to God which gave him a clear moral compass & desire for personal integrity. He stood his ground & did not run away (6:11). Nehemiah did not misuse his power nor abused his position for personal gain.)
8. While opposition came in its many forms (intimidation, harm, slander, discredit, compromise 6:1-14), Nehemiah and the people found the strength/courage to persevere with their task to complete the walls of Jerusalem. (Courage is not the absence of fear, but the strength to do the right thing even though you are afraid. Behind human opponents is Satan whose name is 'adversary' and is an enemy of God, God's people, God's work and God's praise. Remember to put on the full armour of God that He has provided for us. **Ephesians 6:13-18**)
9. Leadership was needed from beginning to end. Plan what needs to be done and organise the work. Motivate the people to fulfil the vision, inspire people to work hard at the task toward a common goal. Act swiftly and decisively to *resolve/problem-solve* matters of people's concern or disunity with creative responses. Remain *flexible* through adapting plans to face new challenges as situations change (people, problems, environment)
10. Success brought glory to God and deflated the opposition as God must have been in it. (6:16)

\*Neh = Nehemiah (a book in the bible).

Reference: *Resilience in Life and Faith: Finding your strength in God* by Tony Horsfall and Debbie Hawker Chapters 2-3

We hope you found these lessons from Nehemiah Chapters 1-6 helpful.

We pray that they will strengthen and encourage you.

How is your spiritual resilience at the moment? What steps could you take to increase it?  
Set aside time to be grateful - take a sabbath rest – connect with hopeful people?

Psalm 27:14 "Stay with God! Take heart. Don't quit. If you ever feel like quitting, you are not alone. We have all been there. Stay with Him and don't walk alone, give us a call. You got a friend ... winter, spring, summer or fall. To connect with us at Men's Breakfast go to <https://www.goldhill.org/recur/mens-breakfast/> or call just call 07831 149 828.



**Resilience in Life and Faith**  
Finding your strength in God



Tony Horsfall and Debbie Hawker

### Introduction

1. Nehemiah's great achievement was to take a bunch of dispirited and downhearted individuals and in spite of much opposition and danger, motivate them to work together in a hostile environment to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. This enormous task they achieved against the odds, in a surprisingly short time – it took only 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15)!
2. Nehemiah demonstrates the capacity to deal with pressure, and to make the best of any situation. He faced many setbacks, yet never gave up.
3. Nehemiah has much to teach us about resilience, and in particular the spiritual dimension behind this important characteristic. We will focus on chapters 1-6 in the book that bears his name, Nehemiah.

### Context

4. Nehemiah was one of the Jews in exile in Babylon who had taken the advice of the prophet Jeremiah to settle down and wait for the day when God would lead them back to the promised land (Jeremiah 29:5-7)
5. In 458 BC, the first group of Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra, a priest and scribe. After much difficulty they succeeded in rebuilding the temple, but then the restoration of the city came to a halt. Years later Nehemiah received news from his brother.
6. Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire. [i.e., the city was unprotected and in great danger]

### Nehemiah Selected Verses

1:4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

1:11 Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favour in the presence of this man."

2:3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"<sup>4</sup> The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, <sup>5</sup> and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."

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

2:20 I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you (Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab), you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

4:9 But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

4:14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."

