

NEHEMIAH: PATTERN FOR LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE IN HARD TIMES

Part VII: Godly Leadership's Edifying Of A Weakened Group Of Subordinates

(Nehemiah 7:1-5; 8:1-9:38)

I. Introduction

- A. Constructing a building to house a family or a church or a business for God's glory is one thing. But building strong groups of people **committed** to the goals of God in using that edifice is another challenge!
- B. Once Nehemiah had the people finish the walls of Jerusalem, he faced the challenge of getting the people mobilized in their **relationships** to be a godly nation on the come back from the depletions of Babylonian exile! That task has great lessons for us on rebuilding depleted groups in a family, business or church!

II. Godly Leadership's Edifying Of A Weakened Group Of Subordinates, Nehemiah 7:1-5; 8:1-9:38:

- A. When Nehemiah finished the wall of Jerusalem, he faced the tremendous challenge of filling it with a coherent, strong group of people for God's glory:
 1. He needed to tackle the problem of getting more people to live in the city, Neh. 7:4a.
 2. He needed to tackle the problem of getting more organized subgroups of homes in the city, Neh. 7:4b.
 3. He needed to tackle the problem of offsetting Tobiah's "fifth column" influence on the **inside**, 6:18-19!
 4. He needed to tackle the problem of motivating the people to get into Scripture for spiritual strengthening and national cohesion as a returned nation from Babylon:
 - a. Ezra, the scribe had preceded Nehemiah in coming from Persia to teach the people God's Law, Ezra 7. Ezra's arrival was intentioned to teach the Jews God's Law, B.K.C., O.T., p. 689.
 - b. However, he met awful moral and spiritual decay in the exiles, Ezra 9:1-4; 10:2, 10, Ibid.
 - c. He had prayerfully taught the Word and the people had begun to respond. However, they had a ways to go before really gelling as a solid, effective, committed group of God's people!
- B. Nehemiah's actions toward gelling the people into a strong, committed, godly group instructs us:
 1. Nehemiah selected the **most qualified men available** for the **highest positions**, Neh. 7:1-2.
 - a. Nehemiah's brother, Hanani had first informed Nehemiah of the downtrodden state of the city, 1:2a. Nehemiah knew that he could trust this man who was committed to Jerusalem's welfare when it was still a heap of ruins! Nehemiah put him in charge of the city itself.
 - b. Nehemiah trusted Hananiah, the man in charge of the palace in the city, for he was a man of personal integrity and he feared God **more than most other men**, Neh. 7:2b! Though he was not perhaps the best man one could imagine for the job, he was the best **available** man around to help his dedicated brother, Hanani! He helped Nehemiah's brother rule the city.
 2. Nehemiah charged them to protect the city from invasion by Tobiah's ungodly infiltration efforts, 7:3.
 3. Nehemiah took steps to establish a **PURE** Jewish population in the city, Neh. 7:5.
 - a. God put the idea into Nehemiah's heart of reckoning the people according to Jewish lineage, 7:5a. This fit God's concern of maintaining a pure heritage to fulfill prophecy about Messiah's lineage !
 - b. He called the leaders of the people together and made this reckoning firm, 7:5bff.
 - c. As a result, **though the numbers were already small to start with (7:4), more were put out of the priesthood than already served as they couldn't prove their lineage**, 7:63-65.
 4. The **PEOPLE THEMSELVES** then asked for the **reading of the Word** that they might know God's will and follow it for His glory, Nehemiah 8:1.
 5. **WHEN the Word of God was read** (Neh. 8:5-8), **the PEOPLE responded to the Spirit's convicting work through the Word and a revival was on**, Neh. 8:9ff!

Lesson: Godly leaders help a depleted people by (1) prayerfully teaching Scripture (Ezra 7-10); (2) they make the facilities housing the group adequate to meet group objectives (rebuilding the wall, Neh. 1-6); (3) they choose the best men **AVAILABLE** for leadership, (4) charging them to protect the group from destructive parties (Neh. 7:3); (5) then, refusing to take much stock in numbers, they require **STRICT** membership **QUALIFICATIONS** from the group that may even diminish current numbers, (Neh. 7:5) (6) which **IN TURN** motivates the **FEWER** but more **GODLY** people to get into the **WORD**, (8:1); (7) this **IN TURN** produces long-term development of the people, Neh. 8:9ff!