

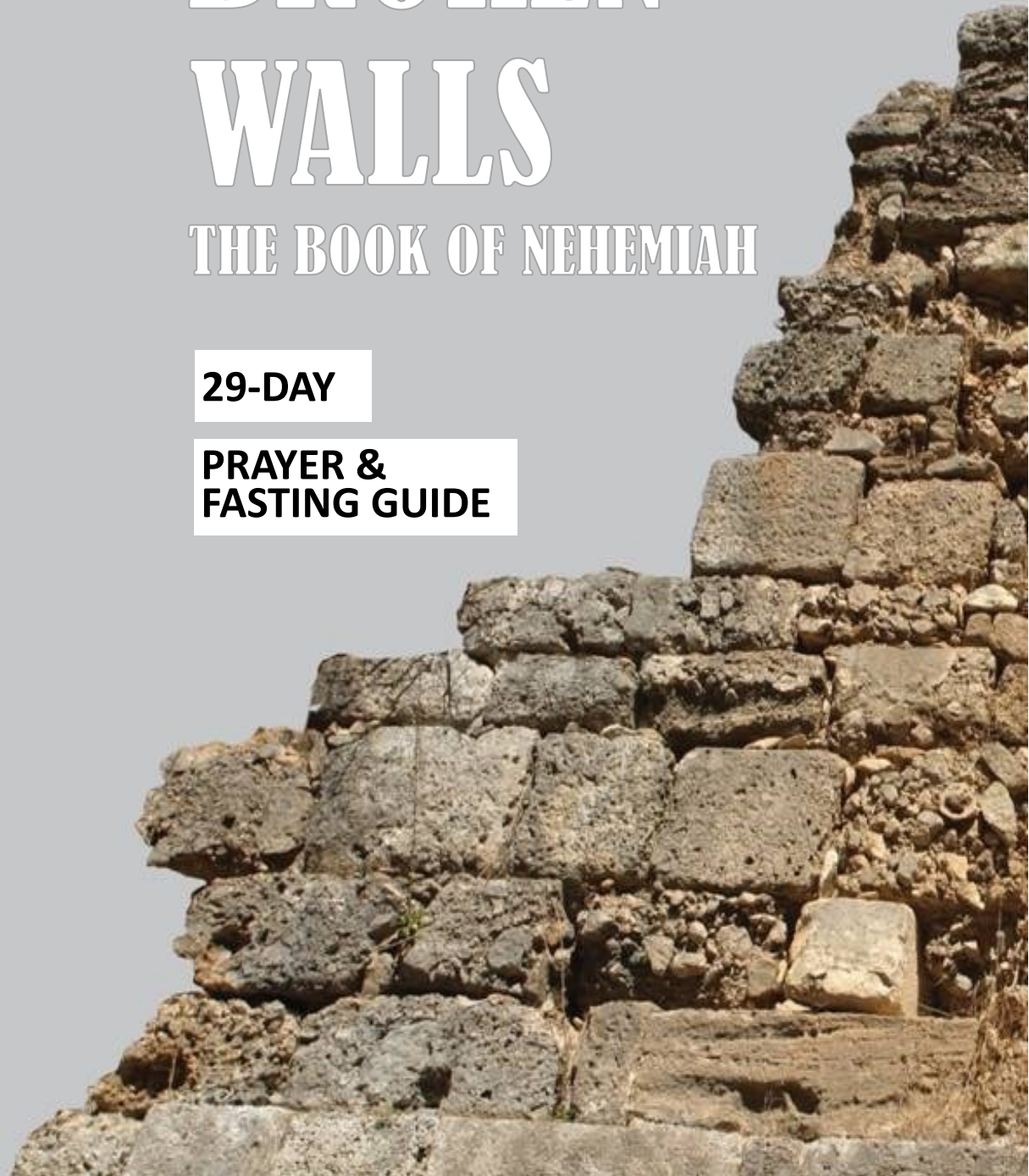
BROKEN WALLS

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

29-DAY

**PRAYER &
FASTING GUIDE**

February 2020
Nall Avenue Baptist Church



Getting Started

Step 1: Understand the Objective —Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your time of fasting. Begin to humble yourself and ask Him to stir your heart, awaken our church, and move in powerful ways.

Step 2: Make the Commitment—Pray and ask the Lord what type of fast you should undertake. Also decided on what day(s) of the week and schedule your fasting. Include your spouse or a friend in helping to keep you accountable.

Step 3: Prepare Spiritually—Confess known sin in your life and ask God to reveal what may be hidden. Begin also with an expectant heart for what God may want to accomplish (Heb. 11:6).

Step 4: Prepare Physically—Consult your physician especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic condition. Begin eating smaller amounts as you approach the time of fasting. Limit your activity during the fast and prepare to your mind to experience physical discomfort, impatience, irritability, and some anxiety.

Step 5: Time with God—Fasting and prayer go hand in hand so set aside time in your schedule to be with God regularly while you fast.

Step 6: End Gradually—Be careful not to end by feasting and eat smaller meals. This is especially important if you fast for an extended period.

Step 7: Expect and Record Answers to Pray —Take time to use the journaling side of the devotional. Record your thoughts and prayers as God begins to reveal things to you. Write these things down in anticipation that you will see God move and act to use you to rebuild walls.

Types of Fasting

I encourage you to seek the Lord in prayer and let Him guide you on your approach to fasting this month. Ask the Lord to show how to choose a type of fasting, what days and meals to fast, and how to target areas in your life He wants you to focus on.

Types of Fasts

Complete Fast—This fast calls for drinking only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

Selective Fast—This fast calls for removing certain things from your diet. One example is a Daniel Fast, during which you remove meats, sweets, and bread and only consume water, juice, fruits and veggies.

Partial Fast—Sometimes called a Jewish Fast and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either be specific times of the day (like 6am to 3pm) or from sunup to sundown.

Media Fast—An option for those who have no experience fasting food and who may have the need to reduce the noise in your life so you can hear from God. Fasting from social media, internet use, television, etc.

Timing of a Fast

This time of fasting will be for the month of February 2020. You can choose to fast a single meal, an entire day, or three or more days during the week. If you need help deciding a fasting schedule talk to one of the staff.

DAY 1

Read Nehemiah 1:1-4

Nehemiah received word of the broken walls in Jerusalem and it grieved him. In his day, a city without walls or gates was the ultimate sign of helplessness and vulnerability. As you begin this journey of fasting and praying ask the Lord to help you confess your own helplessness and vulnerability in this life.

What are the broken walls in your life?

Through this time of fasting and praying you need to open your life up to the Lord and ask Him to reveal the broken walls in your life. This might be a very difficult step to take, but it is necessary. Your answer might be in the area of broken relationships, disillusionment with work or school, a bad attitude that has come into your life, a past hurt or sin you have not dealt with, a crushed dream, or a hundred other different things. It is important to understand that we all have broken walls but also to ask the question: Am I grieved over the broken walls?

What are the broken walls in the life of the church?

This time of fasting and praying is also to lift up the people of God, the church. We must consider the broken things among God's people. I would like to focus us specifically on the broken work of making disciples. We are struggling to reach the lost, struggling to disciple our own children, and struggling to take seriously the work of intentionally helping the weak to mature. Ask the Lord how He might want to use you in rebuilding this broken wall.

DAY 2

Read Nehemiah 1:5

It is helpful to remember that when we deal with broken things in our lives that God is there and is faithful. In the middle of our grief and helplessness, we come to a God who is loving beyond measure. Remembering His promises gives us a strong foundation in order to move forward in our lives.

Broken Walls In Your Life

As you continue praying over the broken things in your life take time today to consider the promises that God has made in your life. Often we have a hard time taking God at His word, but the bible provides us many promises to rest on. He tells us that He will always be with us, that He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He tells us that He knows the details and cares about our needs (Luke 12:6-7). Consider several promises you remember from the bible, write them down today, and then consider how they apply to your broken walls.

Broken Walls in the Church

God established the church and provided a clear command to "go make disciples". What God establishes He also helps sustain. Jesus told His disciples to remember that as they go He will be with them. Jesus provides the power to make disciples, it is not in our own ability. Pray today for the church and ask Him to empower His people toward that important goal.

DAY 3

Read Nehemiah 1:6-7

Sometimes we have broken walls in our lives because of sin we have allowed to come in. Repentance starts when we share God's viewpoint about sin and also His heartbreak about it. Nehemiah confessed not only his sin but also the sin of His people. Instead of blaming circumstance or blaming others, he takes the stand of a leader who is willing to carry the burden of the actions of others. His willingness to do this puts him in position to be a change agent for the things of God.

Broken Walls In Your Life

There might be some things you need to confess in this season of prayer and fasting. We can begin by listing our own sins but it is also appropriate to intercede on behalf of others and to confess their sins as well. Job served as an example of a man who stepped into the gap for those he loved. (Job 1:5) Consider today how you can ask God for forgiveness for yourself and also on behalf of others.

Broken Walls in the Church

The church is not all that different from the people of Israel in the Old Testament. God has established us, provided for us, and even set us on a path for fulfilment in His will but we often turn away from Him. Sometimes this is in overt disobedience and at other times it is more subtle. Ask God to forgive the church of its unwillingness to make disciples of all men. Ask Him to clarify that purpose again for us in our ministries, our groups, and in our personal lives.

DAY 4

Read Nehemiah 1:8-11

Nehemiah's time of confession and repentance moved him toward a time of petition. When we admit how helpless we are in affecting change in our lives and the lives of others, we learn to seek God's help. Look back over the last couple of days and really consider and clarify what it is you need God's help with. Nehemiah was not shy in requesting success and in asking God for His direct help as he went before the king.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Get specific on the types of things you need God to help you accomplish in order to address the broken things in life. Write them down. No matter how big they might appear don't hesitate to name them before God in prayer today. James made clear that at times in our life we have not because we ask not, and Jesus said that God already knows before we ask it. (James 4:2; Matthew 6:32) Don't let another day go by without requesting God's help with the broken walls in your life.

Broken Walls in the Church

Our church needs to voice exactly what we need from God in order to accomplish the mission He gave us. Most believers struggle to share their faith in meaningful ways. Many of us need God to ignite a passion inside of us that will lead us to take His command seriously. All of us need His boldness and His Spirit to go before us in sharing our faith. Ask the Lord to awaken His church and to empower us to be intentional in the lives of others so they might know the power of His salvation.

DAY 5

Read Nehemiah 2:1-3

Nehemiah has good reason to be afraid. He was in a very risky situation as the cupbearer to the king and especially so because of his love and allegiance to a foreign place. Kings in those days were always on guard against insurrection and disloyalty. Nehemiah's discontentment with the broken walls in Jerusalem could easily be interpreted in a negative light. The question we face with Nehemiah's situation is whether or not he will give in to his fear or overcome his fear.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Fear is a big reason why we hesitate to begin addressing broken walls in our lives. This fear can leave us paralyzed and unable or unwilling to begin acting on a plan to rebuild. That is one reason why prayer and fasting as a first step is so important. We acknowledge from the beginning that the Lord is in charge and we seek His plan. He might ask us to do something fearful, but our time with Him strengthens us for the task ahead. Ask God to name the fears you have related to the broken walls in your life.

Broken Walls in the Church

There is a lot of fear over the command of Jesus to "go and make disciples." We are afraid of sharing our faith, afraid of making mistakes. We are afraid that our knowledge and experience might limit the ways that God can use us to help others live for Him. Jesus answered all of these fears by promising He would be with us. His presence is all that we need to begin rebuilding this work within the church. Ask God to give you victory over your fear and to trust His leading as you show others the life of Christ.

DAY 6

Read Nehemiah 2:4-5

Nehemiah had a very difficult step he needed to take. He was heart-broken over the broken wall of Jerusalem and he couldn't hide that pain, even though it was risky to show such displeasure in the king's court. He had been fasting and praying for many days. He had asked God to move in a powerful way and give him favor before the king. The moment he had been praying for had arrived and the king's question opened the door.

Broken Walls In Your Life

It is one thing to pray for God to move and open doors, but it is another thing to take action when that happens. When the opportunity comes we must be prepared and willing to move from simply grieving over broken walls to dreaming about a new vision for rebuilding. It is important to acknowledge failure and brokenness but it is also just as important to have a vision of hope for the future. As you pray today spend some time dreaming about a new vision and the renewed work that could bring that to fruition.

Broken Walls in the Church

Writing about all that is wrong with the church today has become a cottage industry. It is easy to see all that is wrong, but quite a different thing to commit to be part of the solution. Churches are struggling to make disciples in meaningful and intentional ways. Take time in prayer today to dream about how NABC could become a disciple-making church and how exciting it would be to see people's lives changed. Then, consider and pray about how you might be willing to risk some things when God opens doors for you to act.

DAY 7

Read Nehemiah 2:11-12

Nehemiah makes his way to Jerusalem but is still keeping his cards close to his vest. An extended time of fasting and praying has led him to a vision for the people of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the wall, but it is clear that he is still discerning the plan and direction of the Lord.

Broken Walls In Your Life

It is one thing to identify broken walls in our life but it is another thing to know exactly what God would have you do to begin rebuilding them. Having a vision is not enough, we must continue to ask the Lord to help us discern in our hearts the right course of action. Continue to pray over your broken walls and ask God to put a plan in your heart. Write down any thoughts or discoveries you might have this week.

Broken Walls in the Church

We often find motivation to deal with the broken things in our own lives but it can be difficult to muster the energy and concern over God's church. Though a vision and organization is required from leadership, the actual work of making disciples begins in earnest only when each believer allows God to put that burden in their heart. Ask God to burden you with the plan He has for the church to intentionally make disciples in our culture.

DAY 8

Read Nehemiah 2:13-16

As an effective leader and important man in the Persian kingdom, Nehemiah was someone who knew how to get things done. But Nehemiah did not start where we often start. He did not get detailed on planning until after spending a couple of months fasting and praying and searching out the will of God. Only after considerable time with the Lord did he acquire the general vision before he traveled to Jerusalem to inspect the wall himself. Inspection is a necessary step but only after we ask God to set His vision in our hearts.

Broken Walls In Your Life

During this fasting campaign it is necessary that you inspect the walls that are broken in your life. That means you must carefully examine and even record your observations. What is broken? How is it broken? Why is it broken? What is still intact? What blockages are preventing you from moving forward? Do others see the same things? Take time this week to consider these questions and more and record the answers.

Broken Walls in the Church

When it comes to the mission of the church it can be difficult to inspect how effective we are today. There are many reasons for this but a couple of them are that we don't all agree on exactly what the mission is, and there is disagreement about what to do to achieve it. Ask the Lord to help clarify for you what His mission is for the church and why we are struggling to achieve it. Record your thoughts.

DAY 9

Read Nehemiah 2:17-18

After his time of examination Nehemiah recognizes that he must share his vision to the people. It is vital that others recognize the vision of rebuilding and covenant together to make that happen. In leading the people to make this covenant, Nehemiah also shared with them how God had already been at work in His life answering prayer. The people needed to hear this testimony so they could have hope for the future.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Another step that has to be taken in addressing broken walls in our lives is that we must covenant with God and, if applicable, others in order to make progress. We can identify and evaluate to exhaustion, but unless we are willing to commit to do our part to fix the walls nothing will happen. If others need to be involved in this work it might be necessary for you to sit them down and share what is in your heart. Sharing how God has been leading you and answering prayer is especially helpful when you are asking others to be partners with you in rebuilding a wall.

Broken Walls in the Church

As a church we need to covenant together around the calling of Jesus Christ for us to “go and make disciples.” This might be something you agree with but up to this point you have not recognized your own part in building that wall. Today, consider making a covenant with God and with others in your circle of influence to do your part in making disciples, no matter what that might require of you.

DAY 10

Read Nehemiah 2:19-20

As soon as Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem it is apparent that opposition is waiting in the wings to strike. God’s enemies are never content to sit back while good things are happening. Nehemiah could have become despondent and discouraged by this opposition, but he recognizes it is doomed to fail from the beginning. However, he understood the Lord was with him and this confidence in the Lord made all the difference during every attack from the opposition.

Broken Walls In Your Life

If you want to get serious about addressing broken things in your life, then you need to prepare for the fact that it will not be easy and there will be circumstances and even people who are opposed to any progress. Also, we have the advantage also of knowing that opposition and trials are a good sign that we are moving in the right direction. The enemy doesn't bother with people who aren't interested in building for the kingdom of God. If you have opposition consider it joy (James 1:2) and recognize that if you are being faithful, God will have your back.

Broken Walls in the Church

The church has always faced great opposition as the people of God. When God’s people get serious about God’s calling it will invite trouble. Jesus told us to take heart and not to worry because trouble is a part of our faithfulness (John 16:33). If you were to commit to make disciples there is no doubt trouble will follow. Are you willing to face opposition and trials in order to be faithful to Jesus’ command for His church?

DAY 11

Read Nehemiah 3:1-2

In chapter three the work on the wall begins in earnest as all the different groups of people take on their section of the wall. The teamwork is apparent and necessary in order for them to take on this massive project. The fact that the high priest and the other priests are mentioned first is appropriate. The broken physical wall is also a reminder of the spiritual brokenness that is present among the people.

Broken Walls In Your Life

One of the greatest distinctions between the old covenant between the Lord and the people of Israel and the new covenant between Christ and the church is the priesthood of the believer. In Christ we are given the presence of the Holy Spirit. We no longer need someone to intercede on our behalf. This is also true when it comes to taking action on our own broken walls. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit God will give you clarity on doing your part to rebuild some of the broken walls in your life. Ask God to give you guidance on which section and area to begin.

Broken Walls in the Church

As the church of Jesus Christ our only option in obeying His command to “go make disciples” is to work together. Disciple-making is a team sport that requires everyone to work one person, one section at a time. Who are the people in your life God has brought your way in order for you to influence them for the cause of Christ? Write the names of those people down and ask the Lord who He would have you begin focusing on first.

DAY 12

Read Nehemiah 3:5

As chapter three lists all the different people and groups involved in the rebuilding of the wall, one of the most interesting things we learn is found in verse five. We are told that the noblemen of Tekoa would not put their shoulders into the work. In other words, they are willing to benefit off the work of others and revealed their hearts are not interested in truly being a part of God’s plan. There will always be people who say the right things, but when the hard work is right before them they bow out.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Hopefully you have others in your life who might become willing partners with you as you try to work on your broken walls. They might be prayer partners, encouragers, and counselors who help in meaningful ways. There will also be people who cause distraction and frustrate your efforts. Perhaps they are willing to help or maybe they don’t agree on the plan. Whatever the reason, ask the Lord to help you forgive them and to know how to move forward even if that means it is without their involvement.

Broken Walls in the Church

The work of intentionally making disciples is hard work. There are many who struggle to “put their shoulders into it” for various reasons. It might be that they don’t understand the clear command of Jesus or have confidence in how God might use them to accomplish it. Whatever the reason or excuse we need to offer grace to one another and understand that there will always be people in the church who choose to remain in the stands. Don’t let this frustrate us in being obedient to Christ.

DAY 13

Read Nehemiah 3:10-12

As we read through chapter three we see a theme develop. People are working very close to where they live. They are involved in their immediate neighborhood with the people in their families and the people that live on their block. That makes a lot of sense. Nehemiah uses the natural circles of influence in people's lives to maximize the effectiveness of the work. That principle ought to inform where we are working and what part of the wall might be our responsibility.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Some of you might have found it easy to identify some broken walls in your life, but others might be struggling. We need to learn to look in our immediate area for signs of brokenness. Of course that means starting in our own families and intimate friendships, but it could also mean our neighbors at home, work, or school. It doesn't take long to see brokenness if our eyes are open to the people around us. Take time this week to ask the Lord to reveal any brokenness that might be present where you live.

Broken Walls in the Church

Churches have a tendency to become inward-focused. That means that we don't see beyond the walls or beyond the people we see every Sunday. It also means we can develop an uncaring attitude toward those on the outside. While I agree this is a major problem, I also know that often when we consider the work of disciple-making sometimes we fail to see what is right in front of us. Ask the Lord this week if there is someone in the church who is dealing with broken walls who needs your intentional love and concern.

DAY 14

Read Nehemiah 4:1

Sanballat and his companions are not on board with the vision of Nehemiah for the rebuilding of the wall. This is a clear sign that competing interests are at play. Sanballat and the others have been profiting off of Israel's situation and this renewed vision for the people will cut them off and limit their influence. This conflict produces an anger that is going to explode and Nehemiah will have to deal with it.

Broken Walls In Your Life

It is not uncommon for emotions to get involved when we are dealing with broken walls in our lives. It might be our own emotions, or it might be the emotions of others involved. One of the reasons we have been hesitant in the past to address some issues is that we know it could lead to hurt feelings and anger. Take time today to pray for your own emotions and the emotions of others in your life. Ask the Lord to help you see through that and remain faithful to the vision that is necessary to rebuild things.

Broken Walls in the Church

When we are confronted with uncomfortable truth it can upset us. One of the uncomfortable truths in the church today is that the vast majority of believers are not sharing the gospel and have never led anyone to Christ. It is impossible to make disciples unless we are willing to share our faith in Christ in meaningful ways. This truth has even made people angry in the church. They reason, "We do a lot of good things here!" or "It is unreasonable to expect everyone to be able to share.". Instead of getting angry or defensive, let us take time today to confess our fear and apathy about sharing Christ.

DAY 15

Read Nehemiah 4:2

As progress on the wall begins to rapidly advance, things start getting very ugly. The opposition we see forming in the beginning has metastasized and come out in full force. Nehemiah begins to confront trouble and has to take action in order for it not to distract or defeat them. Nehemiah is able to strike the right balance between not underestimating the danger of opposition but also not allowing it to derail God's direction for them.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Though Jesus promises to be with us and to work for us as we take on the broken things in life, we are not promised a smooth ride. In these verses Nehemiah and the people are hit hard. They have to confront the anger, ridicule, and the projection of shame from the enemies of God's plan. When we get busy rebuilding walls these types of attacks will come. Sometimes they even come from the people we love. Ask God today to head off any opposition that is coming your way and to give you wisdom in how to handle it when it comes.

Broken Walls in the Church

One of the things believers seem to fear the most today is opposition from our culture. The church is not in a position of strength and our enemies know that. We seem to be getting attacked from many sides and it is easy to give in to the anger, ridicule, and a feeling of shame. We must not be ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16-17) and we must choose to live by faith, even in a world of growing opposition to the things of God.

DAY 16

Read Nehemiah 4:3

The enemies of Israel are ramping up their verbal attacks. Verbal attacks can be just as intimidating and demoralizing as physical attacks. One thing they are clearly trying to do is to sow seeds of doubt. Will they finish? Even if they do finish, won't a fox knock down their shoddy work? All of this is meant to bully, intimidate, and weaken the resolve of the people to finish.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Doubt is a normal part of working on difficult things in our lives. We wonder if we have the know-how, the resolve, the strength, and the spiritual wisdom to finish. Doubting our own ability is normal and even good. When we come to the end of ourselves there is only one direction we can turn, and that is toward the Lord. Our doubt can force us to surrender and trust in Him for what we cannot do ourselves. Confess your doubt to the Lord today and throw up your white flag of surrender. Ask Him to give you faith for the work and endurance to see it through.

Broken Walls in the Church

God does not call His people to a task that cannot be accomplished. When Jesus called us to "go make disciples" He told us that He would be with us. What else could we need? Our doubts in disciple-making are normal, but they become overwhelming when we focus on our abilities. We are not able to change the hearts of men, only Jesus can do that. We need to pray today that we would be faithful to build relationships, get into the struggle of other's lives, and share the truth in love. We need to trust Jesus to do what only He can do and turn the hearts of men.

DAY 17

Read Nehemiah 4:6-12

The opposition quickly moves from ridicule to action. They are intent on stopping Nehemiah's vision that is in alignment with the plan of God. The enemies of God might employ different timing and tactics but the goal is always the same: to disrupt the mission. Nehemiah is not deterred no matter how frightening the rumors of retaliation are for everyone involved. He stays the course because he is confident in the vision and mission God has for the city of Jerusalem.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Confidence will always be a challenge when we confront broken things in our lives. This is especially true the moment we face opposition and each step of the way as it escalates. It might be tempting for us to back down and stop trying. This is a temptation we cannot give into. Ask the Lord today to confirm for you His plan for rebuilding whatever wall in your life needs attention. Remember that if your confidence is in the Lord and His leading, nothing opposition brings our way should deter you from your faithful work. Leave the results to the Lord.

Broken Walls in the Church

The enemy of God does not want us to make disciples. He will lie and cause all kinds of trouble for the churches that are determined to accomplish the mission. It can turn ugly in a hurry, and opposition might come from very unexpected places. If our hearts are united on the mission the Lord will do the fighting for us. He will guard our flank and gladly take on those who would see us defeated. Thank Him today for being a God like that!

DAY 18

Read Nehemiah 4:10

As we circle back a little bit today to verse ten we see that the strength of the people is starting to give out. The work and the constant fear of attack is stressful and exhausting. They are looking around not at all the work that has been completed, but at all the stones that are still lying on the ground. Nehemiah's leadership is so important here because morale is getting low. The people need encouragement and an ability to focus on what is going right and not dwell on what is still left to do.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Maybe your strength is wearing out today as you continue to fast, pray, and rebuild some walls in your life. When we grow weary we have a tendency to see all the bad and little of the good. Our exhaustion leads us to low morale and can be a catalyst for us to just give up. Pray for renewed strength today and for the Lord to give you His perspective on the progress. Take some time to rest and do something that re-energizes your heart and mind.

Broken Walls in the Church

Burn-out in church life is something that many have experienced over the course of their lives. We wonder what we are accomplishing and struggle to overcome the sense of failure, frustration, or apathy that can surround us. There are many reasons why this happens but one reason is clear. We are asking people to spend a lot of time and energy on things that are not necessarily central to the mission. They might be fun things, even good things, but they are not directly impacting the goal of making disciples. If you feel burned out today, ask the Lord if this might be the reason.

DAY 19

Read Nehemiah 4:15-18

Nehemiah didn't promise the people that the work would be easy or pain-free. He was wise not to promise such things. In resisting the severe opposition it is clear that there was a cost that was extracted from the people. It was exhausting to work and be on guard at the same time. Nehemiah had no alternative than to ask the people for even more personal sacrifice in order to finish the mission.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Taking on broken things can be exhausting. We know this instinctively and that is why we put them off for so long. When opposition gets added to an already challenging situation, it will exact a heavier price in order to finish. As you pray over your broken walls today consider what further sacrifice might be necessary for you to move forward. Who in your life can help you keep watch when difficult times come?

Broken Walls in the Church

The enemy is intent on making sure the church does not fulfill its mission. Opposition and attack can be a good sign that we are moving in the right direction. As we pray for the gospel to pierce the lostness in our community we must remember to stand guard and to work as a team to bring each other into maturity in Christ. Our battle is less visible than the one for Nehemiah and the people, but it is still warfare. Let us put on the armor of God and carry the sword of His spirit into battle. Ask the Lord to go before you today as you desire to make disciples for His kingdom.

DAY 20

Read Nehemiah 4:19-20

By this time in the rebuilding project, people are so spread out that they can't even see or hear one another. This is a dangerous situation to be in because of the imminent threat of attack from the enemy. They used trumpets to sound the alarm and asked others to rally together in times of threat. The sound of that trumpet would have been a reminder to those working in isolation that others were right around the corner.

Broken Walls In Your Life

It is tempting to give into the idea that we are alone. We are working on these problems in our lives and we think no one else can understand or appreciate the struggle. The enemy will use our sense of isolation to continue to thwart our desire and efforts to affect change. That's why it is important to know the fellowship of other believers. The Lord doesn't command us to faithfully gather together (Hebrews 10:25) to check a box. He knows our tendency for isolation and our need to be known and to know others well. The trumpet is sounding but we have to answer it by surrounding ourselves with others who love the Lord and understand our struggle.

Broken Walls in the Church

Disciple-making is impossible in isolation. We might be able to do some good things on our own but God created the church because He understood that in order for people to become spiritually mature they need the diverse fellowship of others. In our efforts to make disciples we need to sound the trumpet and ask others to rally around each other. This deep and abiding sense of community sets the environment for proper discipleship.

DAY 21

Read Nehemiah 5:1-4

Nehemiah's approach to this rebuilding project is holistic and integrated. In other words, this is about more than just a physical wall. In the middle of this building project other problems rise to the surface and it is clear that there are underlying issues that have plagued the people for a long time. The basic issue of hunger and poverty come to the forefront and Nehemiah takes this challenge head on.

Broken Walls In Your Life

There might be some basic, practical things you are overlooking in this season of prayer and fasting. In your desire to see broken walls rebuilt, ask the Lord what simple things you might be overlooking in your life or the lives of others. If something comes to mind, take time this week to try and meet that need. Perhaps that is just the thing that is holding up further progress.

Broken Walls in the Church

It is easy for us to become dualistic in our thinking. We can falsely believe that if we are focusing on spiritual things that the practical and physical issues people face are not all that relevant. This isn't about political social justice movements, this is about disciple-making. When we set out to lead others to Christ and mature them in the faith, we will find that basic issues come to the surface. People are struggling with poverty, addiction, marriage turmoil, parenting problem, and a host of other practical things. Discipling is a spiritual work that involves helping others with basic, worldly issues. If we fail to recognize that we will fail at making disciples.

DAY 22

Read Nehemiah 5:5-6

What is described here is forced servitude. The awful reality is that children are caught up in this injustice. Nehemiah is rightly appalled and disgusted that the leadership in the city has allowed this injustice to go on for so long. Though they are making great progress on the physical wall it is clear that other broken walls exist among them and they are devastating.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Take some time today to pray for your children and grandchildren. They might not be in harm's way or in forced servitude but they might be under something oppressive. Children today are challenged by things many of us could never imagine when we were younger. The world throws so much at them at earlier ages and it is resulting in some very dire consequences. Ask God to use you to provide stability and a safe place to go with their concerns and problems.

Broken Walls in the Church

One of the most disgusting things in our world is human trafficking. This scourge is not just an international problem but it is happening right in our own backyard. In making disciples, the church has to stand for justice and especially do everything we can to protect the lives of children. The enemy of God has always gone after children and will continue to make that a priority. Pray that we will, as the body of Christ, look for ways to be a safe place for children in their unique challenges as we point them to the cross.

DAY 23

Read Nehemiah 5:7-9

Nehemiah was swift and clear in his condemnation of the leaders who allowed injustice to persist. He understood that they could build a thousand new walls but they wouldn't last unless inward corruption and sin was confronted. Taking advantage of others and exploiting it for their personal gain was the stain of those noblemen and Nehemiah brings it out in the open. His courage to confront this sin sets the stage for a promising future.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Is there sin and selfishness in your life that has contributed to your broken walls? We have a tremendous capacity to confuse what is selfish ambition for the greater good. Ask the Lord to reveal any sin that is putting your own desires above what is best for the people in your life. Your effort in rebuilding won't be successful if underlying selfishness is not addressed.

Broken Walls in the Church

The church has often been guilty of serving our own desires at the expense of our mission. We may not even recognize that we are doing this. We can agree to the idea of making disciples, but if most of our time and energy is spent comforting and satisfying our own desires we won't do much at all to move God's mission forward. Real disciple-making will take us to places that are uncomfortable and demand self-sacrifice. Ask the Lord today to reveal any selfishness that is limiting how He wants to use you in making disciples.

DAY 24

Read Nehemiah 6:1-4

Nehemiah seemed to have an uncanny instinct to know what his enemies were up to. This ability might have been developed over time in his leadership position in Persia but it is also clear that as he drew near to God his spiritual wisdom and discernment increased. This type of discernment doesn't happen by accident, it is the product of sustained disciplines that place us before the throne of God.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Our goal throughout this month has been to practice spiritual disciplines in order to draw near to God and ask Him to reveal some broken things in our lives. As you finish this time of fasting and prayer, remember to finish well. Distractions will try to pry you from your commitment so don't allow that to happen. Ask the Lord to give you discernment as you continue through the end of the month.

Broken Walls in the Church

Distraction is an ongoing issue for the church today. We can easily get side-tracked chasing after enemies or pursuing goals that have little to do with intentional disciple-making. We need spiritual discernment to know how to invest, in whom to invest, and what pitfalls to avoid. Let's ask the Lord to grant His church spiritual discernment that will help us accomplish the goal. Pray to that whatever distractions are getting in the way will be identified and set aside.

DAY 25

Read Nehemiah 6:5-8

Sanballat refuses to give up even when the project is near completion. After Nehemiah sniffs out his devious plan to distract and hurt Nehemiah he uses a different tactic to frustrate the plan. He begins to lie and attack Nehemiah's character, motives, and reputation.

Broken Walls In Your Life

When you commit to working toward the goal of rebuilding broken walls you will find that some will oppose you, but others will simply not understand or be confused about what you are doing. Perhaps you have experienced that this month already. Take courage and respond with confidence in the Lord, just as Nehemiah did. We have to embrace the fact that obedience is more important than our reputations. If others want to lob accusations or impugn our motives we must not allow that to send us into a rage and dismantle the hard work we have put into it. If you feel your character, motives, or reputation is under attack, pray today ask God to fight for you. Ask God to give you courage and make sure your conscience is clear before Him.

Broken Walls in the Church

The reputation of the church today is in an interesting state. Some of the criticism leveled against us is valid. As people we are sinful and so our actions or motives are not always where they need to be. On the other hand, much of what the world accuses the church of today is nothing new. Jesus makes clear that if we set out to obey Him and to make disciples, the world is not going to like it. They will call us names, twist our words, and impugn our character. Obedience is more important than reputation.

DAY 26

Read Nehemiah 6:10-13

The enemies of the people of God try one final tactic to disrupt progress and stop the completion of the wall. This is one of the most difficult attacks because it is disguised as wise counsel and committed friendship. We don't know much about this man Shemaiah, but what is clear is that he comes to Nehemiah as a friend and wise counselor. He pleads for Nehemiah to abandon his leadership for a time in order to avoid harm. The words of this friend, however, are the plans of the enemy. Nehemiah once again, because of his walk with the Lord, is able to see through the confusion of the moment.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Working on broken walls requires ongoing discernment to distinguish the difference between good and bad counsel. One of the hardest things to do is to know when the words or counsel of a friend is from God, or is actually tempting us in the other direction. This is not usually because of treachery but often just in misguided advice. Ask the Lord to continue giving you clarity in the proper steps to work on the broken things in your life.

Broken Walls in the Church

There are many books on the market today that are written to guide churches on how they should be approaching ministry. Much of the discussion is based around church growth, adding people to the attendance or membership numbers, and the motive is often self-preservation. Numerical growth is good but our goal should be much greater than that. Our goal is not to draw a crowd but to do the hard work of disciple-making. We need guidance to discern the difference.

DAY 27

Read Nehemiah 6:16

Upon the completion of the wall, in fifty-two days no less, the victory became apparent to God's enemies. They would continue the work of undermining the progress of the people of Israel, but they knew an important threshold had been crossed. We are told that they lost their confidence and even began to fear. There was no doubt where the praise was to be directed for the victory. The people worked hard but God is the One who carried them to victory.

Broken Walls In Your Life

No matter how hard we work on the issues we face we need to always remember that victory comes from the Lord. Whatever progress you have experienced this month, take time to praise God for it and give Him the credit. If others notice some changes or improvements make sure you point them back to the Lord. In this way we serve as examples for others to follow as they look to rebuild some of their own broken walls.

Broken Walls in the Church

No matter how skilled someone might be in sharing the gospel, guiding others in the Scripture, or offering godly counsel with practical problems, the only way disciples are made and come to maturity is through the power of the Holy Spirit. May we never take credit for what only God can accomplish. He is the One who humbles our enemies and He is the One who redeems the lost. Take time today to praise God for how He is moving in the lives of those around you. Ask Him to continue fighting back the things that oppose real disciple-making around us.

DAY 28

Read Nehemiah 8:5-6

The work of physical building had been accomplished but now Nehemiah and Ezra point to the greater work of spiritual renewal. Here we find that God's Word takes center stage as they read from it for hours. If the people are to turn back to God and experience revival it will be because they listen to and heed the Word of God.

Broken Walls In Your Life

Some of the broken things you have been praying about might not seem to be directly related to the nature of your spiritual walk with Christ. If you look a little deeper though you might discover that often our spiritual issues and practical issues are connected. We cannot try to divide those different sides of our lives, they go hand in hand. Ask the Lord to continue a spiritual renewal in your heart and your mind. Be honest with Him today on the role that His Word truly plays in your life. If His Word has not been a priority in the recent past, confess that and commit to regular time in it every day.

Broken Walls in the Church

Many experts today tell us that people in the church have never been more uninformed about the Word of God. That is such a tragedy because the Word of God has never been more available and easily accessible. This disregard for learning the Scripture is partly to blame for the ineffectiveness of the church, but another is the disregard of what we already know. For some of us the issue isn't learning more but simply getting serious about what we already understand. "Go and make disciples" is a pretty clear and direct command. Ask God today if you are seriously putting it into practice.

DAY 29

Read Nehemiah 8:9-10

As the celebration of the people continues after the rebuilding of the wall we find a combination many of us recognized, celebration centered around food! There is a time before God for sacrifice and for fasting, and there is a time for food and celebration. Times of feasting were meaningful for the people of Israel and they are meaningful for us today. In that celebration we are reminded of the provision of God and that He wants us to enjoy the life He has given us.

Broken Walls In Your Life

As our time of fasting and prayer comes to a close, plan to spend time with your family or with friends in celebration. Food is a great blessing and sharing it with others is very central to the fellowship of God's people. Take time to pray and consider today what you might share, besides a meal, with others in your life about the past month and what God has been doing. Take time to celebrate whatever victories God has brought your way and whatever victories He may provide in the future.

Broken Walls in the Church

Jesus taught the early disciples that a meal shared together was an important part of disciple-making. Remember how many times Jesus sat down to eat with His disciples and with others? Food offers us a chance to bridge the gap between what naturally divides us. One of the greatest tools your family can use is your dinner table. Adopt a heart of hospitality and celebration as a mighty tool in the work of making disciples. God will open doors you may not have thought possible.