

# BUILD-A-BELIEVER WORKSHOPS

## Ezra Nehemiah Esther

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*People say to me, "How do you build a church?" You don't build a church, you build a believer. As a result, the church will build itself. (John MacArthur).*

### Nehemiah

Chapter 3:6-16

#### *"How to Install a Prayer-hung Door"*

Nehemiah 3:6 Moreover Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and bars.

Nehemiah 3:7 And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, repaired the residence of the governor *of the region* beyond the River.

Nehemiah 3:8 Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs; and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

Nehemiah 3:9 And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs.

Nehemiah 3:10 Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs.

Nehemiah 3:11 Malchijah the son of Harim and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section, as well as the Tower of the Ovens.

Nehemiah 3:12 And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs.

Nehemiah 3:13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and *repaired* a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Refuse Gate.

Nehemiah 3:14 Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

Nehemiah 3:15 Shallun the son of Col-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David.

Nehemiah 3:16 After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as *the place* in front of the tombs of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

## Introduction

A cupbearer was the Project Manager. His work force consisted of a few priests; some goldsmiths; some perfumers; several local government officials; and some merchants. There were married men; at least one bachelor; and some single women. *Not a contractor among them!* Yet they accomplished in 52-days what others before them had failed to accomplish in nearly one hundred years. They built and repaired the wall and the gates of the city of Jerusalem.

Like the Jews in Jerusalem, our fellowship is comprised of ordinary men and women from all walks of life, married and single. We, too, are involved in a building project. It's the spiritual building project of being built together as the Church of Jesus Christ.

When you see it like that, you get a little more excited about reading chapter three. Maybe there are some principles, some insights, that we can apply that will help us to have success as we put our hearts and hands into the work of serving the Lord.

In the first five verses we learned that any work for God both begins and then advances when you bend your neck. "Bend your neck" was a Jewish idiom meaning you were in submission to God's will and His ways.

- being changed to bring change -  
There are two observations in our next set of verses:

1. Every person in the community, regardless their profession, gender, or status, could participate in the work of rebuilding the wall and its gates.
2. Some of them were particularly suited to the skilled labor needed to hang the **doors** with their **bolts** and **bars**.

From these two observations we can say two things about our own spiritual work of building for the Lord: #1 You Are All Enabled By Grace To Build, and #2 You Are Each Equipped With Gifts To Build.

#1 You Are All Enabled  
By Grace To Build  
(v7-12 & 16)

If you are a Christian, you are called upon to participate in building for God:

1. As individuals, we are told in First Corinthians chapter three to see ourselves as builders whose work will one day be rewarded by Jesus according to its quality.
2. As a community of believers, we are told in First Peter chapter two that we are being built-up as the Lord's spiritual house on earth.

Most Christians have a desire to participate in building, both personally and publicly. But many Christians are not busy building for God – either in the Church or out in the world.

There are a lot of reasons why many Christians are not busy building – some of them lame excuses.

Most sincere Christians are not busy building because they do not see themselves as an essential part of the project. They are; **you** are!

Building the wall was a community effort. Building for Christ is even more of a community effort.

Rather than talk about it in the abstract, we can see it lived-out in our text.

*Nehemiah 3:7 And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, repaired the residence of the governor of the region beyond the River.*

There were **men from Gibeon - Gibeonites**. These were descendants of people who had been marked-out for destruction when Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Fearing annihilation, they deceived Joshua into making a covenant of protection with them. Even though their deception was discovered, Joshua kept his word to them. To punish them, he made them woodcutters for the fires that were needed for the offering of sacrifices in God's Tabernacle.

Now here they were, shoulder-to-shoulder, working equally alongside the Jews. A people marked-out for extinction who instead were busy serving the Lord. No one could look upon them and not immediately see God's grace!

Grace does not just refer to our salvation and the forgiveness of our sins – as wonderful as that is! Grace is also the divine power that we are to live by that comes to us through faith in Jesus. It is an enabling to do ministry – an enabling to build.

If God's grace was sufficient to enable the [Gibeonites](#); it is more than sufficient to enable you.

[Nehemiah 3:8](#) Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs; and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

[Nehemiah 3:9](#) And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs.

[Nehemiah 3:10](#) Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs.

[Nehemiah 3:11](#) Malchijah the son of Harim and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section, as well as the Tower of the Ovens.

[Goldsmiths](#), [perfumers](#), and local government officials are mentioned. Officials are also mentioned in verse sixteen:

[Nehemiah 3:16](#) After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as *the place* in front of the tombs of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

Then, if you drop down to verse thirty-two, you see a mention of the [merchants](#).

Average, everyday working men and women, from various walks of life, did the bulk of the work on the wall.

It's supposed to be the same today as we build for God. Ephesians chapter four encourages all of us to do [the work of the ministry](#).

Whatever your everyday vocation, you are also a wall-builder. Your vocation is not a hindrance to wall-building. To the contrary: The

career or profession or employment God has called you to **is** where you are to build for Him; it **is** where you can serve Him.

Whatever you are, in terms of the outside world, you are *also* enabled by grace to build within the Church. Your ministry is not just outside, where you live and work. It always included serving a local community of believers.

Nehemiah 3:12 And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs.

The mention of the gals means **Shallum** had no sons. Thus his daughters would inherit his property. But it also tells us that women worked alongside the men on the project.

Women are set free by biblical Christianity to build and serve alongside men. In most churches, women form the backbone of the servant corps. While they are not called upon to lead, very little would get done if women were not enabled by grace to build.

One more insight before we move on. Down in verse thirty you read,

Nehemiah 3:30 After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs in front of his dwelling.

The particular word for the **dwelling** of **Meshullam** means a small *chamber*. He is believed by commentators to have been single – a bachelor.

Are you single? Work shoulder-to-shoulder with others in the Church. God's enabling grace is just as available to you.

I mentioned the word vocation earlier. Your vocation is your regular occupation. A word we don't use much any more is *avocation*. It is an activity taken up in addition to one's regular work or profession, usually for enjoyment.

Whatever your vocation, **your avocation is to be a wall-builder** – at church, and in the world – as God's abundant grace enables you to do the work of the ministry.

## #2 You Are Each Equipped With Gifts To Build (v6 & 13-15)

There is a concentrated emphasis in these middle verses on hanging doors with [their] bolts and bars. This is more a finish work, requiring specific skilled labor. Let's re-read the remaining verses:

Nehemiah 3:6 Moreover Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and bars...

Nehemiah 3:13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and *repaired* a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Refuse Gate.

Nehemiah 3:14 Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

Nehemiah 3:15 Shallun the son of Col-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David.

Certain individuals possessed the specific skills to hang the doors. The mention of specific abilities reminds us of the spiritual gifts that are given to Christians.

There are several lists of the gifts. The most prominent are the twelfth chapters of both Romans and First Corinthians; and Ephesians chapter four. We don't believe those lists are exhaustive. But they are a good place to start when seeking to discover God's teaching on the gifts.

The New Testament assumes that each Christian will have one or more spiritual gifts. What is yours? How is it discovered? We can learn the basics from our Jewish wall-builders.

First: They discovered who among them had the ability to hang doors as they all worked together on the project.

It's the same way in the Church. Get together with other believers and you will discover your gift or gifts as you work together on

building. God's gifts are given so you might serve others... **So you must be among them to discover and utilize them!**

Second: God's gifts will operate somewhat differently through different individuals. Look at verse fifteen. **Shallun** is the only one who, when hanging his door, is also said to have **covered it**. He did something a little different.

Don't fall into the trap of preferring certain styles of ministry. God's gifting is as various as the people He uses. *Enjoy the variety!*

Third: It seems that there were no real prerequisites for door-hangers on the wall project. Two (at least) were local officials; but the others were not.

It reminds us that the gifts given to Christians are at the discretion of the Holy Spirit.

1. A spiritual gift is not something that can be learned. It is not a natural talent or ability. It is a supernatural equipping by the Holy Spirit.
2. Spiritual gifts are never earned. They are given by the Holy Spirit as He sees fit.

Three more practical things:

1. If you are interested in further studying the various gifts listed in Scripture, and their discovery and operation, we have a number of text-based Bible studies posted on the website. Go to the Bible Studies page and click either on First Corinthians or Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
2. I would also highly recommend Pastor Chuck Smith's book, *Living Water*. There is simply no better study of the Holy Spirit and His gifts.
3. If you are interested in receiving or possibly experiencing certain gifts in operation, come to our Gift Shop (afterglow) after the communion service on the last Wednesday of the month.

Applying the Word

You are **all** enabled by grace to serve in a general sense. *Just do it!*

You are **each** equipped with a gift or gifts in a specific sense. *Just discover!*

Unless you are not yet a Christian...

### Something Extra

*“We do not come to the Bible primarily to study a man’s character or Christian methods, we come to meet God; a message has little value unless it brings us to the feet of our Savior” (Alan Redpath).*

