

# BUILD-A-BELIEVER WORKSHOPS

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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).*

### Text

Nehemiah 3:17-32

### Topic

The Jews repair sections of the wall closest to their homes

### Title

*Our House is a Very, Very, Very Divine House*

Nehemiah 3:17 After him the Levites, *under* Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district.

Nehemiah 3:18 After him their brethren, *under* Bavai the son of Henadad, leader of the *other* half of the district of Keilah, made repairs.

Nehemiah 3:19 And next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section in front of the Ascent to the Armory at the buttress.

Nehemiah 3:20 After him Baruch the son of Zabbai carefully repaired the other section, from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.

Nehemiah 3:21 After him Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, repaired another section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib. - *being changed to bring change* -

Nehemiah 3:22 And after him the priests, the men of the plain, made repairs.

Nehemiah 3:23 After him Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs by his house.

Nehemiah 3:24 After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the buttress, even as far as the corner.

Nehemiah 3:25 Palal the son of Uzai *made repairs* opposite the buttress, and on the tower which projects from the king's upper house that *was* by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh *made repairs*.

Nehemiah 3:26 Moreover the Nethinim who dwelt in Ophel *made repairs* as far as *the place* in front of the Water Gate toward the east, and on the projecting tower.

Nehemiah 3:27 After them the Tekoites repaired another section, next to the great projecting tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel.

Nehemiah 3:28 Beyond the Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each in front of his *own* house.

Nehemiah 3:29 After them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs in front of his *own* house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs.

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.

Nehemiah 3:31 After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants, in front of the Miphkad Gate, and as far as the upper room at the corner.

Nehemiah 3:32 And between the upper room at the corner, as far as the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

## Introduction

You discover a progression in these verses:

1. The builders made repairs in their districts (v17 & 18).
2. Within their districts, they made repairs near many houses (v20, 21, 23 & 24).
3. In many cases, the houses they made repairs near were their own (v28-31).

The builders had a strong personal interest in the work on the wall because it affected them – literally - right where they lived. Their assigned section of the wall also directly impacted the safety of their closest neighbors.

- being changed to bring change -

We, too, are considered God's wall-builders:

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as **living stones**, are being **built up a spiritual house**...

Like the Jews in Nehemiah's time, we should have a strong personal interest in building because it will affect us – spiritually – right where we live. Your assigned work will also directly impact the safety of your closest 'neighbors' – meaning those you are in fellowship with in your local Church.

Let's explore these things a little further. We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 You Build To Insure The Best For The Household, and #2 You Build To Assure Blessings At Home.

#1 You Build To Insure The Best  
For The Household  
(v17-27)

It's no good having a twenty-foot fence, topped with barb-wire, alarmed, and electrified – if your neighbor has no fence contiguous to yours!

It's crucial that we see just how important it was for the Jews to cooperate with one another in building. They must all build together, at the same time, according to the same plan, to insure the best for each of them.

The analogy carries over nicely to us as Christians. We are being **built up** together as **a spiritual house**. We are elsewhere called **the household of faith**. When we are called **the household of faith**, it is in a strong word of exhortation to look out for one another:

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, **let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

Before we talk about building so that we can have our own blessed homes, we must be reminded we must all build together, at the same time, according to the same plan, to insure the best for our brothers and sisters in the Church.

- being changed to bring change -

These first few verses speak about certain houses within districts in Jerusalem. Think of our Church fellowship as comprised of various homes within the 'districts,' or neighborhoods, of the cities in which we live.

Nehemiah 3:17 After him the Levites, *under* Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district.

Nehemiah 3:18 After him their brethren, *under* Bavai the son of Henadad, leader of the *other* half of the district of Keilah, made repairs.

Two **district** leaders are mentioned. These guys didn't lead by their position; they led by their example. They worked right alongside the people they were leading.

In the Church, leadership is servanthood. It is not lording over; it's doing the work.

Hashabiah and Bavai were Jews among Jews. Often, when *you* are out and about *your* 'district,' you are a Christian among nonChristians.

Among those nonChristians, you should still think of yourself as if you were building together with other Christians. What might that involve?

1. It certainly involves having a good testimony and reputation among nonChristians so as to not influence them against Jesus and His Church.
2. It certainly involves looking for opportunities to share Jesus, or to invite folks to Church.

The repairing of the wall surrounding Jerusalem continues in verses nineteen through twenty-seven. The single thing I want to point out from those verses is the mention of them making repairs on or around the houses of their neighbors – seen in verses 20, 21 & 24.

The Jews understood that they must help and serve each other in order for this project to succeed. They were building and repairing the wall surrounding the entire city – not just in front of their own houses.

We understand, too, that we must help and serve each other in the household of faith. It is the extent to which we understand it that I want to discuss for just a moment.

Examine any Church and you will see a spectrum of commitment:

1. There are always those who love the fellowship of the saints in the household of faith. They are at every function; anytime the doors are open, so to speak, they are there meeting with their brothers and sisters.
2. At the other end of the spectrum are those who occasionally attend a Sunday morning service. They might attend some other study or function if it directly impacts them.

All of us fall somewhere along that spectrum. Some of us would like to do more, but we can't; others should do more, but we don't. How should we evaluate our commitment? One way is by remembering that we do not just build for ourselves in the household of faith. In many ways, what we do (or what we do not do) is far more about others than it is about ourselves.

Maybe you don't 'need' to attend every Sunday... Or any Wednesday... But there are others in the fellowship whose lives you will therefore never impact with the gift or gifts God has graciously given you.

We are being built together:

Ephesians 2:21 ... being fitted together, [we grow] into a holy temple in the Lord, Ephesians 2:22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

You need to **be** together in order to be **built together**. The next time you are reviewing and evaluating your priorities and time commitments, remember your brothers and sisters in the household of faith. They need your heart and your hands to build alongside with them.

#2 You Build To Assure Blessings  
At Home  
(v28-32)

Before we say something about our individual homes, don't ignore the connection with what came before in our text. Being a part of building the household of faith contributes immensely to having the kind of home that will be blessed. It's never a matter of deciding between Church life and home life. There needs to be a working harmony between the two.

**Each in front of his own house** (or something similar) is the phrase that dominates the remaining verses of chapter three. It's a strong word for us to be establishing godly homes based on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

Each in front of his own house. Christianity needs to work at home; it needs to be real at home. You are only as spiritual as you are at home.

The priests are the first to be mentioned.

Nehemiah 3:28 Beyond the Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house.

At home, you are to be a priest. The New Testament knows *nothing* of a priesthood in the way we normally think of it. **Every believer** – man, woman, child – is a priest before God (First Peter 2:9).

It doesn't mean you robe-up and prepare animal sacrifices! It means that the number one priority of your home... It's theme... It's atmosphere... Must be spiritual.

1. Home is where you work out the spiritual principles you are learning from God's Word.
2. Home is where you are called to produce spiritual fruit.

The progress report on the wall continues in verse twenty-nine:

Nehemiah 3:29 After them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs in front of his own house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs.  
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.

Apparently the East Gate was fine, so it's keeper, Shemaiah, pitched-in elsewhere. It reinforces the idea that we first attend to our own homes – then we can help others.

There are several places in the New Testament where men and women are reminded to attend to their own homes:

1. Leaders in the Church are expected first to rule well their own homes (First Timothy 3:4-5).
2. Men in general, as the heads of their homes (Ephesians 5:32), are expected to set the spiritual example.

3. Women are expected to be keepers at home (Titus 2:5). Whatever other things a woman wants to do, her first responsibilities are domestic.

**It's always easier to minister outside your home!** But that is not the pattern you are given in the Bible.

The final three verses are a mixture of working at home and on the houses of others:

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.

Nehemiah 3:31 After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants, in front of the Miphkad Gate, and as far as the upper room at the corner.

Nehemiah 3:32 And between the upper room at the corner, as far as the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

Keep your home in order and you will be ready and available to help others when their need arises.

The repairs started (in verse one) at the **Sheep Gate**; now we've come full circuit back to where they started.

The last gate mentioned before the Sheep Gate was the **Miphkad Gate**. This was also called *the inspection gate*, or *the review gate*. It was through this gate that the armies would pass to present themselves for review and inspection.

We will have a 'final inspection' one day. It's called the Reward Seat of Jesus Christ; or the *Bema* of Jesus Christ – *Bema* being Greek for Reward Seat. It will be a review of how we built for the Lord. It mostly involves our motives, but it assumes we are busy building!

Applying God's Word...

One of the brothers was telling me that his squadron has been preparing for an inspection. **We** ought to live each day as if we are preparing for our final inspection.

If you are a Christian:

1. Building at home, with the Lord, with His Word, and by His Spirit, is your foundation.
2. Building in the household of faith, alongside other believers, is no less crucial – both for you and for them.

If you are not a Christian... You are building a magnificent sandcastle, but the tide is rapidly coming in.

