

Character Study: Nehemiah

Part 5 – Proven Character

Nehemiah 13:1-31

What's happening?

- After the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, Nehemiah made a return trip to visit Artaxerxes, the king who had given him permission to rebuild Jerusalem. Though we do not know how long Nehemiah stayed in Persia, we do know that when he returned to Jerusalem, he was not happy with the situation he found. (13:1-6)
- Nehemiah learned that Tobiah, the man who had caused trouble earlier, was now living in a room inside the Temple. He also discovered that the Israelites were not tithing, and therefore not supporting the priests who worked in the Temple. Nehemiah threw Tobiah out, and got the people to begin tithing again, which allowed the priests to do their job. (13:7-14)
- Nehemiah also found that people were working on the Sabbath and even marrying foreign women, both of which God had forbidden in the Law for their nation. Nehemiah took a stand against these acts, and the people responded in obedience. (13:15-31)

What's God doing?

> God had made Nehemiah into a great leader, both in his ability to oversee work projects and also in his ability to demonstrate godly character. God used Nehemiah not only to rebuild the city wall, but also to keep the people pure and obedient.

What's to learn?

→ People will always follow a leader. For that reason, godly leaders must always take into consideration what kind of example they are setting, not only by their actions, but also by their character.

→ A true leader will always stand for what is right, even if it is not popular. Nehemiah saw the people being disobedient, and he made a call for change. He addressed difficult issues without compromising. True leaders will do the same.

→ Nehemiah was not concerned with people doing what he wanted, but rather doing what God wanted. The best way to move people in the right direction is by showing them the “big picture” of what God desires.