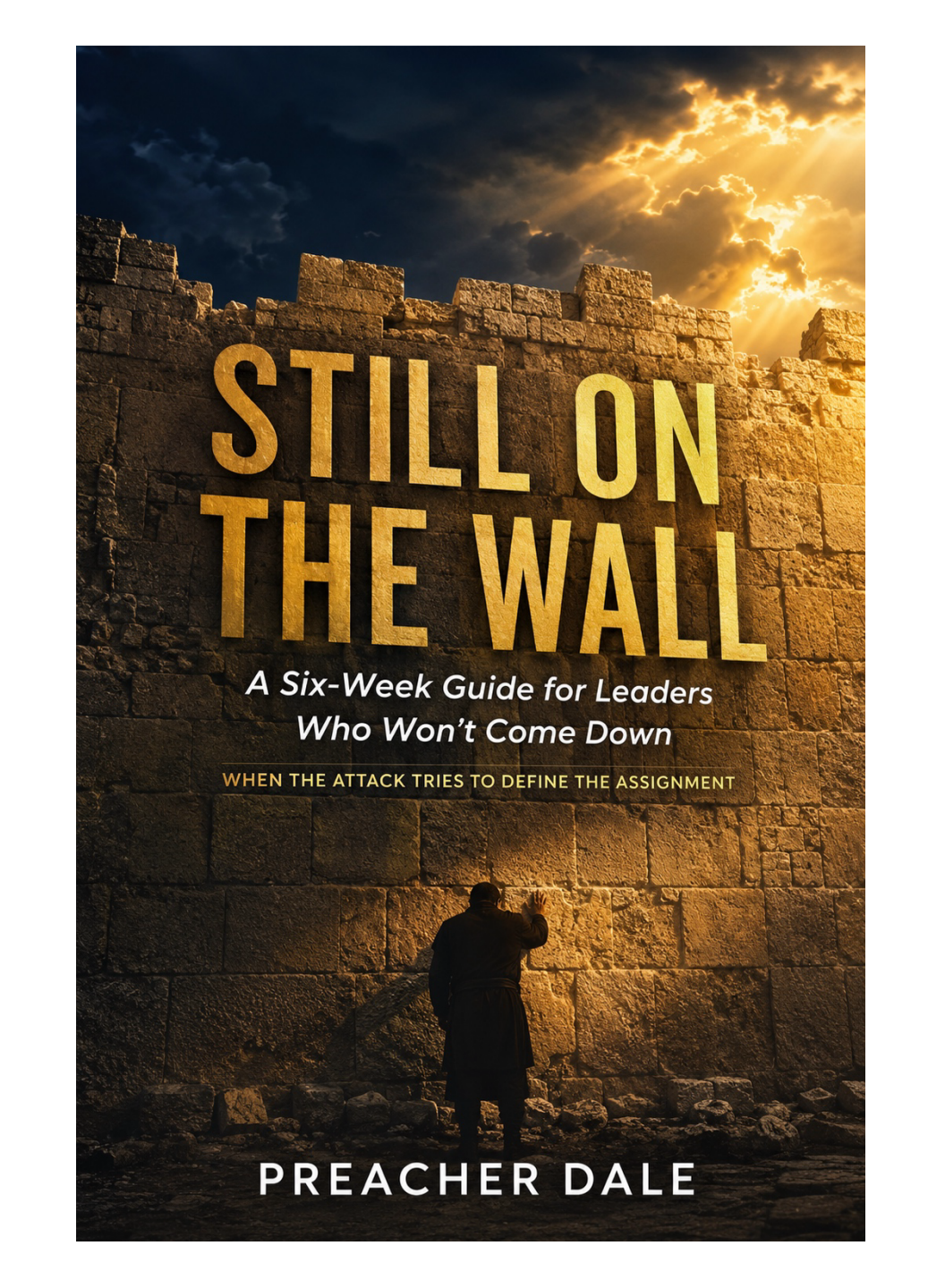




STILL ON THE WALL

*A Six-Week Guide for Leaders
Who Won't Come Down*

WHEN THE ATTACK TRIES TO DEFINE THE ASSIGNMENT

PREACHER DALE

STILL ON THE WALL

*A Six-Week Guide for Leaders Who Won't
Come Down*



Preacher Dale

Hope Church

<https://www.youtube.com/@PreacherDale>

Still on the Wall: A Six-Week Guide for Leaders Who Won't Come Down

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First Edition, 2026

*For every lay leader who showed up on a Sunday
nobody knows about,
held the wall when nobody was watching,
and kept building when everything said come down.*

This book is for you.

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About Preacher Dale and Living Parables

ABOUT PREACHER DALE AND LIVING PARABLES

Preacher Dale has been telling stories his whole life.

It started at thirteen — not behind a pulpit, but behind a puppet stage. While most teenagers were figuring out who they were, Dale was already figuring out how to make the Bible come alive for kids who needed to see it, not just hear it. He wrote scripts. He built characters. He made children laugh and lean in — because he understood something early: people do not connect with information. They connect with story.

That love for story never left.

Over the years, ministry took him through children's programs, live-action skits, dramas, and eventually

the pulpit — but the thread was always the same: find the story inside the truth, tell it where people actually live, and make the ancient Word feel like it was written for right now.

Today, Dale pastors Hope Church in Caledonia, Missouri — a community he loves and a congregation he is honored to shepherd. But something kept pulling him back to his roots. In January of 2026, he launched Living Parables — not as a polished, fully-formed media ministry, but as an honest return to what he has always done best: taking the deep things of Scripture and wrapping them in story, parable, and human experience so that the truth lands somewhere real.

Living Parables is still very much a work in progress — and Dale would tell you that is exactly the point. He uses puppets, live acting, and AI-generated video to create modern parables that help people see themselves in Scripture. It is children's ministry

grown up, the puppet stage with better technology and deeper theology, being built one episode at a time the same way Nehemiah built the wall — imperfectly, under pressure, by a person who simply had a mind to work.

At the heart of every episode is the same conviction Dale carried at thirteen: if you tell the story well enough, people will lean in.

Still on the Wall is the book companion to the Living Parables podcast series of the same name. Each episode goes deeper into the mental, emotional, and spiritual terrain of the chapter you just read — and together, they are designed to do what story has always done: meet you where you are and walk you somewhere better.

A LETTER TO THE LAY LEADER

You did not choose the easiest road.

You could have sat in the pew. You could have shown up on Sunday, put something in the offering, and gone home without any of the weight that comes with actually leading something inside the local church. But you said yes. You picked up the trowel. You accepted the assignment. And now you are living in the space between the yes and the finished wall — which, if you are honest, is harder than you expected when you started.

This book is for that space.

I wrote it for the children's ministry director who is questioning whether anyone is actually being changed by what she does. For the deacon who is carrying church problems nobody outside those four walls will

ever know about. For the worship leader who had a vision from God for what her team could become and is watching that vision take longer and cost more than she ever imagined. For the small group leader, the usher, the prayer team member, the nursery volunteer who shows up every week not because it is easy but because she believes God put her there.

I wrote it for every lay leader who is still on the wall when everything around them says come down.

The book of Nehemiah is one of the most practical books in all of Scripture for anyone leading anything under pressure. In fifty-two days, Nehemiah and his people rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem against six distinct waves of attack. And what I want you to see as you read this book is not just the strategy Nehemiah used — though there is plenty of that here. I want you to see the heart of the man who refused to let any attack define his assignment.

Every chapter follows the same simple pattern. First, I will put you inside the attack — the real, felt, weight of what Nehemiah's builders experienced. Then I will show you what Nehemiah did and why it worked. Then I will bring it directly into your world as a lay leader, because the gap between the ancient wall and your ministry hallway is smaller than you think. And at the end of every chapter there is a section called One Small Change — one concrete thing you can do this week to respond to that week's attack.

I also want to be honest with you about something from the beginning. I am not going to pretend that the life of a lay leader is easy or that faith makes the hard things not hard. I believe in the power of the Holy Ghost with everything in me. And I also believe that God made us human, that exhaustion is real, that discouragement is real, that the wound from inside the camp is the deepest wound of all. Some of what you read in these pages is going to land in places that have been tender for a long time. That is okay. Bring it to God. Let it do its work.

And whatever you do — don't come down.

The wall needs you on it. The people you are leading need you on it. And the God who gave you the assignment has never once reconsidered giving it to you.

Let's build.

Preacher Dale

Hope Church • Living Parables

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is designed to work three ways, and you can choose the one that fits your situation.

As a Podcast Companion

Each episode of Living Parables with Preacher Dale is designed to go deeper into the same text and themes as the corresponding chapter of this book. Listen to the podcast episode first, then read the chapter the same week. The episode will open the text up from a mental, emotional, and spiritual angle — and the chapter will give you the time to sit with it, personalize it, and apply it to your own assignment. Together they are designed to work the way iron sharpens iron.

As a Personal Study

Read one chapter per week on your own. Do not rush it. Each chapter is designed to be read in 15 to 20 minutes, but the reflection questions at the end of each chapter are worth sitting with for a full day or two before moving on. The One Small Change is meant to be practiced during the week, not just read. Put the book down. Do the thing. Then pick it back up.

As a Small Group or Leadership Team Study

Work through one chapter per meeting with your team. Read it individually before you gather, and then use the reflection questions as your discussion guide. The questions are written to generate honest conversation, not correct answers. Some of the best things that will happen in your team will happen in

the silence after question two or three. Let the silence breathe.

However you use it — come back to the through-line at the start of each chapter. Read it out loud if you have to. Say it until you believe it:

***Nehemiah did not let the attack
define the assignment.***

Neither will you.

CHAPTER 1

Mocked, But Still Building

The Attack: Mockery • The Response: Prayer and
Perseverance

***Nehemiah did not let the attack
define the assignment. Mockery
did not define it.***

The Attack

There is a particular kind of pain that only comes from being laughed at while you work.

Not attacked. Not threatened. Not challenged with a reasonable counter-argument. Just laughed at.

Mocked. Dismissed as though what you are doing is so beneath serious consideration that it does not deserve a response — only ridicule.

If you have led anything inside the local church for more than six months, you know this feeling. Maybe it

came from someone outside the church who heard what you were pouring your time into and smiled in a way that was not kind. Maybe it came from a family member who still cannot quite understand why you spend your Thursday evenings leading a small group instead of watching television. Maybe it came from inside the church — the quiet eye-roll, the comment that reached you secondhand, the sense that the vision God gave you for your ministry area is not being taken seriously by the people who have the power to resource it.

Or maybe the loudest mocker is the one who lives in your own head. The voice that speaks in the gap between the vision and the results, between what you believed God said and what you can actually see happening. That voice does not need an audience. It just needs a quiet moment and a tired heart.

Sanballat and Tobiah understood all of this.

When Nehemiah rallied the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the broken wall of the city, the enemy did not send an army. He sent a mocker. Sanballat and his

companion Tobiah stationed themselves outside the work site and started talking. Loudly. In front of an audience. They called the workers feeble. They questioned the quality of the materials. And Tobiah delivered what was probably meant to be the killing blow:

Nehemiah 4:3 (NKJV)

"Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."

A fox. That was the level of their assessment. Not a battering ram. Not a military siege. A fox.

The goal of the mockery was not to make a valid architectural argument. The goal was to get inside the heads of the builders and make them feel small enough to stop. And it almost worked. By chapter four, the workers themselves are saying out loud what the mockers planted in their minds: the strength is failing. There is too much rubbish. We cannot do this.

The attack was never really about the wall. It was about the belief that the wall was possible.



What Nehemiah Did

Nehemiah 4:4–6 (NKJV)

*"Hear, O our God, for we are despised;
turn their reproach on their own
heads... So we built the wall, and the
entire wall was joined together up to
half its height, for the people had a
mind to work."*

Here is what I want you to notice about Nehemiah's response. He did not ignore the mockery. He did not pretend it did not sting. He did not call a meeting to craft a public relations strategy. He did not go down from the wall to confront Sanballat directly.

He prayed. And then he kept building.

He took the hurt, the anger, the sting of being publicly laughed at — and he turned it into a prayer. He handed the offense to God. And then, without a word to the mockers, he picked up the next stone.

And the result? The entire wall was joined together up to half its height.

In the face of ridicule. Under the sound of laughter. With the mockers still standing there. They built to half-height. Because the people had a mind to work.

***"A mind to work." Not a
feeling to work. Not ideal
conditions to work. A mind.
A settled, deliberate, non-
negotiable decision that
what God started was going
to get finished.***

That phrase — a mind to work — is one of the most important phrases in the entire book. It is not talking about motivation. It is not talking about inspiration. It is talking about a decision that has been made in advance, before the mockers show up, before the feelings go flat, before the results are visible. A mind to work means: I have already decided. The laughter does not change the decision. The results do not change the decision. The decision has been made.

Nehemiah did not wait until he felt like building. He built anyway. And the wall went up.



Where You Feel This

Let me ask you something directly.

Is there something God told you to build — inside your ministry, your small group, your team, your family — that you have quietly put down because of what someone said? Not a dramatic resignation. Not a

public exit. Just a slow, quiet withdrawal of the energy you used to bring. The idea you stopped mentioning in meetings because nobody picked it up. The vision you stopped praying out loud because it felt embarrassing to keep believing for something that was not happening.

Or maybe the mockery never came from anyone else at all. Maybe it came from the gap itself — the gap between what you believed and what you can see. You looked at the results and the results looked back at you with Tobiah's voice: if even a fox goes up on it, the whole thing will collapse.

Here is what I need you to hear as a lay leader specifically: the person who laughs at what God told you to build has no heritage, no right, and no memorial in what God is doing through your ministry. Their opinion was not consulted when God gave you the assignment. Their approval is not required for the assignment to be completed. They are standing outside the work site making noise. You are on the wall. Keep building.

But I also want to acknowledge something that does not get said often enough in books like this one. The mockery that comes from inside your own head — the internal critic who measures every effort against every result and finds the work wanting — is often harder to deal with than any external voice. Because you cannot walk away from your own thoughts the way you can walk away from a difficult conversation.

The way Nehemiah dealt with the external mockers is the same way you deal with the internal ones: prayer and perseverance. You take the discouraging thought and you turn it into a prayer. You do not argue with it. You do not try to reason your way out of it. You hand it to God. And then you pick up the next stone.



The Mental Health Moment

There is something worth understanding about why mockery hurts the way it does — and it has nothing to do with thin skin or weak faith.

Researchers studying social pain have documented that public humiliation activates the same regions of the brain as physical injury. Mockery does not just feel bad emotionally. It registers neurologically the way a burn registers. The body processes the wound of being laughed at in front of others as a genuine threat — because in the ancient world, and in the social worlds most of us inhabit, exclusion and ridicule carried real survival consequences.

What this means practically is that when you feel the sting of being mocked for your ministry, you are not being oversensitive. You are being human. The wound is real. And the fact that the wound is real does not make you unsuitable for the assignment.

What it means for Nehemiah's builders is even more instructive. The mockers were not attacking the wall. They were attacking the builders' belief in the wall. They were trying to trigger enough social pain — enough shame and embarrassment and fear of looking foolish — that the builders would put down the stones themselves. The wall was never going to fall to

Tobiah's fox. But the builders' confidence in the wall might fall to Tobiah's words.

Nehemiah understood this intuitively. He did not address the architecture. He addressed the spirit. Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord. The God who is great and awesome is the same God who commissioned this wall. And the God who commissioned it will see it through.

When the internal critic starts speaking in Tobiah's voice, the answer is not positive thinking. The answer is the same thing Nehemiah gave his builders: remember the Lord. Return your attention to the One who gave you the assignment and away from the voice that is questioning whether the assignment is possible. This is not denial of the difficulty. It is recalibration of the perspective.

— • —

ONE SMALL CHANGE

Tonight, before you go to sleep, write down the name of the assignment God gave you. Not the results you have seen. Not the response you have gotten from others. Just the assignment itself. And then write one sentence underneath it: “This assignment came from God, not from the crowd.” Put it somewhere you will see it tomorrow morning. That is the first stone back on the wall.



Reflection Questions

Take your time with these. They are not designed to be answered quickly. If you are using this book with a team or small group, let every person answer at least one of these before moving to the next.

1. What is the mockery — external or internal — that has most affected your confidence in the assignment God gave you? When did it start, and how has it changed the way you show up to your ministry?

2. Nehemiah's people had "a mind to work" — a decision made in advance that was not dependent on feelings or results. Have you made that decision about your assignment? What would it look like to make it now?

3. Prayer was Nehemiah's first response to mockery, not his last resort. How does your prayer life function in relation to the pressures of your ministry — as a first response or as an emergency measure? What would change if it moved earlier in your process?



A Prayer for the Builder Under Mockery

Lord, the laugh got loud. And if I am honest, some days I can still hear it when the room is quiet. I need You to do what You did for Nehemiah's builders — not silence the mockers, but give me a mind to work in spite of them.

Remind me today that the assignment did not originate with the crowd. It came from You. And it does not require the approval of the people who oppose it. Turn the reproach over to You — I am done carrying it. And give me the next stone to lay.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

So Much Rubbish

The Attack: Discouragement • The Response: Honest
Assessment and Renewed Strength

***Nehemiah did not let the attack
define the assignment.
Discouragement did not define it.***

The Attack

Mockery is loud. You can identify it. You can push back. You can take it to God in prayer and pick up the next stone.

Discouragement is different. It does not announce itself. It does not come from outside the camp in the form of Sanballat's taunting voice. It settles into your bones while you are still holding the trowel. It speaks in your own voice. And it does not say stop building. It

says something quieter and more devastating than that. It says why bother.

By the time we reach Nehemiah 4:10, the mockers are still there. The threats are still real. But now the attack has shifted from the outside to the inside. And the people who are speaking are not the enemies. They are the builders themselves.

Nehemiah 4:10 (NKJV)

"Then Judah said, 'The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall.'"

Stop there. Read it again slowly. These are not the people who laughed at the wall. These are the people who answered Nehemiah's call in chapter two with "let us rise up and build." They showed up. They started. And now they are staring at the full scope of what was actually destroyed and the words they say out loud are: we cannot do this.

What happened between the enthusiasm of chapter two and the exhaustion of chapter four? They got a good look at the rubbish. And the rubbish was bigger than the vision prepared them for.

That is exactly how discouragement works in a lay leader's life. The vision gets you started. The initial yes is full of energy. But somewhere between the starting line and the halfway point, you stop looking at the destination and start looking at the pile. And the pile is enormous. The pile is the ministry that is not growing the way you believed it would. The pile is the people who left. The pile is the budget that did not come through. The pile is the years of faithful service with no visible fruit. The pile is the gap between what you believed God said and what you can see with your eyes right now.

And the strength is failing. Because it always fails eventually when the pile is the only thing in view.

What Nehemiah Did

Nehemiah 4:14 (NKJV)

"And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, 'Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.'"

Isaiah 40:28–31 (NKJV)

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Here is the first thing I want you to notice. When Nehemiah heard the workers' outcry, he did not pretend it away. He did not rebuke them for their honesty. He did not tell them to just have more faith and stop talking about the rubbish.

He acknowledged the reality. And then he recalibrated the perspective.

Do not be afraid. Remember the Lord. Not remember the vision. Not remember how far you have come. Remember the Lord — great and awesome. Because the problem with discouragement is not that the rubbish is not real. The problem is that when the rubbish fills your field of vision, God gets small. And a small-looking God cannot sustain the faith required to keep building.

Isaiah 40 gives us the theology behind Nehemiah's leadership. God never faints. God never grows weary. He gives power to the weak. He increases the strength

of those who have no might. And the promise of verse 31 is not for the strong. It is for the depleted. Those who wait on the Lord shall exchange their strength for His. That is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word translated renew — to exchange. You come to God empty. You leave with what He has.

***The eagle does not generate
its own lift. It finds the
thermal and spreads its
wings. Waiting on the Lord is
finding the thermal.***

And then Nehemiah did something else that is just as important as the spiritual recalibration. He reorganized the work. He positioned people strategically. He put families together so they were fighting for the people they loved most. He adjusted the strategy. Not because the assignment changed. Because the season demanded a different approach.

Sometimes the answer to discouragement is not more willpower pressed in the same direction. Sometimes it is the wisdom to find a sustainable rhythm that lets you keep going.



Where You Feel This

I want to ask you a question that requires honesty to answer well. And I want you to sit with it before you move on.

When is the last time you told God the truth about how hard this is?

Not in a general way. Not the sanitized version that sounds appropriately spiritual. The actual truth. The strength is failing. There is so much rubbish I am not sure I can do this.

The Church has sometimes created a culture where that kind of honesty feels like a lack of faith. Where naming the discouragement feels like a betrayal of the

vision. But the workers of Judah named it. And God did not strike them down for naming it. He sent Nehemiah to address it. You cannot address what nobody will admit.

What is the rubbish in your ministry right now? The thing that, if you are honest, is bigger than you expected when you started? The gap between the vision and the visible results that has been quietly draining your confidence without anyone around you knowing it?

Name it. Not to everyone. But to God. And then ask Him the same thing the depleted workers of Nehemiah's day needed: recalibrate my perspective. Help me remember You — great and awesome — rather than the pile. Because the pile is real, but You are bigger. And the strength that finishes walls does not come from inside me. It comes from waiting on You.

The Mental Health Moment

Therapists and organizational researchers have a name for what Nehemiah's workers were experiencing. They call it the implementation dip — the well-documented phenomenon where morale and confidence drop sharply in the middle of a significant project once the full scope of the work becomes visible.

Here is the critical insight: the implementation dip is not a sign that the project was wrong. It is a predictable stage of any work that matters. The couple renovating a house hits it the day they knock down the first wall and find mold behind the drywall. The runner training for a marathon hits it around week seven when the miles stop feeling manageable. The lay leader hits it around month four when the initial excitement has worn off and the results have not yet arrived.

The people who get through the implementation dip are not the ones with the most willpower. They are the ones with the clearest sense of why they are building.

Nehemiah understood this. He did not just tell the people to work harder. He reminded them of who they were working for. Your sons. Your daughters. Your families. Your houses. He put a face on the assignment when the assignment started feeling abstract.

When the rubbish feels overwhelming, the practical move is to go back to the specific human beings your ministry is for. Not the program. The people. The child in your Sunday school class who draws pictures of Jesus and brings them to you. The small group member who told you last month that your group is the only community they have. The family that started coming to church because of the outreach you organized. Get specific. Put a face on it. Because discouragement thrives in the abstract and withers in the specific.

— • —

ONE SMALL CHANGE

Write down one specific piece of rubbish in your assignment — one honest thing that is harder than you expected. And then write this sentence directly next to it: “This rubbish is not the assignment. It is part of the assignment.” The rubbish is not proof that God was wrong. It is evidence that the work is real. And then write the name of one specific person your ministry is for. Put a face on the assignment today.



Reflection Questions

- 1.** What is the rubbish in your current assignment that you have been reluctant to name honestly? What has holding that in cost you emotionally and spiritually?
- 2.** Nehemiah's first response to discouraged builders was to tell them to remember the Lord — not remember the vision, but remember God Himself.

What does it look like practically to “remember the Lord” in the middle of your most discouraging moments in ministry?

3. Who is the specific person or group of people your ministry is for? How would naming them out loud change the way you carry the discouragement of the current season?



A Prayer for the Builder in the Rubbish

Lord, I am going to be honest with You the way Judah was honest with Nehemiah. The strength is failing. There is so much rubbish I cannot always see the wall through it. And I need You to do what You promised in Isaiah 40 — give power to the weak, increase strength to those who have no might.

Recalibrate my perspective today. Help me remember You — great and awesome — rather than the pile. And

help me put a face on the assignment when it starts
feeling abstract. Because the rubbish is part of what
You called me into. And the God who brought me to it
will bring me through it.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Fight for Your House

The Attack: Fear • The Response: Remember the Lord
and Fight

***Nehemiah did not let the attack
define the assignment. Fear did not
define it.***

The Attack

Two attacks down. And both of them — the mockery in chapter four and the discouragement in the same chapter — were attacks you could name. You could identify where they were coming from. You could point at Sanballat and say: that is the mocker. You could look at the pile and say: that is the discouragement.

This week's attack is harder to identify because it does not wear a clear label. It comes in the middle of the

night. It speaks in your own voice. And it does not feel like an attack. It feels like reasonable, responsible, realistic concern.

It is called fear.

Nehemiah 4:11 tells us the exact tactic: the adversaries said they would come into the midst of the workers and kill them and cause the work to cease — without warning, without being seen. And verse 12 tells us it worked: the Jews who lived near the enemy came and reported it to the builders ten times over. From every direction, the same message: they will be against you wherever you turn.

Ten times. Ten repetitions of the same threatening whisper from ten different directions until the thing that is feared feels not just possible but inevitable.

That is the anatomy of a fear campaign. Not one big attack. Not a single dramatic threat. Just the same threatening thought, delivered repeatedly, from multiple angles, until your nervous system has accepted it as certainty.

Does that sound familiar? The same worst-case scenario playing on repeat at 2AM. The same what-if circling back every time the ministry gets hard. The same sense that whatever you are building is fragile, exposed, and about to be destroyed by something you cannot see coming.

Fear does not attack the wall. It attacks your belief that the wall can survive.



What Nehemiah Did

Nehemiah 4:14 (NKJV)

"And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, 'Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.'"

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Nehemiah gave his people three things in one sentence. Stop the fear. Remember the Lord. Fight for the specific people and things that matter.

The sequence is not accidental. He did not tell them to fight first. He told them to remember the Lord first. Because a person fighting from fear fights differently than a person fighting from faith. Fear-driven fighting is reactive, desperate, and exhausting. Faith-driven fighting is deliberate, purposeful, and sustained.

And Paul's word to Timothy cuts right to the source. The spirit of fear does not come from God. That does not mean the fear is not real. It means its origin is not Heaven. When the loop starts playing — when the worst-case scenario starts feeling inevitable — you are not receiving intelligence from God about your future. You are receiving a campaign from the enemy about what he wants you to believe about your future.

A campaign can be countered. A whisper can be silenced. The weapon that silences it is the revealed truth of who God actually is — not positive thinking, not willpower, but the specific, deliberate act of turning your attention from the threat to the One who is greater than the threat.

And then Nehemiah did something brilliant. He made the fight personal. He named what they were fighting for. Not the wall. Their sons. Their daughters. Their wives. Their houses. He put a face on the fight. Because fear is almost always about something vague and looming and nameless. And the moment you name what you are actually fighting for, the fight gets traction.



Where You Feel This

Let me ask you where the fear is in your ministry right now.

Not the surface fear — the one you can name easily, the one that sounds like reasonable concern. The deeper fear. The one that wakes you up. The one that plays on repeat when the ministry gets quiet. The one that sounds, if you are honest, something like this: what if I gave everything to this and nothing came of it? What if I believed God said this and I was wrong? What if the people I am supposed to be reaching never come? What if I am not enough for what this assignment requires?

That fear is a campaign. It is the same threatening message delivered in your own voice, at your most vulnerable hour, from the most convincing possible source. And the reason it is so convincing is that it sounds like honest self-assessment. It sounds like wisdom. It sounds like the responsible thing to feel.

But here is what Nehemiah's response teaches a lay leader: the fear does not get the final vote. God does. And God's vote was cast when He gave you the assignment. He does not assign tasks to people He does not equip. He does not call you to a wall and then

abandon you to the fear campaign that tries to get you off it.

Remember the Lord. Not the threat. Not the worst-case scenario. Not the ten repetitions of the same whisper. The Lord — great and awesome. And then put a face on the fight. Name the specific person, the specific calling, the specific assignment that the fear is trying to get you to abandon. Because you cannot fight for something nameless. But you can fight for a person. You can fight for a child. You can fight for a family. You can fight for the one specific thing God put in your hands.



The Mental Health Moment

There is a clinical name for what the enemy did to Nehemiah's builders in chapter four. It is called anticipatory anxiety — the brain's tendency to treat a vividly imagined future threat as a present-tense reality, triggering the full physiological stress

response to something that has not happened and may never happen.

The body does not distinguish between an actual threat and one the mind generates in high definition. Which means the ten repetitions of the fear message — they will be against you wherever you turn — were enough to create a full-scale crisis in the nervous system of Nehemiah's workers without the enemy moving a single soldier.

The practical implication is this: if you have been running the same fear scenario repeatedly, your body is already experiencing the physiological effects of a threat that may never materialize. You are carrying the weight of a disaster that exists only in the anticipation of it. And that weight is real, regardless of whether the feared outcome ever arrives.

Philippians 4:6–7 gives us the most direct mental health instruction in all of Scripture for this moment. Be anxious for nothing. In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which

surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Greek word for guard is a military term — it means to stand sentinel, to post a guard. The peace of God is not a feeling that drifts in on good days. It is a guard posted at the door of your mind that keeps the fear campaign from setting up permanent residence.

The thanksgiving piece is not incidental. Gratitude activates areas of the brain that quiet the alarm center. Giving thanks while casting the care to God is not just spiritual obedience. It is how the mind gets off the loop.

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ONE SMALL CHANGE

Write down the specific fear that has been looping most this week. One sentence. Name it honestly. Then write directly underneath it the name of the person or the calling you are actually fighting for. Put a face on the fight. And then write: “The Lord is greater than this

fear, and what He gave me is worth fighting for.” Read it out loud. Fear loses power when spoken back to with truth.



Reflection Questions

- 1.** What is the fear campaign running in your life related to your ministry assignment? How many times has the same fear thought come to you this week? Can you identify it as a campaign rather than a certainty?
- 2.** Nehemiah told his people to remember the Lord before he told them to fight. How does the order of those two things matter? What happens when we fight from fear rather than from a fresh remembrance of who God is?
- 3.** What is the specific person, family, or calling that you are actually fighting for? Name them. How does

putting a face on the assignment change the way you carry the fear?



A Prayer for the Builder Under Fear

Lord, the campaign has been loud. And I am going to be honest about how many times I have heard it this week. The whisper has come more than once. And some days it has felt less like a lie and more like a forecast.

But Your Word says You have not given me a spirit of fear. So I am returning this one to the enemy it came from. And I am asking You to post Your guard at the door of my mind — the peace that surpasses understanding. Help me remember You today. Not the threat. You. Great and awesome. The One who assigned the work and has never once reconsidered the assignment. And help me put a face on the fight, so I know what I am holding the wall for.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Sword and Trowel

The Attack: Exhaustion • The Response: Adjust the
Strategy

***Nehemiah did not let the attack
define the assignment. Exhaustion
did not define it.***

The Attack

Three weeks into this book, and every attack we have walked through has had a shape to it. Mockery has a voice. Discouragement has a pile. Fear has a whisper. You can identify each of them. You can name them. You can take them to God in prayer and push back.

This week's attack does not announce itself that way. It does not come with a voice or a pile or a whisper. It just shows up in your body one morning — in your

bones, in your eyes, in the heaviness that does not lift even after a full night of sleep.

Exhaustion.

Not the tired you feel after a productive day. Not the satisfied weariness that comes from giving your best to something that matters. The accumulated, compressive, nothing-left kind of tired that comes from carrying more than a human being was designed to carry for longer than a human being was designed to carry it.

By Nehemiah 4:21–23, the builders have been working in rotating shifts from before sunrise to after dark. They have been sleeping in their clothes. Nobody has gone home. Nobody has changed. And the text tells us they were doing this from daybreak until the stars appeared.

This is what sustained ministry pressure actually looks like in a lay leader's life. You have been showing up for months — maybe years. You have been carrying the weight of the ministry on top of a full-time job, a

family, a household, and a personal life that has quietly shrunk to accommodate the assignment. And the accumulated weight of all of it has brought you to a place where the trowel feels like it weighs forty pounds and the distance between where you are and where God said you were going feels longer than it did when you started.

That is not weakness. That is physics.



What Nehemiah Did

Nehemiah 4:17–18 (NKJV)

"Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other hand held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side while he built."

1 Kings 19:5–6 (NKJV)

"Then as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, 'Arise and eat.' Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again."

I want you to hold two images side by side for a moment.

The first is from Nehemiah 4: a builder with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. Building and armed at the same time. Not sequentially — not build for a season and then fight for a season.

Simultaneously. One hand doing the work. The other hand holding the weapon.

The second is from 1 Kings 19: Elijah under a juniper tree. The prophet who just called down fire from Heaven on Mount Carmel, who outran the king's chariot, who was by any measure one of the most anointed men alive — sitting in the desert asking God to let him die because he is too tired to keep going.

And God's response to the burned-out prophet is not a rebuke, not a theological correction, not a call to more discipline. It is an angel with bread and water. Arise and eat. Because the journey is too great for you in your own strength.

Both images are true. Both are necessary. The sword and trowel tell us how to carry the sustained weight of a long assignment. The juniper tree tells us what God does when the sustained weight has brought us to the end of our own reserves.

Hold the sword. Hold the trowel. Both hands occupied. And when the journey becomes too great — because it will, because God never designed you to run indefinitely on stored energy alone — receive what He sends. Arise. Eat. Rest. And then go again in a strength that is not your own.

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Where You Feel This

Let me ask you which hand you have let go of.

Some lay leaders reading this chapter are all trowel and no sword. You have been working faithfully, showing up consistently, carrying the ministry with diligence. But the prayer life has gone thin. The Word is distant. The spiritual disciplines that once fueled the work have quietly been crowded out by the work itself. You are building hard but spiritually unarmed. And you are wondering why the enemy keeps gaining ground even while you keep showing up.

Others are all sword and no trowel. You have been praying and warring and interceding — but you have not actually been doing the work. Fear or discouragement or exhaustion has paralyzed the activity. You are spiritually oriented but practically stalled. The wall is not going up because the trowel is not in your hand.

Nehemiah's strategy requires both hands occupied with purpose. The work and the weapon are not separate assignments. They are the same assignment

carried at the same time, in the strength that God provides for the long middle of a sustained calling.

And if you are at the juniper tree right now — if the honest answer is that both hands are empty and you are too tired to pick up either one — then I want you to hear what God said to Elijah. Not: get up and be more disciplined. Not: push through with what you have left. Arise and eat. The journey is too great for you in your own strength. That is not a verdict on your fitness for the assignment. It is an invitation to receive what only God can give.



The Mental Health Moment

What Elijah experienced under the juniper tree has a clinical name. It sits at the intersection of what researchers call compassion fatigue and decision fatigue — the documented degradation of emotional capacity and cognitive function that occurs when a

person has been giving from their reserves for an extended period without adequate restoration.

The research from multiple institutions studying high-demand caregivers, first responders, and ministry leaders consistently shows the same pattern: the degradation is not a character flaw. It is a physiological reality. A brain and body running on depleted resources perform measurably worse at the same tasks they performed well when fully resourced. And the recovery from deep depletion is not rapid. It requires genuine rest, genuine nourishment, and time — not just a longer sleep cycle or a weekend off.

God knew this about Elijah. He did not give him one meal and then immediately send him back to the battlefield. He let him sleep again after the first meal. He came back a second time with food and water. And only after two cycles of genuine nourishment did He begin speaking to Elijah about the next assignment.

The application for a depleted lay leader is straightforward: sustainable ministry is not built on heroic depletion. It is built on the rhythm of the sword

and the trowel — mid-course restoration woven into the work itself rather than saved as a reward for finishing. The branch does not visit the vine when it is convenient. It abides. Continuously. Because the fruit that comes from abiding cannot be produced by striving.

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ONE SMALL CHANGE

Identify which hand you have let go of — trowel or sword. Write it down honestly. And then schedule one mid-week refueling moment this week. Not at the end of the week. Mid-week. Wednesday morning. Thirty minutes before God with no agenda except to make the exchange — your empty for His full. One scheduled stop is not retreat. It is the adjustment that keeps the wall going up.

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Reflection Questions

- 1.** Which hand have you let go of — the trowel or the sword? What has that cost you in the current season of your ministry?

- 2.** Elijah's burnout came immediately after his greatest victory. Have you ever experienced a collapse after a significant spiritual high? What does that pattern teach you about the rhythm of sustainable ministry?

- 3.** What does “abiding” look like practically in your current life? Not what it should look like ideally — what it actually looks like. And what is the smallest sustainable change you could make this week to stay more consistently connected to the vine?



A Prayer for the Builder Running on Empty

Lord, I am at the juniper tree. And I am not going to pretend otherwise. The strength is failing and both hands feel empty and the distance between where I am and where You said I was going feels longer today than it did when I started.

So I am asking for what You sent Elijah. Not a rebuke. Not a pep talk. Bread and water. The thing that restores what the journey has taken out. Let me rest in You today. Let me receive what I cannot generate. And when the rest is done — give me the sword and trowel again. Because the assignment is not finished. And You are the God who finishes what He starts.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Trouble Inside the Camp

The Attack: Internal Pressure • The Response: Shepherd
the People

***Nehemiah did not let the attack
define the assignment. Internal
pressure did not define it.***

The Attack

Five chapters into this book, and every attack we have walked through has come from the outside.

Sanballat's mockery. The discouragement of the rubbish pile. The fear campaign whispered from the surrounding enemy. The grinding exhaustion of sustained work under sustained pressure.

All external. All identifiable as "them against us." All attacks that, as painful as they are, have the clarifying effect of unifying the team. There is nothing quite like

an outside threat to remind a group of people that they are on the same side.

This chapter is different. This week the attack does not come from outside the camp. It comes from inside.

Nehemiah 5 opens not with the voice of Sanballat but with the voice of the people themselves — and they are not crying out against the enemy. They are crying out against each other. The poor among the builders are being exploited by the wealthy among the builders. Families are mortgaging their homes and their fields just to buy food. Children are being sold into servitude to pay debts. And the men doing the exploiting are not Tobiah's allies. They are Nehemiah's own nobles and rulers.

There is a unique weight to trouble that comes from inside. When the enemy attacks from the outside, there is clarity to it. A sense of us-versus-them that actually strengthens the community. But when the attack comes from within — from people who are supposed to be on the same side, who answered the

same call, who stood at the same wall — it carries a different kind of devastation. It does not just threaten the work. It threatens the reason for the work.



What Nehemiah Did

Nehemiah 5:6–7 (NKJV)

"And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, 'Each of you is exacting usury from his brother.' So I called a great assembly against them."

Matthew 18:15 (NKJV)

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother."

I want you to notice three things about how Nehemiah handled the trouble inside the camp.

First, he felt the anger. He did not suppress it. He did not perform a calm he did not have. Verse six says he became very angry. The injustice grieved him and it made him angry. That is a healthy, appropriate response to real wrongdoing inside a community. Anger in the face of injustice is not a spiritual failure. It is a sign that your conscience is working.

Second, he thought before he spoke. After serious thought. That is the gap that made everything else possible. He felt the anger fully, and he thought carefully before he opened his mouth. Not to suppress the response. To make sure the response would produce fruit rather than further damage. The serious thought between the emotion and the action is where wisdom is forged.

Third, he confronted the right people at the right level. He did not comfort the victims without addressing the perpetrators. He went to the source of the injustice. He called the assembly. He demanded

restitution. And he set the example himself by forgiving debts from his own household.

The trouble inside the camp required all three. The emotional honesty. The careful thought. And the courageous, direct address of the actual problem at the level where the problem actually existed.



Where You Feel This

This may be the hardest chapter in the book to read. Because the wounds that come from inside the camp — from people who were supposed to be on the same side — are the wounds that cut the deepest and heal the slowest.

Maybe it is a conflict on your ministry team that has been simmering for months and nobody has been willing to name it directly. Maybe it is an injustice inside your community that everyone can see but nobody has been willing to confront. Maybe it is

something that was done to you by someone inside the church — a betrayal, a broken trust, an offense that was supposed to be resolved and never was.

Or maybe you are on the other side of this. Maybe you are the leader who knows that something is happening inside your ministry area that you have been avoiding addressing because the addressing feels harder than the avoiding.

Either way, Nehemiah's response applies. Name the trouble. Think seriously before you speak. And then address it at the level where it actually exists. Not the surface symptom. The source.

Jesus gave us the process in Matthew 18. Go to the person directly. Alone first. If that does not work, bring one or two others. If that does not work, bring it to the broader community. The process is not comfortable. But it is the process that makes the wall keep going up. Because a community that cannot address its internal wounds will eventually be stopped by them, regardless of how well it is handling the external attacks.



The Mental Health Moment

Organizational psychologists who study team dynamics have documented something they call team rupture — the specific psychological damage that occurs when betrayal or injustice comes from inside a close community rather than from an outside source.

When the threat comes from outside, the natural group response is to bond together. The outside attack is clarifying. But when the threat comes from inside — from someone who was supposed to be on the same side — it triggers what researchers describe as a betrayal response. And the betrayal response activates neurological pathways that are qualitatively different from those triggered by external threat. The wound is deeper. The recovery takes longer. And the damage to the trust architecture of the community — the shared belief that the people around you can be counted on — is more difficult to repair than almost any other kind of organizational damage.

David named this in Psalm 55 with more emotional precision than most clinical language can achieve. He said: if it were an enemy who reproached me, I could bear it. But it was you, my equal, my companion, my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked to the house of God.

The wound of being hurt by a ministry companion is the deepest wound in the camp. And the only path through it is the path Nehemiah modeled: honest acknowledgment, serious thought, and direct address. Not avoidance. Not suppression. Not the performance of a unity that is not there. The actual, courageous work of addressing what is actually wrong.

The wall cannot be finished on a foundation of unresolved internal conflict. And the same God who gave Nehemiah the courage to confront the nobles will give you the courage to address what needs to be addressed in your community.

ONE SMALL CHANGE

Name one internal conflict or tension in your ministry community that has been suppressed or covered over. Write it down honestly — just for yourself and God right now. Then write where the trouble actually originates. Not the symptom. The source. And then ask God one question: what is the serious-thought step I need to take before I open my mouth? Because Nehemiah did not speak until he had thought seriously. That gap is where wisdom lives.

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Reflection Questions

1. Is there a conflict or injustice inside your ministry community that has been covered over rather than addressed? What has kept you from addressing it directly? What has that avoidance cost the community?

2. Nehemiah felt the anger before he thought seriously. Have you ever let the anger move you to speak before the serious thought happened? What was the result? What would the outcome have looked like if the serious thought had come first?

3. Who in your ministry community is carrying the weight of something that needs to be named? What would it cost you to be the one who names it wisely and courageously? What would it cost the community if you don't?



A Prayer for the Leader Carrying Trouble Inside

Lord, this one is harder than the others. Because the wound from inside the camp is the wound I did not see coming. And the anger I feel — or maybe the numbness, or the grief, or the exhaustion of carrying it quietly for so long — is real.

Give me what Nehemiah had. The emotional honesty to feel it fully. The wisdom to think seriously before I speak. And the courage to address what actually needs to be addressed, at the level where it actually lives. Not to win. Not to wound. But to rebuild what has been broken so the wall can keep going up.

And heal what I cannot fix. The parts of the wound that are beyond my ability to address — I release those to You. You are the Shepherd of this community. And what the shepherd of the community cannot reach, the Chief Shepherd can.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

Our God Will Fight for Us

The Attack: Scattered Pressure • The Response: Rally to
the Trumpet

***Nehemiah did not let the attack
define the assignment. Scattered
pressure did not define it. The
assignment was defined by God —
and God finished it.***

The Attack

Six chapters. Six attacks.

Mockery. Discouragement. Fear. Exhaustion. Trouble
inside the camp.

And now we arrive at the final chapter — and the final
attack is the most sophisticated of all. Because
Sanballat does not send a new weapon. He sends five

different versions of the same weapon from five different angles simultaneously. Four letters. A rumor. An invitation to a meeting. An attempt to lure Nehemiah into the temple. He tries everything he has left in the last possible window before the wall is finished.

The timing is not accidental. By the time chapter six opens, the wall is almost done. Verse one tells us there are no breaks left in it — only the doors still unhung. The finish line is visible. The work is so close to completion that a motivated team could cross it in days.

And it is precisely then that the final assault comes. Not at the beginning when the rubble was high and the momentum was low. Not in the middle when the exhaustion was deepest. At the end. When the completion is close enough to see.

That is the pattern of scattered pressure in the final mile. It does not come as a single identifiable threat. It comes from multiple directions at once — the meeting invitation that sounds reasonable, the rumor that

needs to be addressed, the concern that requires a response. Individually, each one looks like something that should be attended to. Together, they are designed to pull you off the wall long enough for the momentum to stall and the completion to be delayed indefinitely.

Nehemiah 6:3 (NKJV)

"So I sent messengers to them, saying, 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?'"

Four times Sanballat sent messengers. Four times Nehemiah sent back the same answer. I am doing a great work and I cannot come down.

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What Nehemiah Did

Nehemiah 6:15–16 (NKJV)

"So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. And

it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God."

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

He did not come down. Four invitations. Four opportunities to leave the wall for what sounded like a reasonable conversation. And four times he sent back the same refusal. Not hostile. Not defensive. Simply unmovable. I am doing a great work and I cannot come down.

And then — in one of the most extraordinary sentences in all of Scripture — verse fifteen: so the wall was finished. In fifty-two days.

From rubble to completed wall. Under mockery, discouragement, fear, exhaustion, internal conflict, and scattered pressure from every direction. In fifty-two days, the wall that everyone said was impossible was standing in Jerusalem where ash had been.

And verse sixteen tells us what happened when the enemies heard about it. They were disheartened. Not because Nehemiah defeated them in battle. Not because Israel raised an army. Because the wall was standing. The thing they said would never be finished was finished. And looking at it, they could perceive something that all their strategy and all their pressure had not been able to prevent: this work was done by God.

The finished wall was the testimony. Not a report about the work. The actual standing wall, right where the rubble used to be.

That is the promise behind every chapter of this book. Every day you stayed on the wall when the mockery said come down. Every week you kept building when the discouragement said the pile was too big. Every night you refused to let the fear campaign define the future. Every season you picked up both the sword and the trowel when the exhaustion said put them both down. Every hard conversation you had the courage to have. Every invitation to come down that you answered with I cannot come down.

All of it is going toward a wall that is going to be finished. And when it is finished, the people who were watching are going to be able to see what you already knew: this work was done by God.



Where You Feel This

Let me ask you where you are in the race right now.

Some of you reading this chapter are in the early chapters of your assignment. The vision is fresh, the energy is present, and you picked up this book because you wanted to be ready for the attacks before they came. The best thing you can take from this chapter is this: the final pressure always comes at the end. Know that now. So when the invitation to come down arrives in the last mile, you will recognize it for what it is.

Some of you are in the middle chapters. The mockery has hit. The discouragement has set in. The fear is running. The exhaustion is real. You are somewhere between chapter two and chapter five, and the finish line is not yet visible. The best thing you can take from this chapter is the word in Philippians 1:6: He who began a good work in you will complete it. The God who started this assignment in you has not changed His mind about it. The middle chapters are not the end of the story.

And some of you are at the end. The wall is almost finished. The no-breaks-left-in-it moment is close.

And the pressure from multiple directions is at its most intense because the enemy knows that what he could not stop at the beginning and could not slow in the middle, he has one last chance to prevent now. This chapter is your specific word: do not come down. You are too close to the finish to leave the wall for any conversation, any invitation, any pressure — no matter how reasonable it sounds. Stay. Build. The wall will be finished.



The Mental Health Moment

The final-mile pressure that Nehemiah faced in chapter six has a parallel in what sports psychologists study in endurance athletes. In ultramarathon running, in open-water swimming, in any sustained high-demand effort, researchers have documented what they call the completion effect — the phenomenon where performance and psychological

resilience actually increase as the finish line comes into view.

But they have also documented its shadow: the completion vulnerability. The window just before the finish line, when the brain begins to anticipate the end of the effort, is also the window where distraction, doubt, and disruption have their highest impact. The athlete who is mentally finished — who has allowed themselves to believe the race is over before it is — is the most vulnerable to stumbling in the final miles.

The enemy knows this about human beings. And Sanballat's five-directional assault in Nehemiah chapter six is a textbook exploitation of the completion vulnerability. The wall was almost done. The builders were already beginning to exhale. And that was precisely when the scattered pressure came from every direction at once.

The protection against the completion vulnerability is what sports psychologists call a finishing posture — a deliberate decision, made in advance of the final push, about how you will respond to pressure in the last

mile. Nehemiah had already made that decision. Four times the invitation came and four times the answer was the same. He did not have to decide in the moment. He had already decided. And the decision held.

Your finishing posture for your current assignment is this: I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Say it now. Before the final pressure comes. Because the wall is going to be finished. And you are going to be on it when it is.

— • —

ONE SMALL CHANGE

Write down two things. First, name one wall that is close to finished in your current assignment. Say it out loud. Let yourself acknowledge that the work is almost done. And celebrate that. Second, write this sentence: “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down.” That is your finishing posture. Keep it somewhere you will see it when the last-mile

pressure comes. Because it is coming. And now you will know what to say.



Reflection Questions

- 1.** Where are you in the race right now — early chapters, middle chapters, or the final mile? How does knowing the timing of your current season change how you interpret the pressure you are under?
- 2.** What is your “Ono” — the invitation that sounds reasonable but is actually designed to pull you off the wall at the worst possible moment? How do you recognize it? What is your pre-decided answer?
- 3.** The finished wall was the testimony — not a report about the work, but the actual completed thing standing where the rubble used to be. What will the finished version of your current assignment say to the

people who are watching? Who needs to see what God finishes through you?



A Prayer for the Builder in the Final Mile

Lord, the finish line is close enough to see. And the pressure from every direction is at its highest. Thank You for warning me that this is how it works. That the final assault always comes at the end.

I am going to stay on the wall. Not because I am strong enough to finish this in my own strength — but because You began this work, and You finish what You begin, and You are not done yet.

Help me say it and mean it when the invitation comes: I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Give me Nehemiah's unmovable posture in the final mile. And when the wall is finished — let the people who see it perceive that this work was done by You.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

A FINAL WORD

The Wall Was Finished

Nehemiah 6:15 is one of the most quietly triumphant sentences in all of Scripture.

"So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days."

Fifty-two days. From rubble to completed wall. Under every attack this book has walked you through — every wave of mockery, discouragement, fear, exhaustion, internal conflict, and final-mile scattered pressure. In fifty-two days, the thing that everyone said was impossible was standing where ash had been.

And the enemies, when they heard about it, were disheartened. Not because Nehemiah had a better strategy than they did. Not because the builders were

stronger than the opposition. But because they perceived that this work was done by God.

That is the promise behind every chapter of this book. Every day you stayed when the mockery was loud. Every week you kept believing when the discouragement was deep. Every night you gave the fear back to God instead of letting it define the next day. Every season you carried both the sword and the trowel when the exhaustion said to put them both down. Every hard conversation you had the courage to have. Every invitation to come down that you answered with I cannot come down.

All of it is going toward a wall that is going to be finished. Your wall. The specific, God-given, nobody-else-can-build-it assignment that He placed in your hands when He called you to lead something inside His Church.

And when it is finished — when the last stone is laid and the doors are hung and the work is done — the people who are watching are going to be able to see what you already knew.

This work was done by God.

That is your testimony. Not the report about the work. The actual standing wall, right where the rubble used to be. And nobody who sees it will be able to argue with it. Because what God finishes, He signs.

Stay on the wall. The finish line is closer than it looks.

Preacher Dale

DON'T COME DOWN

A Challenge to Lay Leaders

Before you close this book, I want to ask you to do one thing.

Name the wall.

Not in a general way. Not “I want to serve God better” or “I want to make a difference.” Specifically. The assignment with a name and a shape and a cost and a set of people it is for. The thing God put in your hands when He called you to lead.

Write it down. Right now. Here in the margin of this page if you have to.

And then write this underneath it:

***I am doing a great work and I
cannot come down.***

That is your declaration. Not arrogance. Not self-promotion. The simple, settled, advance-decision of a person who knows where the assignment came from and has decided that the assignment is not going to be stopped by anything the enemy sends in the middle or at the end.

The Church needs lay leaders who will not come down. Who will hold the wall when the mockery is loud. Who will keep building when the pile seems insurmountable. Who will remember the Lord when the fear campaign runs. Who will carry both the sword and the trowel when the exhaustion says to put them both down. Who will address the trouble inside the camp with honesty and courage. Who will stay in the final mile when the scattered pressure comes from every direction at once.

That is you. It has always been you. God did not give the assignment to someone who was going to quit. He gave it to you. And He has never once reconsidered that decision.

So name the wall. Make the declaration. And stay on it.

The wall is going to be finished. And when it is — they are going to see that this work was done by God.

Don't come down.

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If this book has helped you stay on the wall, consider sharing it with another lay leader who needs to hear it. The builder who gave it to you believed in your assignment. Pass it on to someone who needs to believe in theirs.

The wall is going up. Stay on it.

**You said yes to the assignment.
You picked up the trowel.
And now the pressure is telling you to come down.**

The book of Nehemiah is not just an ancient construction project. It is the story of every leader who has ever been mobbed for the vision God gave them. Buried under a pile of dust/surround, paralyzed by fear in the middle of the night, running empty with too much wall left to build, wounded by someone who was supposed to be on the same side, or pulled in five directions at once in the final mile.

Sound familiar?

Still on the Wall walks lay leaders -deacons, ministry team members, small group leaders, worship team, children's workers, and every faithful volunteer who shows up when nobody is watching - through six weeks in the book of Nehemiah. Six attacks. Six responses. And one through-line that doesn't change:

Nehemiah did not let the attack define the assignment.

Neither will you.

SIX WEEKS, SIX ATTACKS: ONE WALL.

Week 1 - Mocked, But Still Building
Week 2 - So Much rubbish
Week 3 - Fight for Your House
Week 4 - Sword and Trowel
Week 5 - Trouble Inside the Camp
Week 6 - Our God Will Fight for Us



Preacher Dale is the pastor of Hope Church in Caledonia, Missouri and the host of Living Parables - a podcast and video series using story, Scripture, and real human experience to meet people where they live.
You're free to use the app! @PreacherDaleHopeChurch www.PreacherDaleHopeChurch.com

