



Series: ***BUILDING A CITY FOR GOD*** (Nehemiah)

## Responding to God's Word

By Matthew Black  
March 3, 2010  
Midweek Service  
Text: Nehemiah 10

“We will not neglect the house of our God” (Nehemiah 10:39)

**Introduction:** We want to see the Lord do a great work in our city, in your family and mine. I want Him to change people's lives. How can we do that? We find out from Nehemiah 10.

- I. **God has the plans for Hanover Park, and it involves you & God, so cheer up!** You are concerned for your family and your workplace and your community to be saved. You can't do it on your own. We can be encouraged that God is going to great things in our lives and community. Why?
  - A. **Because Jesus is the builder of the church—He's got the plans.** He's the Head. He's the Divine Architect. Jesus said, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). Jesus wants to begin by transforming your life, and then He wants to save your family and your friends and co-workers and family. Christ had a big vision for the world. We need to have a big vision for our community.
  - B. **Breath a sigh of relief, because God doesn't want you to try this alone.** Some toys say, “Parental Supervision Necessary”. God labels our life and relationships: “Divine Supervision Necessary”. Remember **Psalm 127:1**, “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain”. Without God we have no plan and no protection from the enemy! With Him we are secure!

**Transition:** We come to Nehemiah 10, and we have a group of people that have ignored God's word for 141 years. Jerusalem was a city that had been in neglect for roughly 141 years. People had given up on this wasteland of a town. It had been ransacked by pagans and forgotten. In many ways it parallels the Chicago area which is filled with paganism and self-love.

God graciously confronted them in His Word, and God's Word demanded a response.

- II. **God has spoken, and He cannot be ignored, so listen up!** The people of Nehemiah's day said, “And because of all this we make a sure covenant” (Nehemiah 9:38). Because of all of what? They had just finished reading what God wrote. Because God has spoken, “we make a sure covenant”.

- A. **If we ignore God, we will miss out on all God's good plans for us.**

**Explanation:** Remember all the blessings God promised to the children of Israel if they obeyed? They would have plenty to eat in the land. They would be safe from invaders. God would protect them and be their God.

**Illustration:** Here's a story that will help us understand how God wants to bless us: A young man was getting ready to graduate college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted.

As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautiful wrapped gift box.

Curious, but somewhat disappointed the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible. Angrily, he raised his voice at his father and said, "With all your money you give me a Bible?" and stormed out of the house, leaving the holy book. Many years passed and the young man became a very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day. Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care things.

When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search his father's important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. As he read those words, a car key dropped from an envelope taped behind the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words...PAID IN FULL !! How many times do we miss God's blessings because they are not packaged as we expected?

**Application:** When God speaks, we need to listen, because He wants to bless us. By ignoring God we miss out on all the blessings He wants to give us as His children.

**B. If we ignore God, He will let us make our own plans.** (This is dangerous!!!)

**Explanation:** Israel disobeyed God, and they ended up getting conquered by foreign kings and made slaves. What a mess it is when we go according to our own plans.

**Illustration:** Have you ever had your kids try to do something without following the instructions? Give them an egg or bottle of ketchup, or a paint can, and what happens?

**Note to parents: Don't trust your children with a can of paint unless you teach**

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The truth is, we don't know what we are doing. We've got to learn to listen to God and trust His plans. If you don't, the result is, you make a mess of your life.

**Application:** When you don't follow the Bible, you can make a mess in your relationships. Remember this, if you ever say, "I know God's Word says this, but..." You are creating your own **destructive plans** for your life.

**Illustration:** Has anyone ever heard of the "Apollo 13" mission of the space program? Perhaps you saw the film. En route to the moon, 200,000 miles from earth, one of the oxygen tanks exploded. They had a short supply of oxygen and had to do exactly what the engineers on earth were telling them. They couldn't question. They had to follow instructions. Had they taken the mission into their own hands, they would have died.



**Application questions:** What are some areas of your life in which you are making excuses and making your own plans for your life?

- How about **Bible reading**? Are you faithful to God's Word each day?
- How about **relationships**? Are you growing in Christlike character in how you approach your fellow believers, your co-workers, or are you creating your own plans? (1.) Are you reacting in anger? Depression? Are you blowing up? Clamming up?
- What are some **areas of struggle in your life** in which you've made a mess recently? Have you taken the time to make things right with God and with others.

Remember, it's not enough to confess your disobedience to God. You must confess and forsake it. Stop creating your own plans. They lead to destruction.

Verses to meditate on:

- **Proverbs 28:13**, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."
- **Galatians 6:7**, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"

III. **God has spoken to you, and you need to step up.** Look at who signed the covenant. "Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests" (**Nehemiah 9:38**).

A. **Who** needs to step up?

1. The **LEADERS** stepped up first! "on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests" (**Nehemiah 9:38**). The first 27 verses of the chapter all have the leaders names listed. We need leaders who love God's Word and are consistent in their lives to step up. If you think you might be leadership material in any area of the church, then step up and let any of the leadership know so we can plug you in!
2. **Every Person** and family, **Nehemiah 10:28**, "And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives,

their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding”.

Look at all the names that follow in the rest of the chapter. God put these faithful servant's names down. I'm sure they were ordinary people who loved God and wanted to make a difference. Do you want to make a difference? Why don't you start by getting involved in someone else's life. Get involved in helping others in the church. How can you do that? Well, that's the next point!

B. How can **You** practically step up and get involved in God's Work at Tabernacle?

1. **Unity**. Stay unified! **Nehemiah 10:29**, “They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law...” They all supported each other in their walk with God. Keep fellowship up, and you will keep unity up.

**Application:** We spoke of a “No Mask Zone” this past Sunday. Let's keep the masks off, keep the tears flowing, or the laughter going. We are a family. We need to help each other and be careful not to hurt each other.

2. **Purity**. Stay pure! We read in **Nehemiah 10:30-31** that every one vowed to keep their sons and daughters from marriage with unbelievers. They also vowed to keep God's Sabbath day holy not letting the buying and selling keep them from worshipping God on His day.

**(for reference, you don't need to read to congregation)**

**Verses 30-31**, “And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: 31 And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day”

**Application:** The people decided to live strictly according to the Word of God. This touched their family life and it also took part of their week. You must put God first if you are to be pure. Make sure you are meeting with Him each day. Be sure you are here for services and not doing other things. Don't make excuses for missing any of the services.

3. **Responsibility**. **Nehemiah 10:39** says it all. Look at their commitment. **“We will not neglect the house of our God”**. They want to see a city for God built among the pagan nations.

**Explanation:** If you look at Nehemiah 10 there are a lot of names of people who took responsibility for committing to God's plan for their lives and not neglecting God's Word. They were willing to write their names down and be accounted for. They were in on God's plans for them and they wanted every one to know it.

How can we put our names down?

- **Step up as a learner**. All of us have to begin somewhere. If you are a new Christian you need to sign up for a new believer's class. Perhaps you have never been baptized. We covenant with God after we are saved by taking the first step of obedience in baptism. If you are saved but not baptized, then you need to step up! See the pastor or myself if you are interested in a new believer's Bible study class.

- ***Step up as a leader.*** If you are willing to teach a new believer's Bible study please see pastor or myself. We will set you up so that you can mentor others. You don't need to have any degree in Bible—just a willing heart. You need to be a growing Christian saved at least one year. If you haven't taken the class, then you need to complete it first yourself.
- ***Step up as a lover of the brethren.*** If you look at the chart in your notes, we have all kinds of responsibilities for each other. (See the "One Another" chart). We need to serve one another and care for one another to be unified. There are 35 responsibilities listed, and 6 prohibitions on the chart. Take it home and digest it!

***Conclusion:*** We need to respond to God's Word like those in Nehemiah's day. After 141 years of desolation in Jerusalem they not only stepped up to build the walls. They stepped up to build each other and keep each other accountable in living out God's Word.

We need to respond to God's Word. If there were a fire alarm, and you slept through it, it could be tragic. Think of the people in Haiti buried under the rubble. When they heard footsteps around them they would bank on the walls underneath the rubble. Then they were saved. God has a plan for your life, for your family, for this church, for this city. Will you respond? If you want, we've given you a little tear off sheet you can fill out, if that helps you.

Will you "STEP UP"?

- I need to be baptized.
- I would like to sign up for a new believer's Bible study.
- I would like to be a new believer's Bible study leader.
- I would like to be a leader in some other area of the church: \_\_\_\_\_
- I will meditate on the 35 "One Another" commands of the NT and also the prohibitions.

If you've checked any of the first four, please give this to a deacon or the pastor.

# The "One Another's" of the New Testament

Listing of verse references to the Greek word ALLELOUS, translated "one another" or "each other")

## Accept one another

1. "Accept one another, just as Christ accepted us" (Rom. 15:17)
2. "Be at peace with each other" (Mk. 9:50)
3. "Live in harmony with one another" (Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 3:8)
4. "Bear with each other" (Col. 3:13)
5. "Be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Eph. 4:2)
6. "Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another" (Col. 3:16)
7. "Forgiving each other as God in Christ has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32)
8. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21)
9. "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (Js. 5:16)
10. "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another" (1 Pet. 5:5)

## Respect one another

11. "Outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10)
12. "When you come together to eat, wait for each other" (1 Cor. 11:33)
13. "Have equal concern for each other" (1 Cor. 12:25)
14. "Be kind and compassionate to one another" (Eph. 4:32)
15. "In humility, consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3)

## Have affection for one another

16. "Love one another" (John 13:34, & 12 other references)
17. "Love one another deeply from the heart" (1 Pet. 1:22 & 4:8)
18. "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 6:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Pet. 5:14)
19. "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Rom. 12:10)
20. "Make your love increase and overflow for each other" (1 Thess. 3:12)

## Teach / Encourage one another

21. "Instruct one another" (Rom. 15:14)
22. "Teach one another" (Col. 3:16)
23. "Admonish one another" (Col. 3:16)
24. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19)
25. "Build each other up" (1 Thess. 5:11)
26. "Stir up one another to love and good works," (Heb. 10:24)
27. "Encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near"
28. "Encourage one another daily" (Heb. 3:13)
29. "Encourage one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18)
30. "Encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11)

## Serve one another

31. "Wash one another's feet" (John 13:14)
32. "Through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13)
33. "Carry each other's burdens" (Gal. 6:2)
34. "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (1 Pet. 4:9)
35. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others" (1 Pet. 4:10)

## RELATIONSHIP BREAKERS

1. "Do not slander one another" (Js. 4:11)
2. "Do not lie to each other" (Col. 3:9)
3. "Don't grumble against each other" (Js. 5:9)
4. "Stop passing judgment on one another" (Rom. 14:13)
5. "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other" (Gal. 5:26)
6. "Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some" (Heb. 10:25)