

6 Strategies to Help You Live Above the Lies of the Enemy

The story of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem has always been an amazing portrayal to me of a man who was clearly committed to a vision that was obviously branded upon his heart! Unlike many, he did not just get a vision, but he walked it out, even in the face of grave difficulty that presented overwhelming challenges.

The entire story of Nehemiah is intriguing, and I would encourage you to go back and read it carefully as there are multiple messages that can be seen throughout the chronology presented in this awesome book of the Bible.

However, I want to focus on Nehemiah's ability to live and even build effectively in the midst of jeers, taunts and intense opposition from the enemies in his life.

Read Nehemiah 4:1-6:

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly irritated, and he mocked the Jews. He spoke before his relatives and the army of Samaria and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they fortifying themselves? Will they make sacrifices? Can they complete this in a day? Can they revive the burned-up stones out of the rubbish heaps?" Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Even what they are rebuilding, if even a fox climbed it, that would break down their stone wall." Hear, O our God, that we are despised. Turn their reproach back upon their own head, and give them as spoil in a land of captivity: No longer cover their iniquity nor blot out their sin, which is before You since they have made insults against the builders. So we rebuilt the wall until all of it was solidified up to half its height. The people had a passion

for the work.

After years of Jewish exile, Nehemiah led the third return to Jerusalem following that of Zerubbabel and Ezra, who had seen the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of the law. The temple was finished in 516 B.C., and it seems obvious that the restoration of the walls would be the next work. However, it was 70 years later, after the temple was rebuilt, that the walls were finally completed.

As we read this story, there are obvious obstacles that Nehemiah was facing, which would have clearly caused many to faint or completely stop before construction even began. In light of this, he secretly inspected the walls late at night to avoid planned opposition. We also see that there were certain noble men who were unwilling to help with the rebuilding of the wall, as they had their allegiances elsewhere. Beyond that, there was clearly planned opposition to stop this project in its infancy that had been placed so emphatically upon Nehemiah's heart.

Nehemiah's heart was heavily burdened for the restoration of Jerusalem's walls and its regained political prominence, the glory of the Lord among His people and the Persian Empire, as well as other nations/kingdoms. He was not just interested in this project; he was driven by it!

As a result, Nehemiah brought vision, prayer, God's involvement, an emperor's resources and great, bold leadership to accomplish a work that should have been completed at least 50 to 60 years earlier. Despite that, miraculously, the wall was completed in 52 days!

The opposition was intense, but Nehemiah and those with him refused to become prey to their enemies! As we reflect upon this story it helps us see what obstacles the Jews faced in rebuilding the walls, but also what resources our God has to rebuild not just walls, but even lives!

The enemy is a master at creating threatening distractions in our lives, especially when it relates to our destinies and callings. Sadly, many people have never learned to overcome or live above the lies of the enemy. Therefore, these are the woeful declarations of many in the church: "I'll never have the faith to step out in my calling; I'll never be happy; I'll always quit what I start; I'll never have a good marriage; I'll always live in lack; I'm not smart enough, pretty enough and so on."

It is vital for believers to find their approval and affirmation from the Lord, and not man, especially when it comes to walking out God's destiny for us! Our oneness with Christ does not insulate us from trials. In truth, it places us on a battlefield as it did Nehemiah, where we become equipped to destroy the works of darkness.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice insofar as you share in Christ's sufferings, so that you may rejoice and be glad also in the revelation of His glory" (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

Hear Paul's description of fighting from victory, despite the taunts of the enemy. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8-9). Here we see that God provides weapons for the battle, but we must take advantage of them!

Oftentimes we battle with dull instruments, and in turn, live in defeat and become exasperated. "If an iron piece is blunt and there is no one to sharpen it, then he must prevail with more strength; but wisdom is a benefit to succeed" (Eccl. 10:10). The place of defeat can be connected to sin, but more times than not, it is connected to our way of thinking and our wrong theology regarding whom we are in Christ and who He is in us. As a result, we embrace a realm of spiritual dullness.

In the following points I want to encourage you with some practical thoughts regarding how to live above the lies of the enemy and how to fulfill God's purposes in your life.

1. **Embrace your union with Christ.** Our strength comes from our divine union with Christ. "I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).
2. **Embrace and proclaim your identity and spiritual inheritance.** The enemy will attempt to strip you of your identity and spiritual inheritance. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).
3. **Resist the lies of the enemy.** The enemy will use lies in order to create chinks in our armor, which in turn, weaken us. "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). "Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).
4. **Realize that our battle scars prophecy of God's faithfulness in the midst of battle.** Our battle scars prophecy of God's faithfulness to us personally, as well as to His eternal purposes in our lives. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).
5. **Embrace a renewed mind daily.** We must have a renewed mind to live above the taunt of the enemy. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2a).
6. **Embrace the report of the Lord.** The report of the Lord is not only true on the mountain, but also in the valley of the shadow of death as well. "We know that all things

work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).
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