



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Aliens in a Strange Land Series, Lesson 27

Lesson Title: Nehemiah Rebuilds the Temple

Take Home Point: Build your life on prayer.

Warm-Up:

Imagine you are a good friend of the United States Ambassador to a particular country. You are preparing to visit that country to do some humanitarian work that is badly needed and desired, and your friend says to you, "Here is my cell phone number. Please call me directly any time during your stay. I can ensure you receive help if you are in need, or we can just talk. I can show you places that most visitors would not see. I have significant relationships with many national and local officials that can be of use in accomplishing the task you are coming to fulfill. No matter when you call, it will not be an interruption. I would be most pleased to have you call on me." What do you do? Do you not bother to call this most influential and interesting friend? Of course not! You make certain to call and enjoy the benefits of a gracious invitation.

Read: Nehemiah 1-15; Romans 12:12

Observation (What happened?):

What activity did Nehemiah regularly perform as you read this account?

How did Nehemiah and the other leaders respond to the people when they began to weep at the reading of God's word?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why were the inhabitants around Jerusalem so intent on stopping the work?

Why do you think Nehemiah was so earnest in wanting the walls rebuilt?

Insight:

It is immediately obvious that Nehemiah had a vibrant relationship with God in talking and listening to him. We often hear that talking to God is mostly for our benefit, since he already knows what we are thinking and feeling before we tell him. And that's true up to a point. But did you know that our talking to God is also important to him? What does God desire from us? A relationship built on trust. He trusts us with his word and the responsibility to be salt and light in our world, and he wants us to trust him by expressing our thoughts and feelings, fears, joys, concerns, questions, and requests to him just as we would a close friend. We won't surprise, shock, or anger him. But we will show him that we consider him a confidant. To whom do you tell your most private thoughts – strangers? Not likely! We confide in friends we trust. Don't you appreciate the trust it shows when someone confides in you? Imagine how much more so it is for God, who made you and longs to be your constant friend and companion. And just as with Nehemiah, as your loving powerful friend, God is able and willing to help you and strengthen you in the rebuilding jobs you have in your life.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What are you rebuilding in your life right now (big or small)? How are you praying about it?

How do you respond to God's word? How seriously do you take it?

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