

Let Us Start Rebuilding!

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***“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”***

Psalm 139:23-24

Before going further, spend some time in prayer, using the Scripture above as a guide.

1. Joshua is perhaps most famous for leading the battle of Jericho. Read Joshua 6:20. What two things – done at the Lord’s command – caused the walls to collapse?

The trumpets were sounded to announce the Presence of God, and the people’s shouts were, amongst other things, a victory cry intended to celebrate the expected blessings of the future. Beloved, pause for a moment and take a risk right now. You are undoubtedly in the Presence of our Holy God. Pray a big prayer and ask Him to show you which of the walls in your life need to come tumbling down, and which walls need repairing. Then look up in expectation, and believe that your prayers *will* be answered (see Psalm 5:3).

2. The walls surrounding Jericho had to be leveled before Joshua and the Israelites could inhabit their promised land. Can you identify any walls keeping you from living life to the full in the promised land God has set aside for you? If you can, what are they?

3. If you have allowed the construction of a wall between your heart and the heart of God, the time has come to level that thing and start trusting Him with your life. Write out Psalm 62:8 in the space below, and then ask God to write it on your heart.

4. How often are we to trust God, according to Psalm 62:8?

5. Do you find that there are times in your life when it’s harder to trust God than others? If so, when?

6. Are you in the habit of “pouring your heart out to Him” during the hard times? Why or why not?

7. Are there any “What ifs?” that are holding you back from trusting God completely? If so, what are they? (Try filling in the following blank.)

What if _____?

8. Let’s try on another “What if?”: What if you did decide to pour out your heart to God and trust Him through it all? What benefits do you think a life lived that way might bring? (Check out Isaiah 26:3-4 for one supernatural blessing.)

God alone is our Rock eternal, our refuge, our strength. Trusting in Him gives us perfect peace. We don’t have to construct “What if?” walls of fear between our hearts

and His, and we don't need to build up walls of bitterness or resentment between ourselves and others in order to "shield" our hearts with a false sense of security. We want the real thing, Ladies. We want to live a life of love.

9. How can we achieve that heavenly goal according to Ephesians 5:1-2?

Being "imitators of God" can sound intimidating. What does that even look like in today's world? Praise God that His advice doesn't stop there! In His great love and compassion, He's given us all the clues we need right in His perfect Word.

10. Back up to Ephesians 4:31-32. What are the six "walls" we are to tear down and get rid of, as identified in verse 31?

11. Which three attributes are we to build up in our lives instead, according to verse 32?

Kindness, compassion and forgiveness; now those are the types of bricks we want to build our houses with, to be sure! Christ doesn't expect us to knock down the old walls of insecurity in order to leave us vulnerable and exposed. He's asking us to trust Him while He encircles our hearts with the protection that comes from rebuilding the godly walls that have become known as the fruit of the Spirit.

12. Please list the nine virtues identified as *the fruit of the Spirit*. You'll find them all in Galatians 5:22.

Bricks of gold, every one! Let's agree to start rebuilding some walls with these Spirit-filled bricks, and let's take a quick look at the life and times of Nehemiah for some keys concerning construction. We'll need a little background check first.

The book of Nehemiah tells us about a time in history when God's people lived in a broken community. Literally, the walls of Jerusalem had been broken down when enemy forces assaulted the city, leaving the people within defenseless against future attacks. Those walls represented strength and security. Their remnants could not be neglected. Without a doubt, they needed rebuilding.

Let's stop here and make some connections before we move on. When the weak walls of insecurity are torn down, God wants to rebuild us according to His master plan of peace and protection. Remember, He alone is our shelter and our salvation.

13. Write out the priceless words of Proverbs 30:5.

Jesus is our Shield; the One who guards our hearts and protects us from attack. He strengthens those whose hearts are fully committed to Him (2Chronicles 16:9). It's when we stop abiding in Him – when we neglect our need to rest in Him – that we become vulnerable. That's when we, like the walls of Jerusalem, can become broken.

Whether you feel that your heart has been broken, or your whole life is in shambles, God has a plan for rebuilding the precious walls of your heart brick by beautiful brick. Believe it!

14. What promises do we read in Psalm 34:18?

He is close to you right now, Friend, and He has a plan for your life that involves the rebuilding of community. Be it the restoration of communion with Him, restoring a broken personal relationship, or using you to serve a broken community out in the world, God's desire is to rebuild lives and restore His covenant relationships.

15. God makes a powerful promise in Amos 9:11. Read it and fill in the blanks below:

I will repair the _____, restore the _____,
and _____ it as it used to be.

16. What *broken places* would you like God to repair? Which *ruins* do you desire to see restored? What needs to be *built up* in your life?

Whatever it is, if it's in line with God's will in God's Word, He can do it. Plus, He can use you (just like He used Nehemiah) to bring about such restoration.

17. Personalize Isaiah 58:12 by filling in this blank:

I, _____, will be called Repairer of Broken Walls...
(your name)

Walls of disobedience must be replaced by faithfulness, and that which is instable must be replaced by permanent shields of divine strength. What can be shaken must be removed so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain (see Hebrews 12:26). We couldn't do it on our own, of course, but with God, all things are possible (see Matthew 19:26). Let's go back to Nehemiah for a few engineering keys.

18. According to Nehemiah 2:17, what did Nehemiah encourage his people to do once they saw the trouble they were in?

19. What did the people say and how did they respond in verse 18?

They began this good work, but they didn't just jump into things haphazardly. They, modeled after Nehemiah's example, had to process through a few emotions before they could begin the process of rebuilding. The same will be true for us. The first key Nehemiah offers us is that rebuilding a broken community requires care and concern.

20. What five things did Nehemiah do when he heard of Jerusalem's destruction in Nehemiah 1:4?

Nehemiah stopped his busy schedule to sit down and pray before the God of Heaven. He cared enough to rest from his daily activities, and he had enough concern for the situation to feel something. Let's determine to allow God to penetrate the walls of our hearts so that we may never grow cold to the broken communities around us.

21. Please fill in the blanks according to Psalm 95:7-8:

Today, if you hear His voice, do not _____ your _____...

Nehemiah teaches us that our hearts were never meant to be calloused to the needs in our families or in our communities. We can determine that the only things we'll allow to be calloused are our knees in prayer. That brings us to our second key. Just like Nehemiah, we must continue to *pray the big prayers*.

22. Read Nehemiah's big prayer in Nehemiah 1:5-11. What most impresses you about Nehemiah's prayer?

Nehemiah's concern did not end when he said "Amen". His prayers moved his heart from *concern* to *action*. There's our third key. Through Nehemiah's willingness to care and his boldness in prayer, God blessed Nehemiah with a vision for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. When that vision was birthed, Nehemiah *had* to act on it.

God gave Nehemiah an action plan that Nehemiah then brought to the king (see Nehemiah 2:4-5). In other words, God showed Nehemiah exactly how he was to follow through and *do something*. He showed Nehemiah how to rebuild his community. Ultimately, God used Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of his community and bring glory to God's Holy Name (see Nehemiah 6:15-16). He can do the same today through you.

23. What specific walls or community do you desire to see built up and fortified? Pray boldly before the God of Heaven right now. Ask Him to give you a vision and a plan that will move your prayers into prayerful action, then write out that vision here:

24. You may feel like you're facing a monumental task, but remember, the walls of Jerusalem were built one brick at a time. What brick is God handing you today? What one thing can you do *today* to move ahead with your God-given vision?

25. Understand that Nehemiah did not work alone. Who can you call on for support?

Along with whatever it is you identified in your "action plan", let's not miss out on the fact that even resting in Christ is *doing something*. Every time you seek God's heart in prayer and search His Word for guidance, you become more useful and, yes, more dangerous in His Name. Each time you choose the higher ground with Him and declare, "That's not enough to keep me from following Jesus!" the walls of your faith are being strengthened, and you're being moved closer still to your promised land.

26. Write out 1Peter 2:5 here:

What an honor! You are a living stone being built into a spiritual house by none other than the hand of God. Your sacrifices of time and effort *are* acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Keep on praying those big prayers, Friend. The one who trusts in Christ will never be put to shame!

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