

It's On You

WORSHIP & WORD • A 6-DAY DEVOTIONAL

The responsibility is on you. The power comes from God.

Pastor Rich Saunders Jr. | Echo Church | Week of October 26, 2026

On Sunday we stood with Nehemiah before he ever lifted a stone, and we learned that God was developing the builder long before He rebuilt the wall. The hardest truth of that message is also the most freeing one: the responsibility is on you, but you were never asked to carry it without Him. This week we take those four moments, position, participation, inspection, and conviction, and we let them work on us one day at a time. Give each morning a few unhurried minutes. Read the passage, sit inside the reflection, and answer the questions honestly. The goal is not guilt. The goal is a willing builder who finally stops waiting and starts responding to what God has already placed in front of them.

One line will walk with us all week: God's hand upon your life is not an excuse to keep yours in your pockets.

DAY ONE | MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

The Burden Before the Building

Sometimes what keeps bothering you is not a complaint. It is an invitation.

Nehemiah 1:4 NKJV

"So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven."

Nehemiah's story does not begin with construction. It begins with a conversation. He hears that Jerusalem's walls are broken down and its gates burned, that his people are living in distress and disgrace, and his first response is not a project plan. It is grief. He sat down and wept. Long before Nehemiah ever became a builder, God was dealing with the man.

We often ask God to show us our purpose while overlooking the very things He has already allowed to trouble our hearts. Sometimes the thing that keeps bothering you is not something God wants you to complain about. It may be something He is inviting you to confront. Now, be careful, because every burden is not automatically a divine assignment. What set Nehemiah apart is that he carried his burden straight to God in sustained prayer before he carried it anywhere else.

So before you rush to fix anything this week, start where Nehemiah started. Ask God about the weight you have been carrying. The ache that will not leave you alone may not be a distraction from your calling. It may be the first signal of it.

You can spend your whole life asking God to change something He has already given you the responsibility to address.

REFLECT

What brokenness have you been grieving or praying over without acting on it?

Have you brought that burden to God in honest prayer, or only complained about it?

PRAY

Father, before I reach for a plan, let me bring You my burden. Show me what You are grieving, and help me tell the difference between a complaint I need to release and an assignment I need to accept. Amen.

DAY TWO | TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

You Are Already Positioned

Your location did not cancel your responsibility.

Nehemiah 1:11 NKJV

*"...and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.
For I was the king's cupbearer."*

Watch where that last line lands. Nehemiah's job is not mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. It shows up at the very end, after the prayer, almost like a footnote. For I was the king's cupbearer. But that footnote changes everything, because the cupbearer was no waiter. He tasted the king's cup to guard against poison, which means he was trusted with the king's very life and stood daily in the king's presence with the king's ear. The access Nehemiah already had would become the key to everything God was about to do.

Here is what we cannot miss. Nehemiah was in Persia, but his heart was in Jerusalem. His location did not cancel his responsibility, and his employment did not prevent him from pursuing God's purpose. The very position that could have made him comfortable gave him access to help people who were suffering. You keep asking God to change your position. Have you considered what He wants to accomplish through the position you are already in?

Position is not permission to be passive. What if the reason God has not moved you from where you are is that He still has something He wants to move through you? Stop confusing an uncomfortable position with an unnecessary one. Your placement may be connected to somebody else's deliverance.

Being positioned is not the same as being obedient. Nehemiah still had to open his mouth and act.

REFLECT

What access, influence, or resource does your current position actually give you?

Whose deliverance might be connected to the place you keep asking God to move you out of?

PRAY

Lord, I have been asking You to change my position without asking what You want to do through it. Open my eyes to the people my place gives me access to, and make me willing to act where You have already planted me. Amen.

DAY THREE | WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

Prayer Does Not Replace Participation

Faith does not just believe God can. Faith makes you available.

Nehemiah 2:5, 8 NKJV

"...I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it... And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me."

Nehemiah moves from private prayer to a specific request, and look closely at what he asks. He does not simply ask the king to do something about Jerusalem. He asks to be sent there himself. That I may rebuild it. Then he goes further and asks for the letters of safe passage and the timber for construction. He knows where he is going, why he is going, and what it will take. Months of quiet preparation stand behind that one bold request.

Prayer does not eliminate the responsibility to prepare. Faith is not the absence of a plan, and having a plan does not mean you lack faith. Nehemiah credits the whole outcome to the good hand of God upon him, and in the same breath he speaks, requests, organizes, and travels. Divine favor does not make human effort unnecessary.

So stop using prayer as a spiritual excuse for personal procrastination. Sometimes the answer to what you have been praying about is waiting on the action you have been avoiding. If you want to rebuild trust, what is the plan? If you want to restore your spiritual life, which practices actually change? If you want healthier finances, what habit starts today? Faith does not just believe God can do it. Faith makes you available for what God wants to do.

Do not just ask God to bless what you are building. Prepare yourself to steward what you are asking Him to bless.

REFLECT

What have you been praying about that is actually waiting on an action you keep avoiding?

What is one concrete step of preparation you can take this week to participate in the answer?

PRAY

God, forgive me for using prayer as a place to hide from responsibility. I believe You can, and today I make myself available. Show me the step I have been avoiding, and give me the courage to take it. Amen.

DAY FOUR | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

Inspect What You Intend to Restore

You cannot rebuild what you keep pretending is not broken.

Nehemiah 2:13 NKJV

"And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire."

Nehemiah had already heard the report back in chapter 1. He knew the walls were down. But now he goes out at night and personally examines the actual condition of them. The Hebrew allows the sense of examined for the word translated viewed; this was a careful, deliberate assessment. And in the very next verse the rubble is so deep his animal cannot even get through. He could not develop a responsible plan to rebuild until he understood the true condition of what needed rebuilding.

You cannot responsibly restore what you refuse to examine. There are people who genuinely want change but will not confront the damage that change requires. We want stronger marriages without examining how we communicate. We want healthier relationships without examining our own habits. We want deeper maturity without confronting the places where we have quietly neglected obedience. Leadership, and honestly just honesty, takes more than inspiration. It takes an accurate understanding of reality.

And hear this clearly, because it is pastoral and not condemning. Inspection is not condemnation. Nehemiah examined those walls because he intended to rebuild them, not because he wanted to shame anyone. A clear-eyed look at the damage is not unbelief. It is preparation for faithful action. The inspection may expose damage greater than you expected, and that is still better than denial.

Hearing about a problem and examining it are two different responsibilities.

REFLECT

What broken area have you been describing but refusing to actually examine up close?

What would an honest, clear-eyed inspection of that area reveal that you have been avoiding?

PRAY

Father, give me the courage to look honestly at what is broken instead of pretending it is fine. I am not inspecting to shame myself, but to rebuild. Show me the real condition so I can begin the real work. Amen.

DAY FIVE | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

Rise and Build Anyway

Everybody with something to say about your building does not have authority over it.

Nehemiah 2:20 NKJV

"So I answered them, and said to them, The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

By now the opposition has gone public. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mock the rebuilding and accuse the people of rebellion. And Nehemiah answers, not with insults, but with confidence in God. What makes this moment so powerful is the way it ties back to chapter 1. In 1:11 Nehemiah prayed, let Your servant prosper. Here in 2:20 he declares, the God of heaven Himself will prosper us. The private petition has become a public confession. And his language shifts from Your servant, singular, to we His servants. What began as a burden in one heart has become a shared mission for a whole community.

Opposition does not automatically mean you are outside of God's will. Your confidence has to rest in God, not merely in your resources, and you have to learn whose voices actually carry authority over your assignment. Everybody who has something to say about your building does not have the authority to decide whether you build.

Nehemiah does not promise the critics that it will be easy. He simply refuses to let their ridicule set the mission. Opposition cannot become your excuse for disobedience. So when the mockery comes, and it will come, answer like Nehemiah did: with confidence in God's character, and then get back to work. We His servants will arise and build.

Opposition cannot become your excuse for disobedience. Rise and build anyway.

REFLECT

Whose criticism have you been treating as if it had authority over your assignment?

What has that opposition been tempting you to abandon that God told you to build?

PRAY

Lord, I will not let the loudest critic set my direction. My confidence rests in You, not in my resources or their approval. Give me the resolve to answer opposition with faith and rise and build anyway. Amen.

DAY SIX | SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

God Was Building the Builder

Do not despise what God is developing in you while you wait to see what He will do through you.

Nehemiah 2:18 NKJV

"And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me... So they said, Let us rise up and build. Then they set their hands to this good work."

Here is something we cannot miss as the week closes. Nehemiah did not actually rebuild the wall in chapters 1 and 2. He prayed. He requested. He prepared. He inspected. He gathered the people. He declared their intention to build. But the construction itself does not begin until chapter 3. That matters, because God was developing the builder before the wall was ever rebuilt. The wall was not rebuilt when Nehemiah started praying, not when the king gave permission, not when he inspected the damage. Yet every one of those moments was necessary for the work that followed.

So do not despise what God is developing in you while you are waiting to see what He is going to accomplish through you. The praying, the preparing, the honest inspecting, the standing firm; none of it is wasted time. It is the making of a builder. And do not walk away from this week feeling like everything depends on you, because that was never the point. The burden was on Nehemiah's heart. The responsibility required his participation. But the good hand of God was upon him, and the work finally belonged to God and to a whole community.

You have a responsibility you can no longer keep avoiding. And you have a God you do not have to accomplish it without. You cannot keep asking God to rebuild what you are unwilling to confront. At some point your desire for restoration has to become a decision to participate.

God's hand upon your life is not an excuse to keep yours in your pockets.

REFLECT

Looking back over this week, what has God been developing in you while you waited?

What is the one responsibility you are now ready to stop avoiding and finally put your hands to?

PRAY

God, thank You that none of this season has been wasted, that You have been building me even while I waited. Your hand is on my life, so I will not keep my hands in my pockets. I accept the responsibility, and I trust You with the power. Amen.

It's On You

A CLOSING WORD

Six days ago you brought God a burden. Since then you have found yourself already positioned, you have moved from prayer into participation, you have looked honestly at what is broken, you have decided to rise and build despite the critics, and you have remembered that God was building the builder the whole time. That is the heart of It's On You. The responsibility really is on you. But the power to accomplish it has always come from God. So stop waiting for someone else to do what He placed in front of you, and put your hands to the work.

God's hand was upon Nehemiah, but Nehemiah still had to put his hands to the work.

Next in the series: Nehemiah 3 and 4 — where the building actually begins

No Games. No Gimmicks. Just God.