



TRIPLE 15 SUNDAY SCHOOL

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2023 The Year of Investment

Quarter 1

Gods Plan for Investment

This Quarter we will learn about God's plan for investments. Investments play a key role in every healthy business structure, as they also do in the life of every believer. We will explore setting a firm foundation in investing as entrepreneurs to maximize our resources in a way that is honoring to Christ. Monthly, we will focus on a different component of investments and provide practical guidance to establish healthy business practices in conjunction with a godly lifestyle.

January: Sowing and Reaping

February: Adding to What has Been Given

March: Prioritizing Investments

Unit 1 Lesson 1

Believing God as we Sow Nehemiah 4:1-6

Personal Application Points:

ACCEPT workplaces always provide opportunities to sow.

DENY thoughts of victimization when challenged to sow.

RESPOND in humility through prayer when internally challenged.

Nehemiah 4:1-6 NIV

1 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, 2 and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"

3 Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!"

4 Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. 5 Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of [b] the builders.

6 So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart

Background and Current Times:

Chik-Fil-A is known nationally for consistent food quality and amazing customer service. In the article "A lesson in customer service from Chick-fil-A President Dan Cathy", Dan Cathy shares, "Every life has a story, and often our customers and our employees, need a little grace and a little space when you deal with them because they are either experiencing a problem, just finished having a problem, or are about to have one". He later goes on to share, "The word 'restaurant' means place of restoration, and we think of Chick-fil-A as an oasis where people can be restored. We strive to treat people better than the place down the street. One way we do that is by remembering that we're all people with a lot of emotional things going on that don't necessarily show on the surface, so we try to offer amenities and kindness that minister to the heart,". Cathy's philosophy is a clear example of how sowing in the work place is necessary to facilitate business in accordance with the mission of God. By sowing good service Chick-fil-A has built more than a lucrative business they have also reaped a reputation as a

leader in their industry by standing on Godly principles. In today's lesson we will explore how sowing led by prayer also helped Nehemiah establish God's will for his people.

Digging Deeper:

Nehemiah came to Jerusalem with a clear goal and focus on sowing his time, energy and resources. In business, many begin with a clear idea of how the journey should end absent of the extent of what must first be given. Upon starting the work to rebuild the wall, Nehemiah was faced with strong ridicule from Sanballat and Tobiah. Their ridicule was coupled with a targeted goal to diminish their efforts, faith, and ultimately ruin the mission. Nehemiah demonstrates a level of maturity through his response despite the level of public ridicule he was under. Nehemiah, in all humility and earnestness, turned his focus to God alone and uttered a prayer that reveals further his commitment to honoring God by giving of himself.

Nehemiah's response is not one of victimization, but a call and model to believers in business to serve with a heart postured towards giving. This enables and equips believers to perceive and respond to conflict in such a way that God is honored. God's vision is not manifested by merely dedicating time and energy alone. Rather, when we present ourselves to God in tune with his heart through time spent in prayer it allows one to facilitate business at a level of professionalism and selflessness that cannot be denied or disputed. Take time to ensure you are in tune with God's heart, the heart that is saturated in humility. True alignment is evidenced by what you have been willing to continuously sow in obedience to Christ as demonstrated through scripture.

Unit 1 Lesson 2 Immediate Responsiveness Nehemiah 4:7-9

Personal Application Points:

IDENTIFY the value in immediately responding to Christ as an entrepreneur.

COMMIT to consistently having quality devotion time with God.

FACILITATE responding immediately to God's provided instruction within your business.

Nehemiah 4:7-9 NIV

7 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. 9 But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

Background and Current Times:

Oreo is a universal brand with a longstanding reputation that extends decades. Oreo, approximately 2 years ago, also wildly responded to a perceived threat that forever marked the company's perspective on their product value.

"When the official NASA Asteroid Watch Twitter account sent out a message about Earth's potential collision with Asteroid 2018VP1 — a "very small" asteroid that "poses no threat to Earth" — most people just ignored it, but not Oreo.

The snack company took the (non)threat very, very seriously — so much so that it decided to erect an asteroid-proof vault in Norway to protect its precious recipe as well as a stockpile of milk's favorite cookies. The company announced the precautionary measures." Via Twitter.

Does Oreo have a secret recipe? Yes. Here's where they'll hide it - Deseret News

<https://www.deseret.com/u-s-world/2020/11/3/21546931/oreo-recipe-vault-asteroid>

To some this was a wildly irresponsible display of pomp while to others this act simply demonstrated the value of the Oreo and its perceived impact on society. Oreo believed that what they possessed had value and because of this belief they responded quickly and accordingly to it. In the same way we as believers should cherish God in a way that demands an immediate response. Through scripture, we see a display of Nehemiah's positive responsiveness to God even in the face of threats. We also learn how we can glean from his example as we operate business to the utmost level of professionalism within the workplace.

Digging Deeper:

The pursuit of establishing a business comes with its own inherent challenges, often times we make the mistake of putting a stronger emphasis on challenges rather than God. We must always be mindful we are victorious in all things because we have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and savior. This is a sure victory that calls for us daily to desensitize ourselves to the things of the flesh and to feast on the things of the spirit. When we become sensitive to Christ in this way we are conditioning ourselves to respond immediately in obedience to Christ. Immediate obedience opens the door for us to sow and reap inside of God's timing which causes our lives as well as our businesses to not only be established but also blessed. One can be assured there will be external forces working against the work given by God to accomplish here on earth.

Nehemiah, even after his prayer, was still confronted with the swelling anger of Sanballat and Tobiah. Nehemiah persisted and excelled through prayer and practical application of a solution. His response opens the door to highlight our need to be sensitive to hear and obey. It also cautions us not to build blindly. Moreover, Nehemiah models a picture of professionalism through integral responses to God through prayer. Take time to consider how much do you forget or ignore God given instructions? How is God asking you to respond?

Unit 1 Lesson 3 Waiting to Reap Nehemiah 4:10-15

Personal Application Points:

UNDERSTAND waiting is synonymous with preparing.

BELIEVE Christ will always keep his promise.

EMBRACE the responsibility of waiting on God in your personal life and in your business.

Nehemiah 4:10-15 NIV

10"Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall." 11Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." 12Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us." 13Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. 14After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." 15When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work."

Background & Current Times:

In the 1979-80 basketball season, the Los Angeles Lakers experienced what many thought would be a tragic setback. After fighting their way through the entire regular season and the playoffs games, their all-star center, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, injured himself in one of the championship games. Jabbar was unable to play, leaving a gap in the team at the most crucial time. However, the labor of the team would not be in vain. The rookie sensation Magic Johnson had been waiting and preparing the entire season for the time where he would step in as leader. He demonstrated courage by filling in the gap and playing Jabbar's position, thus leading the team to an NBA championship. In today's text, Nehemiah also finds himself in what appears to be an unfavorable predicament. Nehemiah gives us an example of how to wait properly by not allowing circumstances and unfavorable facts change our posture or preparation of what our sowing yields.

Digging Deeper:

No matter what the state of your business may be, there will always be times where it seems as if what was promised will not happen. Though the plans of man are often faulty, the promises of God are not. It is our responsibility as believers to maintain and believe as we wait. Waiting is not permission to waste time while wishing. Instead, it is opportunity to put action to belief. When Nehemiah received word of his enemies incoming attack, his response was to acknowledge his weakness and move forward. As believers and aspiring entrepreneurs, it's important that we always be willing to be sober concerning the reality of our circumstances while also maintaining expectation in what God said. God is pleased when we utilize the necessary resources to continue the path he has set before us. This may look like asking for counsel, educating ourselves in a particular area of weakness, or even confronting habitual behavior that is not rooted in Christ. We can rest assured knowing it is Christ who will give us the grace to still progress as we exercise courage to tend to our lives as we "wait".

Unit 1 Lesson 4
Stretched on Purpose, by Purpose Nehemiah 4:16-23

Personal Application Points:

DECIDE that the mission that Christ has called you to is more valuable than your comfort.

CHOOSE to relinquish all limitations you have placed on yourself or your business.

EMBRACE the opportunity to be used in unorthodox ways to accomplish God's will.

Nehemiah 4:16-23 NIV

16"From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah 17who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, 18and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me. 19Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. 20Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!" 21So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. 22At that time I also said to the people, "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and as workers by day." 23Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water."

Background & Current Times:

In 1966, Mary Van Brittan Brown invented the first home security system. Brown was a nurse who lived in New York City. Often her husband would be away, and she spent many nights alone at home. As an African American woman, she found the police to be unreliable and slow to respond. Based on her need for safety, she developed a system that used a camera to look through four peep holes all connected to a monitor in her bedroom. Brown was willing to step out of the medical field to meet another need. Nehemiah calls for residents in Jerusalem to expand their capabilities according to the need that is before them. Some of the people are even occupying two roles simultaneously. Today, we will learn that God gives us grace to be successful when we are willing to inconvenience ourselves for His purposes.

Digging Deeper:

As believers, it is imperative that we understand that the life we are called to live is not dictated by comfort. In a time where many have looked to the church to be a refuge from responsibility of self-inflicted circumstances, we must remember that the symbol of our faith is the cross. Understanding this key helps us open the door to the full benefits of sowing and reaping. Nehemiah and his men illustrate what it looks like to inconvenience yourself for the sake of Christ. Through their conviction to restore the wall, they relinquished limitations and familiarities that do not serve this purpose. Though the men are carrying swords, Nehemiah makes clear that it is the Lord who will fight for them, just as He will fight for us when we embrace the opportunity to be used by Him in unfamiliar and unorthodox ways. More than our know how, God first desires our willingness. It is our willingness to be used and stretched that serves as a catalyst to God's plan. As we begin this year, take the opportunities before us to step outside of what we have been accustomed to and maximize sowing and reaping by faith

Unit 1 Lesson 5

Sowing into one another Nehemiah 5:1-7

Personal Application Points:

ACCEPT that our words and actions sow seeds into people we encounter.

UNDERSTAND the seeds that we sow into others are a result of the quality of our relationship with Christ.

CHOOSE to be a good sower to those you encounter.

Nehemiah 5:1-7 NIV

"Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their fellow Jews. Some were saying, "We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain." Others were saying, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine." Still others were saying, "We have had to borrow money to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our fellow Jews and though our children are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others." When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are charging your own people interest!" So I called together a large meeting to deal with them"

Background & Current Times:

Jason Wilson is best known for his efforts to change the lives of young men through martial arts. His clips covering the Cave of Adullam have gone viral because as he pushes his students to their limits physically, he is also there to restore them mentally and spiritually. Friends and family members of young men who have experienced his class, testify of the changes they have witnessed in behavior and academic success. Wilson never set out for notoriety, rather he was only looking for an opportunity to serve his community in a way that he was not served. Like Nehemiah, Wilson makes the state of the people he works with a priority. In today's text, Nehemiah demonstrates that God is not only interested in the building of a wall. He is also concerned about how we treat and serve one another.

Digging Deeper:

Whether from a personal perspective or from a business perspective, there has never been any major success without a strong team. Often God will give us a vision of what our life and business should look like. We cannot make the mistake of thinking that we will possess those things without being good stewards over the relationships that God allows us to have. Our relationships are not only resources to our destiny, they are also an opportunity for us to model God's heart with how we steward them. The things we say, the promises we make, and our actions all affect those relationships one way or another. These actions and words if not regulated by a heart that's yielded to Christ will never lead to accomplishing God's will. Instead they will yield connections built on other premises which gives room for jealousy, hurt feelings, anger, lust, and other things that are hinderances to the ultimate vision. What is the status of your relationships? Are they aiding you in accomplishing God's will? What is God asking you to change?