Great Praying Is Absolutely Necessary for Rebuilding the Family  
Nehemiah 1:4-11

4 As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.  
5 And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,  
6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned.  
7 We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.  
8 Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples,  
9 but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’

10 They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.  
11 O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.” Now I was cupbearer to the king.  

Nehemiah said he was doing a Great Work –  
Nehemiah 6:3

So far, we have found that doing a great work involves:  
Great Passion  
Great Purpose – Vision  
Great Praying

In coming lessons, we will find that it also requires:  
Great Patience  
Great Problems  
Great Price

Today – Great Prayer – What is it?  
Nehemiah’s Prayer…  
He Cared Enough to Ask…  
He Cared Enough to Weep  
He Cared Enough to Pray  
He Cared Enough to Volunteer
Nehemiah Cared Enough to Pray

This prayer is the first of twelve instances of prayer recorded in this book. (See 2:4; 4:4, 9; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 9:5ff; 13:14, 22, 29, 31.)
The Book of Nehemiah opens and closes with prayer.

The longest recorded prayer in the Bible is found in Nehemiah 9:5-38. A prayer of confession, repentance, praise and worship.

The shortest prayer in the Bible is found in the narrative in Matthew 14:23-33 where Jesus walked on water. Peter came out of the boat to walk on the water to Jesus and begin to sink and he prayed, “Lord, save me”

Nehemiah 2:4
Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 4:4
Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives.

Nehemiah 4:9
And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

Nehemiah 5:19
Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

Nehemiah 6:9
For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

Nehemiah 6:14
Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

Nehemiah 9:5
Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, “Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

Nehemiah 13:14
Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service.
Nehemiah 13:22
Then I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and come and guard the gates, to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember this also in my favor, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of your steadfast love.

Nehemiah 13:29
Remember them, O my God, because they have desecrated the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

Nehemiah 13:31
And I provided for the wood offering at appointed times, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

It is obvious that Nehemiah was a man of faith who depended wholly on the Lord to help him accomplish the work He had called him to do.

The Scottish novelist George MacDonald said, “In whatever man does without God, he must fail miserably, or succeed more miserably.”

Nehemiah succeeded because he depended on God.

Speaking about the church’s ministry today, the late Alan Redpath said, “There is too much working before men and too little waiting before God.”

Our families are under tremendous pressure and attack today and most of them need divine intervention if they are going to survive. They need not just a miracle, they need multiple miracles. They need on-going protection and provisions. I’m convinced that these things only will come in answer to sincere, heartfelt prayer that is initiated by God’s Holy Spirit.

How can you pray for your family?

This kind of praying doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure it out. This kind of praying must be prayed in faith by anyone who humbles himself, herself before a Holy God and seeks the Lord with their whole heart.

Hebrews 11:6
And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

What are the elements or the ingredients of prayer that can bring down God’s favor, blessing and His help?
Nehemiah’s Prayer Begins With Acknowledgement of the Person, Position, and Power of God.

Nehemiah 1:4-5
As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,”

“The LORD, the God of heaven” is the title Cyrus used for the Lord when he announced that the Jews could return to their land (2 Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2).

The heathen gods were but idols on the earth, but the God of the Jews was Lord in heaven. Ezra often used this divine title (5:11-12; 6:9; 7:12, 21, 23), and it is found four times in Nehemiah (1:4-5; 2:4, 20) and three times in Daniel (2:18-19, 44).

Nehemiah began his prayer as we should begin our prayers:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name” (Matt. 6:9).

To what kind of a God do we pray when we lift our prayers to “the God of heaven”?

We pray to a “great and awesome God” Neh. 1:5,

“… Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord who is great and awesome” Neh. 4:14,

Ezra “… blessed the LORD, the great God…” Neh. 8:6

“…Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God…” Neh. 9:32

He is worthy of our praise and worship.

If you are experiencing great affliction (v. 3) If you are about to undertake a great work (4:19; 6:3) You need His great power and His strong hand (1:10) You need His great goodness (9:25, 35) You need His great mercy (9:31) of a great God.

Is the God you worship big enough to handle the challenges that you face? That’s where we start!!!!

God is also a God who keeps His Word
Nehemiah 1:5
And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,
The Lord had made a covenant with His people Israel, promising to bless them richly if they obeyed His Word, but warning that He would chasten them if they disobeyed (Lev. 26; Deut. 27—30).

The city of Jerusalem was in ruins, and the nation was feeble because the people had sinned against the Lord. (See Ezra’s prayer of confession in Ezra 9 and the prayer of the nation in Neh. 9.)

The Greater Part Of Nehemiah’s Prayer Was Devoted To Confession Of Sin

Nehemiah 1:6-7

Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.

Ezra and the Leaders prayed this prayer in Chapter 9

Nehemiah 9:33-37

33 Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly.
34 Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them.
35 Even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you or turn from their wicked works.
36 Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves.
37 And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray this way.

Luke 11:4

And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.”

It was this promise that Nehemiah was claiming as he prayed for himself and the nation.
God’s eyes are upon His people and His ears are open to their prayers (1 Kings 8:29; 2 Chron. 7:14).

2 Chronicles 7:14

*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

The word *remember* is a key word in this book (Neh. 1:8; 4:14; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31). It is used 8 times in the book.

**Nehemiah 1:7**

“We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept your commandments....”

Nehemiah used the pronoun “we” and not “they,” identifying himself with the sins of a generation he didn’t even know. It would have been easy to look back and blame his ancestors for the reproach of Jerusalem, but Nehemiah looked within and blamed himself!

“We have sinned! We have dealt very corruptly!”

When one Jewish soldier, Achan, sinned at Jericho, God said that “the children of Israel committed a trespass” and that “Israel” sinned and transgressed the covenant (Josh. 7:1, 11). Since the sin of one man was the sin of the whole nation, it brought shame and defeat to the whole nation. Once that sin had been dealt with, God could again bless His people with victory.

How do we know that God forgives our sins when we repent and confess to Him? *He has so promised in His Word.*

Nehemiah’s prayer is saturated with quotations from and allusions to the covenants of God found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

He certainly knew the Old Testament Law!

In Nehemiah 1:8-9,

*Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’*

Nehemiah reminded God of His words found in Deuteronomy 28:63-67 and 30:1-10. Nehemiah asked God to forgive His people, regather them to their land, and restore them to His favor and blessing.
We can remind the Lord of His promise for us today!

1 John 1:9
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1-2
My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Nehemiah’s Humble Prayer Closed With An Expression Of Confidence

Nehemiah 1:10-11
They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.” Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Nehemiah knew that he was too weak to rebuild Jerusalem, but he had faith that God would work on his behalf.

Nehemiah had Confidence in God’s Faithfulness.
“Now these are Thy servants and Thy people” (v. 10).

In bringing Babylon to destroy Jerusalem and take the people captive, God chastened the Jews sorely; but He did not forsake them! They were still His people and His servants. He had redeemed them from Egypt by His great power (Ex. 14:13-31) and had also set them free from bondage in Babylon. Would He not, in His faithfulness, help them rebuild the city?

Nehemiah had confidence that God would raise up other people to help him in his work.
Unlike Elijah, who thought he was the only faithful Jew left (1 Kings 19:10),

He was sure that many other Jews were also praying and that they would rally to the cause once they heard that God was at work.

Great leaders are not only believing people who obey the Lord and courageously move ahead, but they also challenge others to go with them.
You have faithful friends and others that will pray for you and believe with you to restore your family.

I remember when I was going through some of the most challenging times in my family and ministry, I humbled myself and sought others to pray for me and my situation.

Many of us fail simply because of our pride and unwillingness to ask for help from God and others.

Finally, Nehemiah was confident that God would work in the heart of Artaxerxes and secure for the project the official support that it needed (Neh. 1:10).

Nehemiah couldn’t simply quit his job and move to Jerusalem. He was an appointee of the king, and he needed the king’s permission for everything he did.

Furthermore, he needed the king’s provision and protection so he could travel to Jerusalem and remain away from his post until the work was completed.

Without official authority to govern, an official guard for the journey, and the right to use materials from the king’s forest, the entire project was destined to fail.

Eastern monarchs were absolute despots, and it was not easy to approach them or convince them. But “the king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases” (Prov. 21:2).

1 John 3:19-23
19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

Here are several other great verses to assure of the Lord answering our prayers:

1 John 5:14-15
Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.
John 15:7  
*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

Matthew 21:22  
*And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

This is the truth from God’s Word!!!!!!

The sad truth is that we made our plans for our marriage and our home and really didn’t consider asking and seeking the Lord for wisdom and direction. And for His will to be done. We wanted to do it our way. And then asked God to bless our mess! Or to help us out of the mess we have made.

**Remember the Lord’s Model Prayer**

Matthew 6:9-13  
9 *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*  
10 *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*  
11 *Give us this day our daily bread.*  
12 *And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.*  
13 *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Isaiah 49:8-26  
*God’s promise to restore His people after the captivity…*

*Your walls are continually before Me…*

Our lives are like walls…  
The walls of our lives often lie in ruins through neglect…  
The Holy Spirit brings us to rebuild the walls and He is the One who continues to do the work of reconstruction inside us. He tries His best to bring to our attention the condition of our walls… but sometimes we don’t listen…

Some of us are living within the walls of our life surrounded by ruin, and it all began very slowly. First there was a loose piece of stone or mortar. Then a crack appeared in the wall… Then a hole in the wall. Then because of further neglect, the weeds of carnality began to grow through the wall…

The walls around our spiritual lives that should protect and defend us is in shambles…  
Such things as selfishness, lack of discipline, procrastination, immorality, not making time for God, compromise, and rebellion have come and sowed their ugly seeds… now they have poisonous fruit…
The great distress and reproach of the people…
Means misery and calamity…

The scorn, contempt,, the mocking.. disdain…
In the Semitic languages closely related to words that mean: sharp, cutting, penetrating or piercing…

The picture painted by this term portrays someone suffering the lacerations of cutting words.

The Jews were severely criticized and slandered by people who were enemies of the faith…

Even today, this is happening as our Christian churches and families don’t have any better testimony of God’s greatness and glory in our midst!!!!
May the Lord help us!!!!!