

“WORKANOMICS”

Nehemiah 3:1-4 etc.

The book of Nehemiah is about his overseeing the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem. It is a book about WORK. Some form of the words work, labour, build, or repair occur 80 times in its short 13 chapters.

Nehemiah's success depended on how well he organized and motivated workers to join him in building the wall. Obviously he could NOT build the wall single-handedly.

Over 50 names and families are mentioned in Nehemiah chapter three. It is more than a list of names: **It is a register of workers.**

Management is divided into two categories: (1) Management of THINGS; (2) Management of PEOPLE. Of the two, people are more difficult to manage and most important, because from people come IDEAS. The most valuable resource of any organization is it's PEOPLE!

➡ “**Workanomics**” is the delegation of the work and management of the work-force. **Five elements of workanomics:**

I. COMMITMENT. Nothing gets done by uncommitted people.

A. **VISION** for the work (2:17-18).

➡ Nehemiah communicated the **importance of the wall.**

Non-denominational organizations advocate tearing down denominational walls. One contemporary Christian song says, “*Let the Walls Come Down*” referring to the walls of doctrine. Doctrine defines who we are.

The world says **build bridges**. “Let’s bridge the generation gap...” One song refers to “a bridge over troubled waters.”

God emphasizes WALLS. There is not one reference to “bridges” in the Bible. On the other hand, there are over 250 references to “walls” in the Bible. Satan opposes wall builders (cf. 2:19; 4:1).

1. Walls speak of SECURITY. Walls protect us. Would you live in a house without walls? Would you put your money in a bank that had no walls?
 2. Walls speak of SEPARATION. Walls divide. A wall draws a line and makes a border. (1) Walls say to it's occupants: "Stay inside" (safety zone); (2) Walls say to its enemies: "Stay out" (combat zone).
 - God wants His people to be separate (Luke 15:51-53; 2 Cor. 6:14-17). Doctrinal walls... Walls of moral purity...
 3. Walls speak of STRENGTH. A city's walls was a testimony of it's strength. God told Jeremiah, "*Behold, I have made thee this day a DEFENSED city, and an iron pillar, and brasen WALLS against the whole land...*" (1:18). You will only be as strong a Christian as the walls you have established around your spiritual life.
- B. **VOLUNTEERING** for the work. "*They said, Let us rise up and build*" (2:18). They saw the need... they took it to heart... and they committed themselves to the work. They were **convinced it was a "good work"** (2:18b). Good work of ministry (1 Tim. 3:1).
 ➡ The Lord Jesus does not force His yoke upon us. He says, "*Take my yoke upon you*" (Mt. 11:29).
- C. **VENTURING** to the work (4:6—"*So built we the wall... for the people had a mind to work*"). They got to it! They got busy.
 ➡ Commitment always leads to commencement. A commitment that does not lead to commencement is worthless.

II. COORDINATION.

- ➡ WALL TO WALL WORKERS (unbroken chain of workers). 38 individual workers are named; 42 different groups are identified.
- ➡ A united effort. Every worker **adjoined** his work with his neighbor's. These phrases repeated throughout the chapter: "*And next unto him...*" "*Next unto them...*" "*After him...*" "*After them...*"

➡ Workers had to be organized (cf. Titus 1:5). Every worker knew what portion of the wall was his responsibility. This does not happen by chance—JOB DESCRIPTIONS.

➡ We must see how each of our ministries adjoins with the whole.

A. **DIVISION** of labor. Simple & practical = productive.

1. One of the basic tenants of leadership is SIMPLICITY— The capacity to cut a big task down to a size we can handle. Nehemiah divided the work of the wall into smaller sections separated by **12 gates**. ILLUS: “K.I.S.S.”

2. Nehemiah was PRACTICAL in assigning work. Each worker worked near their own house (vs. 10, 23, 28, 29, 30).

➡ Any work for God must begin at our home. If it doesn't work at home, it won't work anywhere.

B. **DESCRIPTION** of labor. Three words describe their labor.

1. **Build** (7 times). The work of the church is about building. Build implies undertaking something NEW (starting a new ministry— New Young Adults Class).

- Romans 15:20: *...I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should **build** upon another man's foundation:*
- 1 Corinthians 3:10: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise **masterbuilder**, I have laid the foundation, and another **buildeth** thereon. But let every man take heed how he **buildeth** thereupon.*
- 1 Corinthians 3:12: *Now if any man **build** upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

2. **Fortified** (3:8). The wall was still standing, but needed strengthening. (Reviving an existing ministry—G.R.O.W. / S.S.).

3. **Repaired** (over 30 times). Fixing what is broken. A ministry may be broken—It is not working right and needs repairing.

III. **COOPERATION.**

➡ Success depends on the cooperation of its workers.

A. **Everyone can do something.** A variety of people, from all walks of life, working together.

1. Priests (v. 1). Spiritual leaders set the example.
2. Goldsmiths (v. 8, 32). Jewelers
3. Apothecaries (v. 8). Pharmacist
4. Shallum's daughters (v. 12). Nursery. Phoebe (Rom. 16:1)
5. Men of the plain (v. 22).
6. Merchants (vs. 31-32). Businessmen. Thank God for white collar workers who get involved serving the Lord.
7. Nethinims (v. 26). Temple servants.

➔ In the body of Christ people have a diversity of talents: **Clerical** (Lindsey); **financial** (Abbotts; Ruth); **painters** (Tony); **graphic designers** (Barb); **tech** (Scott, Jeremy, Roy); **musicians** (Anita; Mark J.); **managers** (Steve S., Dan C.); **medical** (Julianne, Stephanie; Charity); **law enforcement** (Jerry); **food** (Christine); **teachers** (Foresees); **mechanics** (Turk, Dave); **real estate** (Mark & Misty); **transportation** (Patti); **project management** (Raleigh).

- Everyone has a ministry. It takes ALL of God's people working together to get the work of God done. "*We are labor-ourers together with God*" (1 Cor. 3:9).

All may not be able to do the same work, but all can work. The daughters of Shallum (v. 12) could not do as heavy work, but they could do something. The priests and merchants may not be expert in laying bricks, but they did something.

B. **Some do more work than others** (v. 5 cf. vs. 19, 21, 24, 27). It isn't enough to say, "I've done as much as so-and-so has." We must do as much as we can, as long as we can. Jesus asked, "*What do ye MORE than others?*" (Mt. 5:47).

➔ **ILLUS:** Two men of our church asked me this week how they can get more involved in the work of our church.

C. **Some work harder than others** (v. 20; Eccl. 9:10; Rom. 12:11).

1. Six times we find workers doing "*another piece*" (3:11, 19, 20, 21, 27, 30). They weren't lazy. When they finished doing one part, they sought to do another part. They did not stop laboring after completing one part. They wanted to do all they could to get the walls rebuilt.
2. Baruch worked "*earnestly*" (3:20) on the walls. The Hebrew word translated "earnestly" means "to be hot" (Strong). Baruch sweated as he labored on the walls because he worked hard enough to get hot. We need to get hot in our work for God.

IV. COMMENDATION. Workers need to know they are appreciated.

- A. Workers like to know their leaders take a personal interest in them. Nehemiah knew their names... where they worked... and what they accomplished. He knew about their families.
- B. "*One Minute Management*" principles: "People who feel good about themselves, produce good results." And, "People who produce good results, feel good about themselves."
 1. Goal setting
 2. Praising
 3. Reprimands

V. COMPLETION. They kept their eyes on the goal until the job was done. "*They BUILT it...*" (vs. 13, 14, 15 cf. 6:15).

➡ "FINISH THE JOB!" (Bob Jones Sr.) Don't quit (1 Cor. 15:28).

SUMMATION: The names of the first and last workers mentioned are suggestive of Jesus Christ—the Alpha and Omega of His spiritual work. The high priest—Eliashib (God the Restorer) (v. 1), and Malchiah (God is King) (v. 31). Between the rising of the High Priest and the coming of the King, the work was done. When Christ ascended to heaven, He began His intercessory work as our great High Priest. One day, He will come as our King. In the mean time, "We'll work 'til Jesus Comes!"

➡ Find your place on the wall of God's work and get busy.