

Character Trait October 22-28 is Determination

Proverbs 11:3, “The integrity of the upright guides them”

CHARACTER: the qualities built into an individual's life that determine their responses, regardless of circumstances.

Determination: Overcoming obstacles in order to reach my goal.

Weekly Verse: Philippians 4:13 “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.”

Bible Story: The book of Nehemiah tells the amazing story of a small group of Jews rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem against fierce opposition. It is a fascinating story, culminating with this statement in Nehemiah 6:16, “When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.”

Quote: “A river cuts through rock not because of its power, but because of its persistence.”

Leadership: Nehemiah presents great insights into what it takes to be a leader. One of my favorite quotes from the book occurs in Nehemiah 6:3. His opponents are trying to distract him from rebuilding the wall, leading to this reply, “I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down.” He did not allow himself to be distracted from what he considered to be the great work that God had called him to do.

Application: Here are eight core lessons we can learn from Nehemiah that we can apply to our own lives:

- 1) God calls us to do his work, and we need to be ready to respond to that call (Neh 2:12). God had spent years preparing Nehemiah for the work he called him to do.
- 2) True leaders identify with the people, and think in terms of “we” and “us”, not “I”. (Neh 2:17)
- 3) True vision comes from God (Neh 2:12). Nehemiah is clear that God had put the plan into his heart.
- 4) Prayer is essential to understanding the situation and asking for guidance (Neh 1, Neh 2:4). Years of prayer had prepared him for his encounter with the king.
- 5) God’s vision was simple—“rebuild the wall”. We make it complicated.
- 6) Don’t forget your vision for what God has called you to do (Neh 6:3). It is easy to let distractions and life blur our focus and turn us away from our calling. Stay true and strong.
- 7) It takes more than one person to accomplish the goal. Nehemiah built a strong team that both built the wall and protected the workers. The task was bigger than any one person could do alone.
- 8) Don’t become discouraged by adversity. The book of Nehemiah is filled with descriptions of how the opponents of rebuilding the wall attempted to thwart Nehemiah and the workers.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which one of these eight lessons do you identify with the best? Which one speaks to you and inspires you?
2. Which one of these eight lessons is the hardest for you to identify with?