

Cd Gv287 Building Blocks

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of perseverance, prayer, and effective communication in ministry through the example of Nehemiah.

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:4, Nehemiah 2:12, Nehemiah 4:11, Nehemiah 4:19, Nehemiah 6:10, Nehemiah 8:10, Nehemiah 13:31

Topics: "Christian Discipline", "Prayer Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and discipline in the Christian life. He compares the privileged access to resources and materials that believers in the West have with the struggles faced by believers in the Soviet Union. The speaker challenges the audience to imagine being imprisoned for their faith and how that would change their priorities. He then turns to the story of Nehemiah, highlighting the importance of prayer and reviewing key verses from the book. The sermon also touches on the building blocks of evangelism and study in the Christian life.

Transcript

I don't know how many of you listen to cassette tapes. I find that enormous help, especially sometimes when I'm jogging or driving or taking a bath. And one of the great problems we have in OM, I'm sure of our top ten problems and our twenty minor problems, is of course the effort just to communicate what is happening, what we are, what we believe, what are the changes being made, why are these changes being made.

And over the past year, in some of these sessions when I've shared with you, I've talked about some of these things. And if you are the kind of person that likes to listen to tapes, you can borrow these, there's no sense keeping them unless you have a special purpose, and then just recycle them back through Janice. Does everybody know Janice? I'm sure you do.

We've been now working together for two days, or four. But you can recycle them back to her. I'll have them on display here in the front afterward, if you can take a few minutes.

This is that tape I gave here in devotions on being interdenominational. What are some of the blessings? We all know some of the criticisms. What are some of the blessings of being interdenominational? Here's a tape about the ministry of ICT.

It might be good if people in STL could understand ICT and vice versa. Prayer burdens from the area leaders meetings. These are some of the prayer requests that came out of the area leaders meetings.

Here's one on communications. How to be a good communicator. Here's one on the challenge of 86, getting a little late for that.

World prayer report. But some of you who are new may find this of some value. There's many more different tapes there, and you're welcome to have them.

I think I've already given a review of this book. How many have this book? Touch the World Through Prayer by Wesley Duell. Only a few.

I guess it hasn't quite hit yet. If you'd like a copy, write me a note. And give me some idea in the note that you're willing to read it.

I don't want you to just pile up books. I don't have that many. But this book, in my mind, is more significant even than Operation World.

Because if people don't understand how to pray for the world, and the spiritual reality of prayer in their life, Operation World is just an information book that eventually sits on the shelf. I've been selling these two together in the States. It's dynamite.

Wesley Duell was one of the first missionaries I ever met when I went to India. A very godly man. With the Oriental Missionary Society.

It's published by Francis Asbury Press. I think STL is thinking about doing a co-edition of this. Is that right? Published by STL in January.

Published by STL in January. Praise the Lord. Yeah, well, we're only going to give them away, Dave, so you can relax.

But let's just look for a few minutes at Nehemiah. Nehemiah. I think you've all been through Nehemiah, so I'm not going to give you a Bible study on Nehemiah.

At least I know some of you have. But sometimes it's good to just review a few key verses. Starting in the first chapter.

And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awe-inspiring God, who keepeth covenant and mercy for them, who love him and observe his commandments. I often mark the verses that I especially would like to memorize, but that's one of them. Nehemiah was the cupbearer of the king, and he had this burden concerning the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

And I remember when in the early days of the ship ministry the Lord gave us, there in Rotterdam, we were trying to repair Lagos. He gave us a lot of encouragement from this book, because as we looked at the engine room, and as we looked at the ship in general, we felt it was a little bit about like the experience of Nehemiah. His prayer was answered, and he was able to return to Jerusalem.

And when he gets there, we find at the end of chapter 2, he goes out on this excursion. Verse 12, And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me, neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem. Neither was there any beast with me, except the beast that I rode upon.

And I went out by night, by the gate of the valley, even before the jackal's well, and to the dung gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and its gates were consumed with fire. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain and to the king's pool, but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. And it goes on to tell about his trip.

Through this, Nehemiah gets involved in rebuilding the wall. The subtitle in my Bible just before verse 17 says, Nehemiah encourages the people to build the wall. Then said I unto them, He see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and its gates are burned with fire.

Come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God, which was good upon me, and also the king's word that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build.

So they strengthened their hands for this good work. The moment they sort of moved into action, the opposition moves into action. And how true this is in the work of God.

In almost every church that we ministered in in the States, we had about 63 meetings, we saw, you know, the enemy just trying to make a mess. And sometimes when we're in OM and we see our own problems and our failures and some of our struggles, we can get a little discouraged or at least battle discouragement. But I think it's important for us to realize that the whole church throughout the world is in a tremendous state of siege and spiritual warfare.

Three of the churches, big churches that I had come to speak at, had lost their pastor within the last few months. He had either resigned, in one case in quite a difficult situation, in the other two cases, I don't know the details, but I know the people were confused, many of them, and wondering how they were going to go ahead. In the States, perhaps more than in some places, the senior pastor of the church often is the leader, and when they don't have a senior pastor, things happen.

One big church, when their senior pastor left, the income just went down. And with that, of course, come a lot of other problems. Many people, of course, when they think of the States, think of all the churches as being big megachurches, because they're the ones you read about.

A vast majority of all the churches in the States are small churches. Small there would mean two, three hundred. That wouldn't necessarily mean small here.

But don't think it's a nation just scattered about with these megachurches. I was surprised to discover, even in Florida, where I was ministering at a very large church with several thousand members, that, in fact, that part of Florida, according to recent surveys, has a lower percentage of Christians than a number of other places, and a very high percentage don't go to church anywhere down there in that great recreational area of the country. It is quite overwhelming to make a trip like this.

I'm sure some of you, it may be your dream to go on a six-day blitz trip of 7,000 miles, visiting all kinds of people. But for my kind of temperament, it's a bit overwhelming, because people have so many problems. There is so much divorce.

There's so much heartache. And those are the people that often gravitate to characters like me, or come up after the meeting for a special prayer. I guess we saw about 200 people make open commitments.

We don't, firstly, on these trips, preach missions. We preach Christ. We call people to surrender their lives to Christ, to make him Lord, and we try to show how this leads into missionary service, whether it be in their own hometown, or whether it be overseas.

And I'd ask you, if you can think of it, sometime during the days to come, to really pray for these people who have made commitments. Sometimes at the end of the meeting, I'll say, look, if you'd like to pray, I make it very clear that I don't have time for long counseling, just at the end of the meeting. I encourage them to seek their own pastors for that.

But if you'd like to just pray briefly, and you're willing to wait, then I'd be happy to pray with you individually. Other people fill out a little paper that I pray over later on, and then we send them a follow-up from here in Bromley. But you know, oftentimes people will wait in a queue.

We call it a line over there, for 20 or 30 minutes, just to say a few sentences, and to pray. And it's just quite overwhelming when people... In those few minutes, sometimes I read their paper very quick, or I listen to them for a brief period, and then we just really pray together. But these people are very much on my mind.

I find it a bit of a struggle now to arrive back here, and try to push that to some degree in the back, and enter into that which is going on over here. More people and more challenges. We've already had our first meeting here.

Just down the road, five churches came together from this area for a special meeting, and I shared with them. And that was on Wednesday evening. You know, one of those churches has its building burned and gutted twice in the past year.

Some of you know Mayswood. Any of you go to Mayswood? Some of you used to. These people are in a terrible state.

Some months ago, some time ago, I don't know exactly, they had their building burned. It was arson. And they just had it again just recently.

The entire building just burned out worse than the previous time. They are really thinking of giving up their effort to reach that. One of the most difficult housing estates in this area.

And that's, you know, you might easily say, oh well, we can't give up. You haven't been working there for 20 some years, and making almost no progress whatsoever. Maybe a tactical retreat would be from God at this stage, and tie in with the other churches.

But I think as we have our own struggles here, we need to just realize that the same thing took place way, way back here in the Old Testament. Same thing is taking place in God's work right around the world. And in the midst of our struggles, try to follow the example of men like Nehemiah.

Anyway, let's just read about this opposition. When Sambalot, the Heronite, and Tobiah, the servant of Ammonite and Gershom, the Arabian, we're in verse 19, heard it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us. You know, that's what's happening to those people there in Mazewood.

It's in a different way. Sometimes we think of persecution, you know, just taking place out in Egypt, or, you know, where we have some people in prison, not Oamers, but Christians. But it can take place anywhere.

Despised us and said, What is this thing that you do? Will you rebel against the king? Then I answered them and said unto them, The God of heaven will prosper us. Therefore, we his servants will arise and build. But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.

And then it goes on to tell how they built the wall. The opposition got so great at one time that they stopped. They cried out to the Lord again.

They went back to the wall. Verse 6 is a good one in chapter 4. So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together to the half of its height. For the people had a mind to work.

They found the balance between work and prayer. Verse 9, Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and we set a watch against them day and night because of them. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of the burdens is decayed.

There is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall. So again, the adversary. Verse 11 and 12 try to stop the whole process.

Nehemiah finds himself with quite a challenge. Let's just read that. Verse 11, An adversary said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come among them and slay them and cause the work to cease.

And it came to pass that when the Jews who dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times from all places, Where ye shall return unto us, they will be upon you. Therefore set I in the lower place behind the wall and in the high places. I even set the people according to their families with their swords and their spears and their bows.

And I looked and rose up and said unto the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, Be not afraid of them. Remember the Lord who is great and awe-inspiring. And fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses.

And it came to pass when our enemies heard that it was known unto us and God had brought their counsel to nothing, that we returned all of us to the wall, everyone to his work. I don't know if there's anyone this morning who because of discouragement or some problem or some difficulty or some hurt has turned away from the work. I don't know if we have anyone like that this morning.

You may be actually still doing the job somehow. It looks like that. But your heart is no longer in it.

You're not really committed to the work of God and to the work in which the Lord has called us. This does happen on OM. It does happen on the ships.

It happened out in some other aspects of the work over the years. And I would just hope that you could be encouraged from the word of God. Whatever opposition you're having, it may be personal.

It may be something you're not even really able to share. It may be something that doesn't necessarily have anything to do with what's happening here. But somehow it's demotivating you.

Maybe you could take Nehemiah and pray, Lord, give me a mind to work. The words that have been popping into my mind just the last two days as I was preparing to talk here this morning were simply these

words about laying the building blocks of the training program that we're supposed to be involved with here. I think most of us by now realize that Operation Mobilization in any field is a combination of things.

It's not one simple little thing. The most important thing, I believe, always, wherever we are, is becoming more like Christ. I believe that work goes on.

Even if OM's training program fails, God doesn't fail. We do. And His training program goes on.

I met people after they come out of OM. Sometimes I meet more in that category, like on this trip, than people who are in OM. Though I did start out with a night of prayer in the New Jersey office and a prayer of challenge breakfast with prayer partners there.

But often people tell me that it was the hard time on OM that really laid the foundation for the ministry. I remember one of our earliest teams went to Mexico. The leader wanted to help get the book sold, so he carried boxes of neckties.

And he thought when he sold the book, he'd give a free tie. Ties are quite available in the States. By the way, if any of you need a couple of ties, just drop me a note.

As you can see, I'm very keen on ties myself. But he brought these, and of course he didn't declare them at the border. One of my very closest friends, this dear brother, I was at that time, we just had the conference at the border, and I was on my way to Chicago driving an elderly retired missionary in the oldest car I had ever driven in my entire life.

It was an amazing journey to Chicago with this dear woman. My wife and I had been married about six months. We were just coming back from that first tour of Mexico, headed for Spain.

When I got to Chicago, I found out my friend was arrested and in prison, one of the worst drug-ridden prisons in all of Mexico. I found out that he got through the first customs checkpoint with his ties, which really wasn't good. Because in Mexico they had the system that three miles down the road they had the biggies, the other customs, and of course you should have declared anything.

It's quite a good system, actually. You should have declared things at that first one. He didn't even think about it.

He wasn't, I don't think, purposely trying anything. When the customs hit him, he was a black brother, and in those days they were very, very rough on black people on the Mexican border and many other parts of the states. They arrested him.

They accused him of everything. I don't know what happened, but he was in prison, surrounded by all kinds of interesting characters, and there was a little bit of panic, and some people felt I should return. I'd hardly ever flown in an airplane in my life, but I flew back to Mexico.

I hitchhiked back to Chicago after that. I can tell you a few things about that trip. In answer to prayer, somehow, dear brother Hosey Burt, some of you remember him, got released, and that team went on to Veracruz, but continued to be an absolute disaster.

I don't know whether he was just so shaken by that experience. He was the team leader, but it was a disaster. There was a young man on that team, just a brand new recruit.

I'd met him in the elevator at Moody Bible Institute. He said he was going to West Pakistan. I said, look, you're going to the wrong place.

Go to East Pakistan. That's of greater need. It was at least back then.

His name was Phil Parshall. Never have learned to pronounce his name right. Keep going back and forth.

But he later shared about how that team was such a disaster, yet when he later arrived as a missionary in Bangladesh, the disaster there, which involved a moral failure among women, it involved homosexuality, it involved one of the worst things I've ever heard on the mission field. God had prepared him, and he stood through that double, triple crisis in Bangladesh. It was East Pakistan at that time.

I think you know if you've read some of his books that he's one of the leading missionaries among Muslims in the world today, now working among Muslims, Philippines, and traveling around the world, lecturing on Islam. He often refers to this disaster team. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast wind it in either direction. Team. I don't know if any of you feel that your household is a disaster or OM is a disaster.

I haven't heard anybody putting it in such extreme terms. But usually by the end of the year, there are a few people that may feel that way. It's interesting that what can happen and be an encouragement for one person, because often of their background, their temperament, their viewpoint, can be an absolute disaster for someone else.

Such a wide range of people. But whatever our background, I think there is something for us in this book of Nehemiah. To press on against the opposition.

To be encouraged in the work. This is the work of God. Whatever struggle you may have, surely you can see that getting these powerful Christian books, whatever our failings may be, out to the ends of the earth is a work of God.

Someone once said, I probably said something similar to it, if we're distributing these great books and not living this life ourselves, that's hypocrisy. Satan is a master intimidator. And all of us, if we start matching our lives against some of these books, some of which are extreme anyway, we're all going to go down.

These great writers are not even living up to the books that they wrote. So, if you measure in the arrival sense, I've arrived at living up to this book. This is a lifetime.

Just this one book. And I think it's important to realize that though we in our lives probably are not living up to some of these books, we probably don't want to live up to some of them, because there's a variety of books. I don't want to say anything against Christian diet books.

The right book for the right person can be used of God. I'm actually very much more open-minded than some of you. I've seen some of your memos.

Maybe that was last year's group. About some of these books. Don't just write a book off as rubbish.

Because number one, a person has written that book. I'm on a tangent now, but just give me two minutes. A person has written that book and that may have been the beginning of God working through them in a creative way.

Maybe their second book will be better. You don't have to push it. You don't even have to read it.

But be careful just making a derogatory statement about it. Because I tell you some of the people who write even what I think are superficial books, and I've got to meet these authors, and I do all the time, are beautiful people who are trying to find God's plan in their life. They may be young.

Often they have been encouraged to write by somebody else. So, you know, when you read one of my books and you discover they're not really that great, you don't blame me, because I fought writing them for at least six years. It was John Watts, who was director of STL in those early days, who encouraged me to go ahead with... I did write that literature of evangelism.

After that, I knew I shouldn't write anything else. It was John Watts who encouraged me to go ahead with another book, and it was when he and Keith were killed that I decided, or in the process of that, I don't remember all the details, that's why the book is dedicated to Keith and John. So, some books that even aren't that great, and you probably wouldn't even want to read them for the right person.

One of the reasons I have so many books in my little office, books especially there for counseling, is because the right book at the right time means so much. You know, so many single parents today, most of those single parents will never see a book written for single parents unless somebody gives it to them, or distributes it. Many of them I talk to in the States, in other cases, have never heard that there was such a book.

Actually, there's one even written by an exoemer, Mike Wiltshire, especially for single parents. So, that book probably wouldn't be so relevant for a lot of people, but would be extremely relevant for them. This is the work of God that we have been called to.

Let us understand that no matter how much we want this to be a training program, it is still an evangelistic, and a discipleship, and a literature thrust. And I think there's often tension. I don't know this year, been away, but there's often tension.

You know, are we here for training, or are we here to do a specific ministry? Clearly, it is both. OM has been that from the earliest days. Then someone says, well, which is the priority? Well, to some degree, you have to decide that.

I think there are people here who feel that OM as a ministry, I'm in that camp, is a priority. This is my life work. This is my ministry.

I still need training. I'm still studying. Last night when I couldn't sleep because of jet lag, I was reading a brand new book that I don't think I'm going to push.

But I got something from that book. And I'm still learning, especially in this area of communication, and this area of prayer. So probably some of us feel that this is our ministry.

We've been through training programs, stage one, the initial couple years. We still want training. We still want to grow.

We're still failing. We still have many needs. But we feel this is our ministry.

It may be ICT. It may be STL. There are others that feel that they've come on OM for training.

There's no way you can come into OM training with a big T and not get a little disillusioned. Don't think it's just here. The ships have the same problem.

Even India sometimes has the problem. The word training means such different things to different people. Training now to some people in OM actually means a program in which you can even get credit at a Bible college.

And we've been working on it. And I think there are some people now in OM, and they have to do a lot more academic study during their time on OM, who are getting some kind of credit in Bible colleges. There's been a lot of pressure on us in this area because people go to OM for a couple of years but discover that the training they have, the experience they have, isn't officially accepted at the University of London.

By the way, I think it will be a long time before it does. And you know, all these churches that I visit all over the world, the greatest struggles they have, always relationships. Always relationships.

It's almost always the same. There are always many ramifications. Impurity may come in.

That is big today in churches. But that isn't the biggest problem. It's the disunity the impurity brings.

Impurity comes in. Some are very sympathetic and feel the person has been disciplined in the wrong way. And then the body is divided over how the whole thing is handled, especially if the person repents.

If they don't repent, it's sometimes easier. They can go, and that's it. It's when they repent, how do they handle it? I had a letter from a man just recently who has been in terrible immorality in that assembly.

The parents of women that he's been involved in, young girls I believe, are there in the church. It's incredibly complex. I wrote to a godly man about this, and he said the best thing for that man to do, he has repented, he is with his own wife, which doesn't always happen.

This godly Bible teacher said the best thing to do, that man, is to get out of that area. Because the living God forgives, but God's people don't forgive so easily. And the emotional vibrations of that whole situation with him sitting there is extremely difficult.

Maybe those parents, some of them probably weren't even believers. It's known widely. I'm not saying that's the answer.

I'm just saying what that man of God said. And I believe if you can go through this year or two years learning something about relationships, handling failure in relationships, handling emotion, hostility in relationships, handling, of course, your own words, your own tongue, in reacting to people's problems or sins or criticisms or comments or temperament or whatever, then you have laid an important building block. When things go wrong, that is often the opportunity to be tested and to grow into maturity.

Nobody in OM that I know of is organizing things to purposely go wrong. But they do. They do.

The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence is a cliché, but it's helpful at times. Because, as I've said to so many people, often it gets much rougher after you leave. OM, with all of its weakness, has a deep, compassionate element, spends a lot of time in healing and praying and counseling, pastoral work.

Very few people in the average church have the pastoral opportunities that we have. We may not take them. And unless you've been in some of these big local churches and talked with the people that I've talked to, some of whom never even meet, barely meet their own pastor of their own church, you may not understand what I'm talking about.

But I really pray we'll not miss that building block as we build the work of God here in Bromley. Actually, some of our apparent problems can often be a blessing. How many of you young people would like to come into something where everything has arrived, it's all neatly organized, there's no lack of staff, no lack of money, everything is going perfect.

You just come. Real challenge. Real challenge.

The exact thing that I would never want to get involved in personally myself. And it's amazing when we learn to see that the problems, the things that go wrong, it may be lack of staff, it may be a missing crucial leader, it may be this, it may be that, to see this as a challenge. To pray that God will supply.

To pray that we may know what our part is to be. Maybe some of us should be doing a little more recruiting on our knees first in letter writing, in phoning, in urging people in presenting this great vision. Not time to go into that.

Another building block that I believe is so essential here, and it's the toughest to cut your teeth on, and it's the building block of discipline. And I think, especially this morning, of the discipline of prayer. And I just know that if you're going to learn to pray, you are going to have to learn how to deal a stronger blow to the self-life and to the body, because people don't want to pray.

I am overwhelmed with the lack of prayer in the United States and many churches. I can't believe it. It's a con.

It makes the film *Sting* look like a Disneyland flop. How the enemy somehow has gone in and just taken the prayer meeting away. Christian leaders openly acknowledge there's no prayer life.

Deacons, elders, no prayer life. That's not just there, it's in many countries. And you know, if you don't learn something about prayer, here, I don't know where you will, the privilege to come here each week and have an extended time of prayer.

And I hope that you'll get God's signals about how much you should give to that prayer meeting. It used to be that our prayer meetings would go to one, two, three in the morning. You'd go out of there so wiped out.

The next morning, you know, you'd go into the workplace and start packing up the toilet paper instead of the books. But, you know, there's a lot to pray about. The length of the prayer meeting has nothing to do with merit.

I'm sure somebody could come in here and intensity of prayer and spirituality do more in two hours than I could in four. Praise the Lord. My own wife, as you know, God never stays to the end of the prayer meeting.

We have become very open-minded, very lenient compared to the old days. Giving people freedom to leave as they sense is best. But don't use that freedom just to go the easy road.

To pray that extra hour, you might have to kick yourself. Walk out of here for a while. Go down the road.

Wash your face and maybe give it one more hour because it's often the extra mile that makes the difference. It's the extra hour that makes the difference. And we need, in the light of the needs of the world, in the light of what this brother says in this book, in the light of what we read about in Operation World, we need more time.

Now, where are we going to get that time? You say, well, carve it out of the work. The work schedule because we give an hour every day to ministry and training. And we know some of that is straw.

We're not ignorant. You can't get wheat without straw. Have any of you ever done any farming? In any movement there is straw.

OM has the straw factor. Verwer has the mess factor. Some of you have been sitting here for years.

You especially need grace. But I tell you, to carve out an hour of the work day is a great privilege. I will tell you, the saints in the Soviet Union would like to have an hour in the morning for prayer and fellowship and Christian films and Bible study.

And the problem with many of us here in the West is that we are spoiled. We have so much. We have videos.

We have films. We have audios. We've got so much.

And we take it for granted. And we take it for granted. You know what I'd like to do with many of you? I've got this streak.

I'd like to put you in prison in the Soviet Union just for three days. That's all I had. That was enough.

Just put you in prison for three days. But with a feeling, the lovely feeling, that you might never get out. How would you like to wrestle with that one for three days? I dare to say your priorities might change.

God has put us here for a purpose. If I didn't believe in the sovereignty of God I couldn't function. And even if you feel it's a rough year.

Even if sometimes you doubt if you're in the right place here. God has a purpose in bringing you here. And He wants you to be trained in discipline prayer.

Buffeting the body. Bringing in the subjection. Far more difficult is buffeting the mind in that meeting.

Sitting here is not enough. But to think, to pray, to concentrate. I often pray in my own heart.

I find a lot of people speak slow. I can listen to them and pray in between their sentences. Just crying out and worshipping the Lord.

Not everybody engages in that. But I do find prayer a great struggle at times. And I have to discipline myself to keep on praying.

Now there are many other building blocks here. The building block of evangelism. Which we're endlessly discussing and wrestling with.

You know the new book I've been circulating. I Hate Witnessing. Have you seen that one? By Dick Innes.

Pray for him. His wife is extremely ill. Extremely ill.

Just talked on the phone with him. But I guess most of us all of our life will struggle to some area or other with witnessing. But there are opportunities here to learn a lot about evangelism.

Don't miss some of those opportunities. There are other building blocks. The building block of study as we have access to so much material.

And we can learn so much as we just redeem the time. The building block of hard work. And I know the work here sometimes for some of you is boring and it's hard.

Quite a few people when they've left who have wanted to go into full time Christian work. You know they have not been able to go. The door has not opened.

Even in America there is not the money to send all these people that want to go into Christian work. For some of you this will be the only full time Christian work you do in your lifetime. Whatever little dream you have.

Whatever little meeting you raise your hand up volunteering to go. It is not that simple. I can't even preach anymore the straight forward messages of just challenging everybody to go and volunteer.

My conscience will not allow me because so many want to go. And the financial barriers and the other barriers are so great. I still preach that but I explain the other side of the coin.

And I will tell you I just hope you see that this year whatever struggles there may be is a golden opportunity to lay foundations in your life. Don't let the year slip by. We're already going into 87 and find that you're still stuck somehow in first gear or reverse or neutral.

When we look at you it may look somehow that you're going alright. Because for most of you when you leave here as I see with so many XOMers there will not always be the compassionate streak that does exist within the body of Christ. It does exist within OM.

But you may find that life in all of its cruelty can hit you right square in the face. And if you don't have that foundation laid that God wants you to lay now I tell you it may not be a very pleasant experience. Let's pray.

Father we thank you for the challenge of Nehemiah the challenge to be builders in your work to put brick upon brick. And Lord you know our own hearts our own attitudes man looketh at the outward appearance but you look at our hearts. Keep us especially Father from rebellion in our own hearts from our own subtle pride that loves to defend itself loves to defend its own ways loves to jump on the other person and enable us to take the sinner's place and to really come up praising you.

Lord you know the need for prayer in the church in the world right now as this is the method you have chosen to accomplish the task. And Lord as we come on Tuesday nights or in our private devotion which is even more important may we not come shackled by condemnation but may we come encouraged to break through though we sense our failing we sense our lack of faith we sense sometimes it gets boring we sense sometimes we don't understand what's happening we see our inconsistencies our needs Lord may we not allow that fog to hinder us from seeing you for you have told us that we must run the race with our eyes fixed upon you not on the guy working next to us not on the leader in something he may have

said that we didn't like not on the vehicle that may be broken down in the middle of the street but on you help us Father to lay these building blocks of hard work of prayer of discipline of growing in our ability to relate and love people people within the body outside of the body and we believe that as in the book of Nehemiah there will be a day when we'll be able to say and they completed the wall and they completed the wall and all the people shouted and all the people praised your name Lord as we rush toward 1987 by your grace we want each day to count each moment to count to be a people of praise and a people who are building for eternity but we pray in Jesus name Amen

Audio: http://archive.org/download/SERMONINDEX_SID18175/SID18175.mp3
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