

A Step-By-Step Guide For Rebuilding a Country

What Getting “A Quick Win” Can Do For You

Unedited Transcript

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Good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to Nehemiah chapter six, Nehemiah chapter six. We're doing a series, a Step-by-Step Guide for Rebuilding a Country again, country is metaphor for whatever you feel like the Lord is leading you or giving you the desire to rebuild. Let's go ahead and do a shout-out today, we've got six men who are meeting at the church, their church, on Saturdays at 6:00PM. They call themselves Men of Grace at Grace Church.

Just a little sidebar, at Man in the Mirror, we are now teaching to name your ministry to men after the name of your church. For example, this is Grace Church in Beach, North Dakota. What if the men's ministry decided to call themselves Iron Men? Well, what that means is that every time an announcement then is made for Iron Men, all the guys that aren't part of that little group don't feel like they're included. But when an announcement's made, "Okay, this is announcement to the Men of Grace," by that we mean all the men in the church whether or not they're part of the men's only ministry. It's just a tweak we made in the last couple of years.

Name your men's ministries, online you guys too, name your churches men's ministry after your church. If it's Northland Community Church, it will be Northland Men or Men in Northland, that kind of thing. Okay, so Men of Grace at Grace Church in Beach, North Dakota, you can't see this, I realize that but man, this is so interesting because they're on the border between Montana and North Dakota. I noticed that because Ryan Howell, the leader, actually lives in Montana and goes to church in North Dakota. Ryan, we need a field rep up in that area too just so you know. I wonder if you'd join me in giving these men who have are now part of our Bible study a very rousing and warm Man in the Mirror welcome this morning. One, two, three, hurrah, welcome. Glad to have you with us.

All right, and so, that's the series, A Step-by-Step Guide for Rebuilding a Country. I chose to call it Step-by-step because I'm trying to give you actionable ideas not glittery generalities. I know you hear a lot of messages and they sound real flowery, but then you don't what they actually do with it. I'm trying to be very specific here. We started out, and then I've been reviewing with you each week just because it is cumulative and it builds on itself. The first message was What Does God Want You to Do, and the idea was to figure out what is the vision that God is calling you to and to start with whatever is burdening you, and then let God give you His vision through prayer. Prayer being in the operative tool, if you will, for discerning God's will in this and then just being determined to act even if you feel sadness of fear, because that's what Nehemiah was doing.

The big idea was that the first step to every great outcome is to imagine its possibility, and then the three things that you would need to get started would be the right resources, the right plan, and the right team and to say that preparation without prayer is presumption. We would likewise say that

prayer without preparation is presumption, and then creating some early momentum ... I'm still getting feedback. You hear that, right? I'm hearing tinny speakers. I'm hearing tinny speakers, yeah. Creating Early Momentum and basically we talked here, dream unbelievably big but start believably small, and then we talked about Overcoming Opposition. We looked at the opposition from Sanballat, Tobiah and others. The big idea was basically expect opposition, trust God, but then take personal responsibility too.

Then, What Can We Do When the Wow Wears Off? We just talked about not shrinking away from bad news and trying to remove the bottleneck that's holding you back, and then the big idea was what bottleneck, if removed, would accelerate you towards your goal? We talked about the bottleneck theory how at any time, there really aren't ten things holding you back at any one moment. There's really only one thing holding you back, figure out what that is. Now Nehemiah has removed the bottleneck that's holding him back hopefully. Hopefully you've removed the bottleneck that's holding you back or have at least identified what it is and you're working on it. He did identify and remove the bottleneck that was holding him back, and in his estimation it was this mistreatment of the people and he resolved that, and he had an acceleration. He was able to actually get something to happen that I want us to take a look at in verse 15 of chapter 6, "The wall was completed on the 25th day of Ilo in 52 days."

The title of today's message is What Getting a Quick Win Can Do for You. Fifty-two days is a quick win. It's a momentum builder, and so I want us to look at that. Basically first of all, why do you want it or why would you want a quick win? I'd tell you, I'm under so much stress right now. It's just like one more feather and I'm going to snap. I mean I really feel like one more feather ... I almost snapped at you guys in the back this morning, sorry about that. People can only handle so much bad news. Everybody has a different capacity. I think I have a pretty big capacity, but I have a lot of things going wrong right now.

My father-in-law passed away. It's so interesting, because I'm married to his daughter and she's one of three sisters. These three girls, man, they have been getting a lot of love but the reality is that after his wife, I'm actually the one who spent more time with him than anybody else. We were like best friends, weekly lunch buddies. He was my mentor. He said I was his mentor, whatever that means. Everybody's taking care of these three girls, I'm saying, well, who's going to take care of me? Who's going to take care of me? I'm in this grieving thing with the waves that come and go, and then I'm trying to get our camper. I have a punch list. I have 27 items on the punch list. I've been trying to get this punch list punched for two months. Honestly, this is a feeling – sometimes we say concrete things, but what we're really trying to do is to bring analogy, bubble up our feelings through analogy. Here's how I feel, I feel like the service department that's supposed to fix my camper, like I'm the salesman trying to sell them something they really don't want, that's what I feel like, that's what I feel like.

I already told you a few weeks ago I had to get an air-conditioning system replaced at the house, right? No joy there, right? Well, now this week for the last week – septic system, septic system. I started this odyssey on Sunday, let's not get into it. Broken promise, broken promise, broken promise, it's still not working, it's still not working. If we don't get it fixed today, anybody have a spare room? I mean because we can't stay in the house anymore, all right? No, no, no the trailer, and I could use the trailer right now all right? But where is it right now? The dealer finally took it, so yeah. The point is people can only take so much bad news and that's what was going on with these people, these people in Jerusalem. They have had all the bad news that they could take and then along comes Nehemiah, along comes their savior – little "s." By the way, this is a powerful metaphor or analogy or illustration of the Gospel of Jesus too – with the big "S" – Savior.

Those people were also overwhelmed. Nehemiah's people were overwhelmed here in Jerusalem with all these kinds of problems, and people can only take so much. Along comes somebody who says, "Hey, I'm going to fix it. I'm going to make everything right." You can imagine that many of these people would then be doubters. They'd be doubting because there have been other people who have probably come and go on over the hundred years since they came back from the Diaspora to Babylon, the Babylonian captivity. There would be some doubters. There would be some doubters, yeah? Yeah, there would be some doubters. Broken down walls, rubble everywhere, burned stones, agitators. There was even fake news. Fake news is now the big thing in our culture. They were even sending fake news out in chapter six, verse five – we won't look at that. They were discouraged, they were down. Those people were wondering, "I wonder if Nehemiah can pull this off," but they were doubting. Now, there are different kinds of people that would have heard Nehemiah.

We have a little continuum at Man in the Mirror that we use when we're talking with pastors and leaders, and one end our allies, the other end our opponents. Allies are people that ... It doesn't make any difference what you say, you can't alienate them. They are for you. They are with you. The opponents on the other end, there's nothing you're ever going to be able to do to win them over, they're just absolutely against you. A little bit towards the middle from allies are receptive people. They're not allies but they are receptive to your message, they're willing to listen. Over towards opponents but a little towards the center are non-receptive people. They've already had the one more feather that I'm hoping I don't get, all right? They've already lost hope. They are overwhelmed but they're just not receptive to the message so you have these different kinds of people.

Why do you want a quick win? Why do you want to quick win? Because if you can get a quick win, you can turn a lot of those non-receptive people into true believers. You can consolidate your receptive people into true believers. In fact, here's the big idea for the idea: nothing turns doubters into allies faster than a quick win. Nothing. Whatever you're trying to rebuild in your marriage, your own life, a relationship with a sibling or it's a task that you're trying to do, you're trying to start a company, it could be that you're trying to reboot your company, you could have fallen in hard times. You have doubters when you have a startup, but sometimes when you have a business that's been around for a while or a practice that's been around for a while, and it goes into a lull, hey those doubters are even more entrenched. You know what I'm talking about. Nothing, nothing can turn those doubters into allies faster than having a quick win.

What happened with Nehemiah is that God sent him, they were having these problems, God sent a man. Whatever is going on in your situation, God, the normal practice of God is God sends a man. You are the man, you are that man. You're the man that God ... God put a burden on your heart and makes you want to weep, mourn, fast and pray. You feel called to this project whatever it is, this rebuilding, you're the man. You're the Nehemiah in that situation. God wants to use you to do the rebuilding, and nothing's going to help you do that faster than getting a quick win. 52 days, that's a quick win. By the way, 52 days – okay, we're just talking about phase one of Nehemiah's rebuilding the country. All this that we've been talking about here, this week five, week six, this is week six.

This is week six, this is all just to get phase one off the ground, but here's the thing, once you get phase one off the ground – and there are four, five phases that we'll look at – we'll be able to consolidate some of those phases into one message because now what's happening is we have that flywheel turning. Do you know how much effort it took to get the flywheel started, all right? It took a lot of effort to get that first revolution, but now we're going to begin to see that the flywheel is going to turn faster and faster and faster, because we got to this place where we got this first win in 52 – 52 days that is.

Now, let's take a look at what getting a win can do for you. Well, one thing it can do for you is it can silence or at least rattle the opposition.

Verse 15 we read, let's go to verse 16, "When all our enemies heard about this." Nehemiah had enemies. You may not actually have enemies, you may have opponents. You may have resistors but in his case, there was clearly enemies because they were trying to physically harm the people. "When all our enemies heard about this and all the surrounding nations saw it, our enemies lost their self-confidence because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God." What happened? He got a quick win. His opponents they lost their confidence and God started to receive glory. A lot of times, I would have done it this way, but this is the way God seems to do it is He takes these situations and He lets them get confounded. He lets them get murky. He lets us get overwhelmed. He does things in such a way that unless He intervenes, all hope is lost.

All hope is lost unless God does something and intervenes supernaturally to mobilize a hundred years worth of failed efforts and then in 52 days rebuild the wall to secure this city, that is a divine intervention. People took note of it, and it says, "They realized that this work had been done with the help of our God. God brings himself glory through these circumstances often times." This is like the Gospel of Jesus too. Jesus came, he had opponents, he had enemies, he had people who wanted to kill him. He had people who did kill him. Sorry that didn't work out, guys, he rose again, but anyway, it's the same thing. He was able to through his miracles and through his teachings, he was able to silence and rattle his opposition. The question I guess here is what is your situation like? What is your situation like?

Can you see if you could get a quick win, in your situation, how these people that are doubters or opponents how it can silence or at least put a muzzle on some of these doubters. Maybe it's that you really felt like you wanted a career change, and everybody in your family was against it. They just thought that was so stupid for you to want to move from being a salesman to being an artist or whatever it is. The idea is that if you were to be able to have a quick win and maybe as an artist I don't know what a quick win is, maybe it's actually selling something for real money, I don't know, that would silence or at least rattle the people who will get you and begin to win some of the doubters over some of the allies to become better allies with you. Think of any other examples?

I have to say it, it's interesting I don't know where you are in your politics and I don't really care honestly where you are in your politics. I hope you don't care where I am in my politics and I'm not going to tell you what my politics are, because if you like my politics, that will be great, but if you don't like my politics, the risk factor is very high for us, because you're not supposed to talk about religion and politics and I'm already talking about religion so I'm not going to talk about politics. I will say that Donald Trump by getting a few corporations to say that they're going to, and I don't even know what the details are but you've heard some – Carrier Corporation, General Motors, Chrysler, Ford – jobs remaining here that ostensibly or at least so I heard would not have been remaining here. An investment being made here that to the best of my knowledge would not have been made here, he's got himself a couple of quick wins. He's created some real early momentum for the work that he is doing among people who care about such things.

Now I happen to be a person that cares about jobs and economy and fiscal responsibility, and I am fiscally conservative, that has nothing to do with my label or my brand. I am just fiscally conservative. I think debt's dumb. How many years have I been telling you that debt is dumb? How many of you have actually listened to that message that debt is dumb? This is what a quick win can do for you, it can turn doubters into allies very quickly, very quickly. Now just imagine for a moment that if Nehemiah had

been successful in rebuilding this wall and it took 20 years to rebuild that wall – would he have rebuilt the wall? Yes. Would it have been a good thing? Yes. Would it have created security for Jerusalem? Yes.

Would it have converted doubters into allies? No. No, because he would have been losing ... It's just like – I'm just making this up on the spot, but – King Saul marched into battle and then had his men just slowly desert him one by one. As the enemy looked overwhelming, his army just slipped away. Well, that's what would have happened to Nehemiah, but he got himself a quick win. Now the other thing that getting a quick win can do for you, it can mobilize even more allies to execute your vision. Verses 17 through 19, we're not going to look at, I'll just tell you very briefly what happens is that I said their silence or at least rattle, he didn't silence his opposition. He did rattle them, but you would read there that they continued to try to intimidate him. Chapter seven verse one, "After the wall had been rebuilt and I have set the doors in place, the gatekeepers, the singers and the Levites were appointed."

He was able to capitalize on the street cred that rebuilding this wall had given him. He was able to put his team together, gatekeepers, singers, Levites. He put his team together. He pointed his team. Verse two, "I put in charge of Jerusalem, my brother Hanani," these names are something to keep straight, "I put in charge of Jerusalem, my brother Hanani along with Hananiah, the commander of the citadel because he was a man of integrity or a faithful man." We've talked about faithful men here like every other week. God calls us to be what? Faithful. Not to produce a particular outcome, this was a man of integrity. Some of your versions will say faithful because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most men do. He put his team together, he appointed a mayor for Jerusalem. He appointed a chief of police for Jerusalem. He's rebuilding this country. He's putting his team together. He's putting his administration together.

Reading on verse three, "I said to them the gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot while the gatekeepers are still on duty, have them shut the doors and bar them also. Appoint residents of Israel as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses." He establishes the rule of law for the city and law and order. Verse four, "Now the city was large and spacious but there were few people in it, and the houses had not yet been rebuilt. My God put it in my heart," now we're into phase two, now we're into phase two, "God put it in my heart to assemble the nobles, officials, and common people. He registered them by their families and then he began to repopulate the city." In verse 70 of chapter seven, he also got the people to participate, I don't know if this was a form of taxation or charitable contributions, but some of the heads of the families contributed to the worth and then different amounts were given.

In verse 73, "The priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants along with certain other people and the rest of the Israelites settled in their own towns," and so because he got this quick win, he was able to consolidate that into a huge initiative." How was this like the Gospel of Jesus? Jesus came, he turned water into wine. He did a few other miracles. Can you imagine if Jesus had not had a few quick wins? The things that he was saying, the number of doubters that were around him, can you imagine those doubters becoming allies if Jesus had not consolidated a quick win or two? This relates right to the Gospel.

How about you? How is this like your situation? You have all of these steps that you know have to be taken in order for you to restore your marriage. Man, wouldn't it be awesome if your wife would agree to let you take her on a three-day weekend down to Naples, Florida, you see, to get a quick win? Things can begin to happen from there. Maybe it's that you have completely rebuilt your website and you've changed it from one website to 14 websites and then the big website is going to be just the portal but

you haven't changed the big website yet because you've been rebuilding all these little micro websites for all these different things that your company does. When you finally change the big website so that all of a sudden people come to your website and then they can get anything that they came looking for easily and quickly, you all of a sudden have yourself a big win and you can consolidate that, that's what Man in the Mirror is doing.

Brian is our manager of internet strategies and that's exactly what he has been doing for the last two years. He's taken our massive, the largest men's discipleship website in the world by a factor of 10, which also makes it the most cumbersome men's website in the world, and he's moved out all these like the Books by the Box Program is now booksbythebox.org. This Bible study is just recently been moved on to its own website. They've spent a year, they've taken every message we've ever done here and they have now loaded it into YouTube. Somebody can watch these websites on YouTube, subscribe to YouTube channel and then moved everything over to its own website, mimbiblestudy.com. He's done with a number of different things. He's about to have a huge win, a huge win when he launches this new portal that goes into all these things. What's going to happen is – we know it's going to happen – we're going to multiply the number of allies that we have in the ministry when they have the access to the resources that they need at their fingertips.

What is it for you? What is the thing? What is your view? What is it you're trying to rebuild? We're trying to rebuild manhood in America. We're trying to restore the book of manhood. Honestly, it looks like we're losing. It looks like we're losing, but we're not, we're actually winning because we're on the winning team. It might only be a finger in the dike at the moment, but you watch, you watch. Lots of doubters, lots of people don't think it can happen. Many people don't believe in systemic solutions anymore. They believe you can only attack problems atomistically but I stand before you as one who believes we can change the entire system. We can see a spiritual revival and awakening in the entire world, starting with men in America. It can be done, and after we get a few more, all we really need a few more quick wins and I think we will see, I don't even know why I'm talking about all this – well, I'm talking about it because I want to talk about it.

I think we are at a point where we and others who share this vision and other ministries, because we're certainly not alone, a few more wins and I think we're going to convert enough doubters into allies. We'll see a tipping point that will lead to an acceleration towards the vision. The big idea today is that nothing can do this, nothing can turn doubters into allies faster than getting a quick win. Where is it that you need a quick win? What would a quick win do for you? What can you do to make that happen this week?

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, only You know the bottlenecks that have been holding these brothers back, also the guys online. Lord, I pray that you would allow them to resolve that bottleneck and see an acceleration but then Lord that they would also be able to look around not at the end goal but at something that they can get a quick win at. Maybe it's just picking up the phone and calling the blood brother you've haven't talked to for 20 years, maybe that would give you a quick win. Maybe it's lowering your prices, maybe it's volunteering at the county level in politics or maybe somebody wants to see their church revitalized, rebuilt. Maybe a quick win would be just starting a small group at church and inviting a few couples or maybe a few men to join them. Lord, You know what each of us are burdened by, and I just pray, Father, that You would help us convert doubters into allies by giving each of us a quick win. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.