



*Week 8*  
**NO MORE STANDING  
ON THE SIDELINES**

As we head into this final week, let's think about how far we've come.

**You've made it to the final week. What has been the most impactful lesson you've learned from this study?**

Named the Super Bowl MVP for Super Bowl 52, Nick Foles had done what few could during the Patriots dynasty: win a Super Bowl championship against them. Even so, the Philadelphia Eagles chose to keep him on the sidelines for the next season. After all, he was the backup quarterback. And even as a Super Bowl winner, he remained that.

But in week 14 the Eagles' starting quarterback, Carston Wentz, tore his ACL. The season hadn't looked great for the team up until that point. They carried a losing record into the next week's game against arguably the strongest team in football, the Rams. Few had hopes of a win. But Foles achieved just that.

**What's one reason men become content on the sidelines of life?**

Even though the season was an eventual loss, it ended on a strong note, and many believe it's because one man moved from standing on the sidelines to participating on the field.

Men, God has a plan for you. You don't belong on the sidelines. This week we're going to look at how you can take part in everything God intended for you to do by fully engaging on the field of your life.

*Ask someone to pray before watching the video teaching.*

**WATCH**

*Use these statements to follow along as you watch video session 8.*

No more excuses. No more living an ordinary life. No more sitting on the sidelines.

Nehemiah became a man of faith, influence, perseverance, dedication, unwilling to compromise.

You are the one to see the rebuilding of the culture.

Nehemiah didn't make the distinction between sacred and secular. He was going to bring the spiritual into the secular.

There's a battle in the spiritual realm that's causing chaos in the physical realm.

You've been called to be a man of impact, not just be a man by nomenclature.

When the enemy rises up because he knows what will happen if you man up, you're going to experience God overriding what you didn't think could be overridden in your life.

I'm going to stand up for the divine principles of God, and I'm not going to give any more excuses.

## MAN UP

*Use the following questions to discuss the video teaching.*

**Read the following verse together.**

*For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.*

COLOSSIANS 1:29

*Strive* means “diligently pursue an outcome.” It involves hard work. Persistence. Effort. Consistency. And a whole lot of just plain determination. In this passage Paul tells us that his striving was done in the power of Christ, which strongly worked in him. Through His strength Paul was able to accomplish more than he ever would have on his own.

**When have you had to admit that you didn't have the strength necessary to complete a task? Who came to your aid?**

In the video Dr. Evans summarized the plotline of the popular movie *The Matrix*, in which a computer programmer is called on to literally save the world. He has a choice to make. If he takes the red pill offered to him, which contains certain powers, as well as entrance into another reality, he will be positioned to carry out his larger destiny.

Neo, the computer programmer, knows there's power in the pill. He also knows that the man offering him the pill believes in him enough to offer it. The combined force of this knowledge gives him the courage to get off the sidelines and into the battle on the field. We too have a red pill—the blood of Christ that works powerfully in us and gives us the ability to accomplish what can be done only through Jesus' power.

**What has Christ empowered you to do that you never could have done on your own?**

**How do we honor Jesus and the sacrifice He made on our behalf when we take hold of the power He gives us, get off the sidelines, and enter the game?**

**In what areas of your life is God calling you to get into the game?**

Dr. Evans used the example of a bowler who wears the right shoes and has all the right moves but can't knock down pins to represent a believer who looks the part but lacks true spiritual power. Looking good doesn't automatically equate with leaving a legacy of positive impact. We men have all the necessary equipment. Jesus has given us all we need to make a game-changing impact. To do that, we have to leave the sidelines behind and play the game in His power.

**Why do we settle for looking the part? How could the working of Christ's kingdom power make an impact in your spheres of influence?**

Kingdom men understand that making a kingdom impact involves more than looking the part. God seeks a man who truly influences the people around him for the kingdom of God. He's looking for a man, like Nehemiah, who risks his life to build God's kingdom in the world. Nehemiah was a government worker, not someone we think of as being a spiritual giant. Yet when Nehemiah saw a God-sized problem, he took a risk and asked to be subbed into the game. God is looking for bold obedience. He's looking for a man, like you, who will follow Him wherever He leads you to go.

**Legacies are built of small acts of greatness stacked on top of one another. What's one small act of greatness you can do this week for the kingdom of God?**

## PRAYER

*Close the session with prayer.*

Father, we want to make an impact. We want to be a part of Your team to lead this world to You. Help us get off the sidelines and start working toward the goals You've established for us to live out.

# HIT THE STREETS

## *Three Keys to Positive Impact*

Nehemiah had a tremendous impact on his entire nation at a critical time in history. His life modeled what it means to be a kingdom man. We can increase our positive impact for the kingdom of God when we seek to apply the following three spiritual qualities from Nehemiah's life.

### **1. A Man of Faith**

To be a man of faith, you must have a bigger view of God than of your enemies. If you have a bigger view of your enemies, they'll control you. Wind can't move an iceberg because most of an iceberg is beneath the surface of the water. But the current can move an iceberg, even in the face of a fierce wind, because the pull of the current is stronger than the push of the wind. If the pull of God is stronger in our lives than the push of our enemies, God's influence will win out.

I've been intimidated at various times, especially when my life was being threatened. But if I ever allowed the threats of the enemy to control me, I would have quit my ministry a long time ago. If we're going to do anything of lasting value for God, we must be men of faith. Times will come when we need to take a stand together, man to man, shoulder to shoulder, as men who believe in God.

### **2. A Man of Justice**

Nehemiah held the leaders of Jerusalem accountable for being men of honesty and justice. Then he reinforced the seriousness of the situation and the need to make things right. Nehemiah didn't let God's people get away with unjust business practices, with holding their brothers in slavery, and with the wealthy oppressing the poor.

Let's be honest with one another. Some of the deeds we as Christian men tolerate aren't even on the borderline. They're just wrong. If we're going to be men of godly impact, we must be men of justice like Nehemiah. We must practice justice, insist on it, and fight for it when necessary. The question we need to ask ourselves is, *What does God think?* not, *What will people think?*

### 3. A Man of Perseverance

If you want to make an impact, don't stop doing what God wants you to do. Don't give up the dream God gave you just because trouble shows up. Keep rebuilding. Don't let other people knock you off the wall. Too many of us hear the world say, "You can't make any difference. Don't even try. It's not worth the effort." Who says? I'll tell you who says. No one with any real authority. The problem is that we're listening to those voices rather than continuing the work.

Keep on going. Don't let people who have no spiritual perspective stop you. When you persevere in what God has called you to do, you have the opportunity to make an eternal impact.

### BIBLE STUDY 1

## *God's Ways*

Nehemiah was a Jew living in Persia as a servant of Artaxerxes, the king of Persia. He was a descendant of the Israelites who had been carried into captivity by the Babylonians, who were then conquered by Medo-Persia. Nehemiah had no personal history in Israel, but his heart was there because that's where God's people and God's heart were.

Nehemiah received a distressing report from his brother about conditions in Jerusalem:

*The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire.*

NEHEMIAH 1:3

Nehemiah was crushed, not only for the sake of his people but also for the sake of his God, because he knew these conditions were a reproach to God's name.

Nehemiah didn't start pushing for a political solution. Nehemiah didn't try to get the right person in office, get the right laws passed, or get the right programs in place. Nehemiah knew better, so he immediately bowed before God with tears, prayer, and fasting (see v. 4). He also turned to God's Word for the right perspective on his problem.

If you want to be a man of impact, you don't start with political, social, or economic solutions, although all three of these eventually came into play in Nehemiah's case. Rather, you fall before God in fasting and prayer, and you go to the Word.

**Read the following verses and record the common element in all of them.**

**Ezra 8:21**

**Acts 9:8-9**

**Esther 4:16**

**Matthew 4:1-2**

**Acts 13:2-3**

**Daniel 9:3**

**Jonah 3:5**

**Matthew 17:20-21**

Fasting and prayer are recurring themes throughout Scripture, particularly when an individual or a group of people were seeking to make a large impact on an entire culture or to carry out a mission of healing or service for God. When we get called into the game from the sidelines, fasting and prayer make up our first play.

**Does fasting always have to mean abstaining from food? From what other activities can we fast in order to focus on seeking God?**

Fasting is the reduction or removal of something that brings physical gratification as you seek God for a greater spiritual need. The temporary deprivation of something enjoyable helps us focus our attention on something better. Fasting is a means God uses to open our hearts and minds to the work He has for us.

Fasting isn't something you do casually. You can't just skip a meal or a TV show and call it a fast. Nehemiah wept as he fasted. Many biblical examples of fasting involved a contrite spirit. In relinquishing the power and attachment to the flesh, we let God know we're serious. Our full attention, surrender, and sacrifice can then be devoted to entering God's presence and crying out to Him.

**Prayer and fasting allow us to hear the Lord more clearly, but you have to make time for them. Over the next few weeks, when will you take the time to pray and fast? What will you fast from?**

Nehemiah fasted and prayed because the walls of Jerusalem had been torn down in battle. As a result, the city couldn't be safe and secure. Through fasting and prayer God led Nehemiah to action. However, Nehemiah mourned over the condition of the walls because he believed Jerusalem was the Lord's city that was meant to reflect His leadership and rule. To Nehemiah, the glory of the Lord was at stake.

Whatever walls are broken down in your life, your first action should be turning to God. Through prayer, fasting, and the Word, He will bring to your heart and mind the steps you must take to rebuild what has been destroyed.

**Read Nehemiah 2:1-5. What did God lead Nehemiah to do about the condition of his fellow Israelites and their city?**

**God placed Nehemiah in the king's service. Think about where God has placed you. How could you be used for His service in those places?**

**Read Isaiah 58:8-9. How does God's larger perspective give Him a different vantage point for viewing our situation?**

God has placed you where you are for a reason. Just as He placed Esther in the kingdom "for such a time as this" (Esth. 4:14) in order to save her people from certain death, and just as He appointed Nehemiah as the cupbearer to the king (see Neh. 1:11), God has a reason He has placed you where you are. God is intentional. Never let what you see determine the way you feel about your significance.

We don't have the perspective to understand all God is doing in the world. We don't know what God will do with simple obedience. It's not clear to us what God will do when we share the gospel with a coworker or seek to serve the neighbor down the street. God will take those extra moments we give to our wives and children and multiply them. He takes our ordinary obedience and multiplies it for kingdom impact.

**Players on the sidelines don't contribute to the game. In what ways have you been passive when God is calling you to be active? How could you make an impact if you got into the game?**

**Is there an area of life in which you need to hear from the Lord? When will you fast and pray specifically for this need?**

**Who could help hold you accountable to remain in the game now that you're off the sidelines?**

God knows the end from the beginning (see Isa. 46:10). He knows the plan. He knows what play to call. He's got the winning strategies for both offense and defense. And He can take you where you need to go. But being led by God requires fully seeking Him with your whole heart through fasting and prayer. It requires demonstrating your trust in Him by following His directions for every area of your life. If you want to be a man who makes a kingdom impact, then suit up. Get in the game. Play by His rules. His calls. And pursue His goals. His way.

## PRAY

Pray about ways you can make a greater impact for the kingdom of God. Seek to be faithful where He has placed you and ask Him to burden your heart in the specific areas where He wants you to make an even greater impact for Him.