

Rebuilding Spiritually

REBUILDING AND MATURING THE SPIRITUAL MAN

**DEFENDING AGAINST SPIRITUAL ATTACK –
ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY**

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To Win at War

- ▶ **Know Your Enemy** – His tactics, soldiers (i.e. false prophets), his strength and abilities, uniform, and morale towards destroying you
- ▶ 2nd Corinthians 2:11- Many Christians are “Disadvantaged” because they are ignorant of Satan’s devices – **Intelligence Reports:**
- ▶ **Satan’s morale** – he is highly motivated in stealing, killing and destroying Christians (John 10:10)
- ▶ **Area of Operations** – Strongholds, Occults, Culture, some churches
- ▶ **Soldiers:** His invisible kingdom and hierarchy of evil; false prophets, and those who are submitted to him
- ▶ **Strength** – He has no power over the believer except that we render to him; his greatest strength is in his deception



Good News! He Is Defeated

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Power of His Might

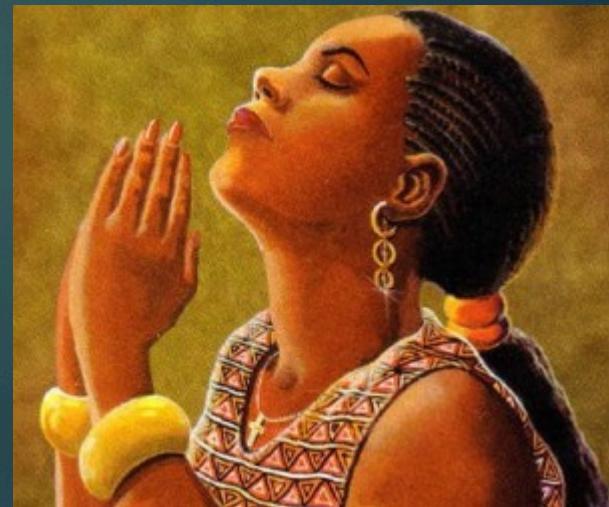
- ▶ Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might:
 - ▶ Literally, **Paul is saying strengthen yourselves in the Lord** just as David strengthened (encouraged) himself in the LORD his God in 1st Samuel 30:6
 - ▶ Paul also says to be strengthened with His might (power) through His Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16)
- ▶ Might is inherent power or force. A muscular man's big muscles display his might, even if he doesn't use them. **It is the reserve of strength.**
- ▶ Power is the exercise of might. When a person lifts a heavy weight, it means that now the reserve of strength (his might) is actually in operation.

Points of Emphasis

- ▶ God has given us His Might just as Saul tried to give David his armor, yet many Christians do not exercise God's might or power
- ▶ Many turn their physical or emotional strength upon themselves or others, wrestling against flesh and blood
- ▶ Having power is no good unless it is exercised and one needs to exercise in order to maintain might
- ▶ God has vast reservoirs of might that can be realized as power in our Christian life. But His might does not work in us if we passively. His might works in us as we step out to do the work in total reliance upon His strength

Strength Through Dependency

- ▶ **You are in a spiritual battle.** If you are ignorant or ignore that fact, you probably aren't winning the battle. We are combatting the wiles, schemes, and tactics of the devil
- ▶ The fact that our real battle is not against flesh and blood is lost on many Christians, who put all their efforts in that direction.
- ▶ Paul's idea here is much the same as in 2nd Corinthians 10:3,4: *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.*



We are Properly Armed

- ▶ 2 Timothy 1:7 - For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
- ▶ In 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Paul talks about the deceptive power of the enemy. Satan is the father of lies and will do whatever he can to keep us from walking in the powerful life of Christ.
- ▶ When we are driven by a spirit of fear, we act out the antithesis of power, love and a sound mind.

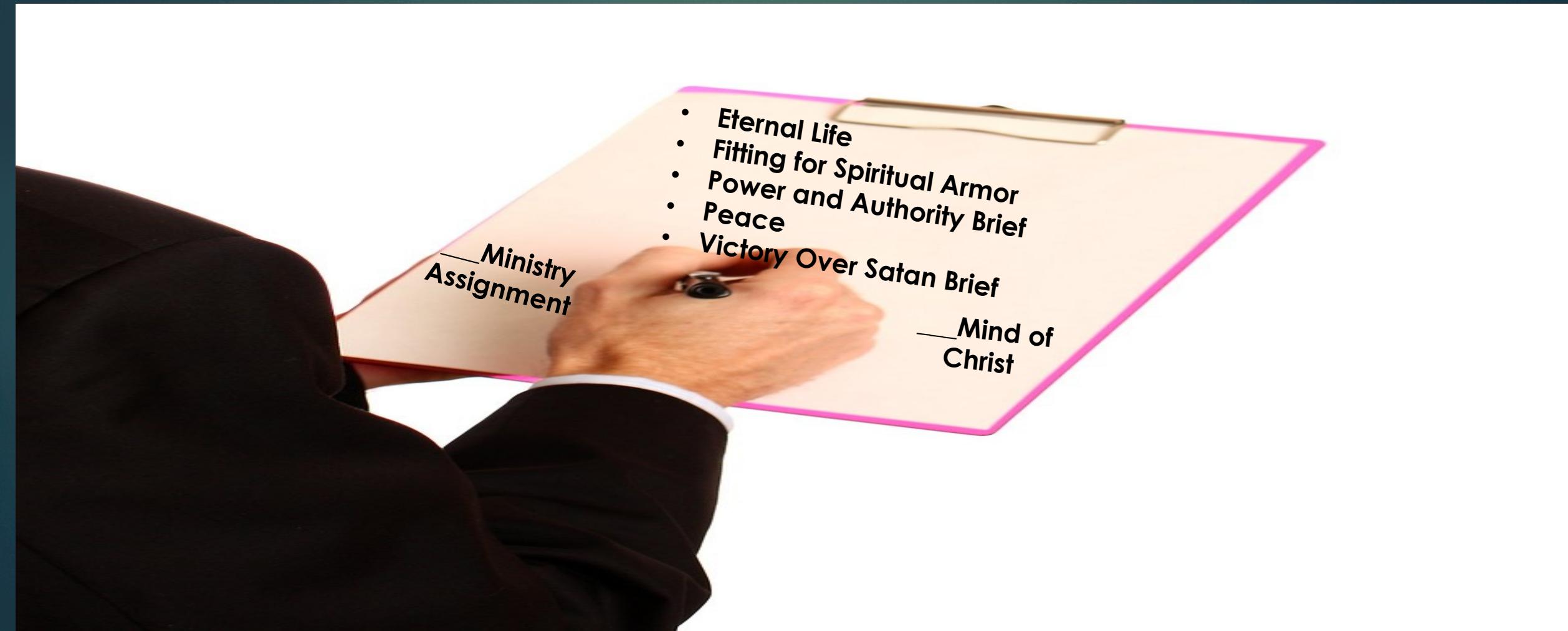
Spirit of Power, Love and Sound Mind – Are You Properly Armed

- ▶ **Spirit of Power** – Holy Ghost Power to overcome all the attacks of the enemy, bear spiritual fruit, lead and guide us into all truths, be effective ministers of the gospel, endure trials, and bring us to spiritual maturity
- ▶ **Spirit of Love** – In managing relationships – Drawing from God's Love to overcome strongholds and oppression
 - ▶ At the same time, maintaining peace and balance in our relationships with one another
- ▶ **Sound Mind** – Temperance, wisdom, knowledge, wholeness
 - ▶ Balance and control of our thought life, emotions, feelings,
 - ▶ Deliverance from strongholds, wicked imaginations

Reflect On This: Christian In-Processing

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Let's say that this is your first day as a Christian. See the Narrative on the following slide describing your In-Processing Brief



Narrative

Greetings New Born Babe in Christ

Just want to take this time and welcome you into the kingdom.

On behalf of Almighty God Lord Jesus, we are glad you made this decision that will affect you eternally.

As part of this in-brief, we want to make sure you are properly fitted for your spiritual armor. You definitely will need this.

By the way, we need to brief you about our adversary. Beware of him and don't listen to him – He is a liar.

Good news is that you have victory and power over him.

Here are your keys to the kingdom. We will provide someone to provide doctrine for you to continue in.

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

The Holy Spirit will connect with you and infill you shortly and assign you to ministry

God Has Given You Victory

- ▶ The goal of the Enemy is to get you to believe that you are defeated or that God is holding back on you – He wants to cheat you out of your victory
- ▶ Satan's strategy is to talk you out of what God has given and provided for you. We want you to forfeit your prize!

Numbers 22:2,3: Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel.

- ▶ Israel was advancing towards the Promised Land, they were victorious in battle. God had told them not to attack Moab, but Balak still feared
- ▶ King Balak couldn't defeat the Israelites, nor could he get Balaam to prophecy against them, so he deceived them into cursing themselves – Spirit of Balaam

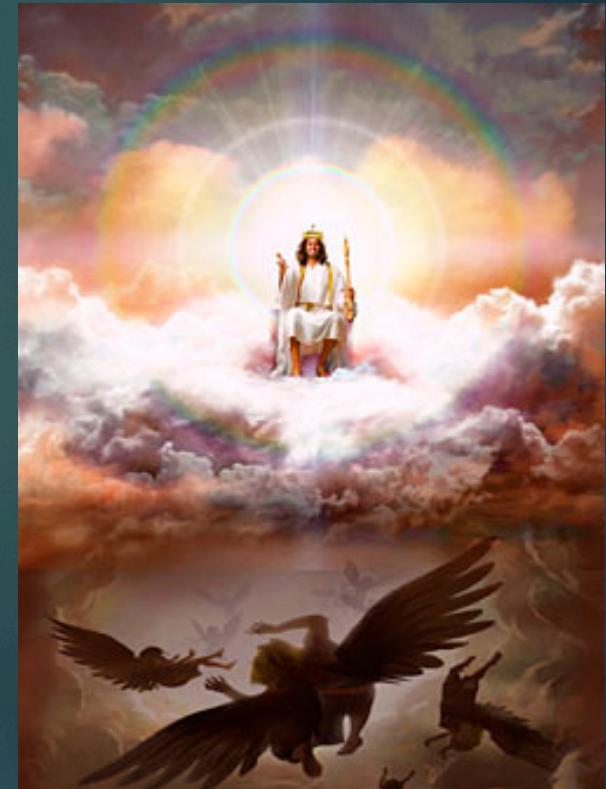
Don't Surrender

- ▶ **The Enemy cannot obtain victory over you without you surrendering first**
- ▶ *2 Peter 1:3 - seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*
- ▶ *1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour."*
- ▶ Adam and Eve had heaven on earth, but were “talked” out of it
- ▶ Satan seeks to steal, kill, and destroy, but he cannot take it from From you without you surrendering to him



Power and Authority

- ▶ "And having spoiled (defeated) principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them..." *Colossians 2:15*
- ▶ Satan and his evil spirits were stripped of all their authority
- ▶ **God has given you all power and authority**
 - ▶ "Behold, I give you authority... over all the power of the enemy..." *Luke 10:19 NKJB*
 - ▶ *We gain power from our authority, but authority is ineffective unless it is exercised*



Let's Go Back to Nehemiah

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- ▶ Nehemiah 4:7,8: But it came to pass, *that* when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, *then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder it.*
- ▶ When we do the work of God, it often makes the enemy of our soul angry. He sets himself against the progress being made by God's people in touching a lost world for Jesus Christ.
- ▶ **Satan's attack: Fear and Confusion**
 - ▶ A confused people will never move forward and fulfill God's work.
 - ▶ They are usually confused because they are distracted by the enemies tricks instead of focusing on God and His promises

If you are focusing on the squirrel, you have become distracted



Combating Satan's Attack

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- ▶ **Nevertheless we made our prayer to God: Nehemiah 4:9**
 - ▶ Jesus told the disciples as they attempted to drive out a demon (Matthew 17:21) that this comes by “prayer and fasting”
- ▶ **We set a watch: They also knew that prayer didn't mean they were to do nothing.**
 - ▶ **Jesus encourages us to Watch and Pray** - Matthew 26:41 - *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*
 - ▶ **To set a Watch is to Observe the Enemy and Guard the Fort**
 - ▶ *When we see an area of our Christian life that needs our attention, it isn't enough to just pray about it. You need to set a watch as well* - give special attention and accountability to that area of your life until you are walking in consistent victory
 - ▶ Our prayers do not replace our actions; they make our actions effective for God's work. (Guzik)

Avoiding C.H.A.O.S. – Don't Allow the Enemy to Succeed by:

- ▶ **C** – Creating an atmosphere or attitude of the mind and spirit that
- ▶ **H** - Hinders the flow of God's Spirit in our lives and relationships, providing
- ▶ **A** – Access and
- ▶ **O** - Opportunity for the enemy to infiltrate, occupy, and develop strongholds
- ▶ **S** – Setting the stage for oppression, sickness, disease, strife, confusion, etc.

James 3:16 - For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

1 Corinthians 14:33 - For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.



Access and Opportunity

- ▶ Sometimes we provide access and Opportunity unknowingly
- ▶ **That is why we can't be ignorant of Satan's devices**
- ▶ **Doorpoints** – Events that you have experienced that the enemy has used to take and maintain a stronghold (trauma, birth process problems, rape, financial loss, wounding in churches, etc.)
- ▶ **Ephesians 4:27: and do not give the devil an opportunity.**
 - ▶ Your adversary will strive to influence your mind, and irritate your spirit; watch and pray that he may not get any place in you, or ascendancy over you. (Clark)
 - ▶ **Give place** - opportunity, power, occasion for acting

NOTE: Satan doesn't need your permission to launch an attack against you. He just need access

Don't Be a “**Motel Six**” Christian – Stop welcoming the influence and spirits of the enemy in our life, your household, and your church



“We'll leave the light on for you”

Don't leave the Door Open! - Practical Applications

- ▶ Complacency, Compromise, Carnality
- ▶ Jesting, coarse communications, gossip, etc.
- ▶ Letting your spouse leave for work angry and in strife; poor communication
- ▶ Access to seducing web sites; not managing what you put before your eyes (eyes represent “access”)
- ▶ Not monitoring what your kids watch and engage in
- ▶ Not praying and fasting or interceding
- ▶ Not settling an argument between you and someone



Nehemiah Faced Two Challenges

- ▶ **From the Inside: Discouragement and Fear (Nehemiah 4:10)**
 - ▶ They considered the work to big for them to perform
 - ▶ Some believers see their spiritual maturity as a goal to big for them to perform
 - ▶ God has made you more than a conqueror, yet we can become conquered by unbelief, fear, lack of self control, works of the flesh, and weakness of spirit due to spiritual immaturity
 - ▶ They also had to clear the rubbish as they built the wall – Many of us do not want to deal with the rubbish or remove it from our lives
- ▶ **When discouragement and fear comes, the first thing affected is the work of God in us and through us**
 - ▶ As a leader, it's easy to lead when your followers are full of enthusiasm and have a heart to work, but once broken, it becomes a major trial

From the Outside: Enemy Attack (Nehemiah 4:11)

- ▶ Nehemiah's enemies planned a surprise attack - And our adversaries said, "*They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease.*"
- ▶ They planned the attack while the people's spirits were down
- ▶ God alerted the people through faithful Jews that an attack was coming - So it was, when *the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times,* "From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us." (Nehemiah 4:12)
- ▶ *This was not to cause fear, but to encourage preparation and defense*

From the Outside: Financial Attack

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Nehemiah 5:1-5:

Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers.

2 For there were those who said, "We, our sons and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain that we may eat and live."

3 There were others who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our houses that we might get grain because of the famine."

4 Also there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards.

5 "Now our flesh is like the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold, we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are forced into bondage already, and we [fn] are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others."

The Work Ceased

- ▶ Against their Jewish brethren: The work stopped because of *strife among God's people*. This strife was generated by Finances
- ▶ **Let us get grain for them, that we may eat:**
 - ▶ People had money problems because they worked hard on the walls and did not spend the same time on providing for the needs of their household
 - ▶ People had money problems because there was a famine, which made food more expensive. It was so expensive that some mortgaged their property to provide food. **A famine may not be your fault, but a national dilemma**
 - ▶ People had money problems because the government kept taxing them even though they weren't working as much and even though the cost of living went up.
 - ▶ **We have borrowed money . . . indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves:** People had financial problems because the loans they had taken out to live cost interest, and some were in default (High Mortgage)
 - ▶ As will be indicated later ([Nehemiah 5:11](#), the hundredth part), the rich were taking advantage of the crisis to make money off the poor, charging 12% interest a year.

What to Do?

- ▶ **Essential to handling our money with the right heart before God is being a giver. (Guzik)**
 - ▶ Being a giver to the work of the Lord helps us always remember that God and His kingdom come first.
 - ▶ The New Testament tells us our giving should be regular, thoughtful, proportional, and private ([1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#)); that it must be generous, freely given, and cheerful (2 Corinthians 9)
- ▶ **We sometimes want to separate what we do with our money from our walk with God. This is a huge deception from Satan.**
 - ▶ Buying a house is a spiritual decision, not just a financial one
 - ▶ Bad financial investments and wasteful spending can cause strife, depression, fear, stress, etc.
 - ▶ Money problems are usually linked to other problems



What Did Nehemiah Do?

- ▶ **I rebuked the nobles and the rulers:** He challenged those charging high interest rates encouraging them to act righteously as servants to God's people
 - ▶ We will restore it- the nobles repented and made positive changes
- ▶ **Set the Example – Putting the Work of God before Selfish Ambition (Deception)**
 - ▶ Neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions: Nehemiah was a great example of putting the work of God ahead of his own personal interest
 - ▶ He certainly had the right to tax the people for his support (others had done it before him), but he didn't take that right because it wouldn't help the work of God.
 - ▶ **Remember me, my God, for good:** Nehemiah did not look for praise from man - but from God. (Nehemiah 5:19)

Defending Against the Enemy

Nehemiah 4:12,13

Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”

- ▶ **They put on their armor to engage the enemy** – This is a spiritual battle – doing nothing is not an option
- ▶ **It was done by families** – Ministry begins in the home
- ▶ **Do not be afraid** - Nehemiah put their mind in the right by reminding them: “Remember the LORD, great and awesome”

Stand Ready

Nehemiah 4:17: Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon.

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- ▶ The kingdom of God is built with both a sword and a trowel: a sword to come against every spiritual force of wickedness in high places, and trowel to do the work of building up the people of God.
- ▶ Even though we may face enemy attacks and experience trials, we must be ready to defend and at the same time defend the work of God in you

A Sustained, Ready Defense

Christians need to be armed with the same attitude today. They need to be always ready, always clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, always wearing the armor of God, ready for that final trumpet blast that will gather us together with our LORD.

Nehemiah strengthened the defenses and repelled the enemy attack by having each person watching over the other person. They stayed alert, watching and praying

Even in the midst of trials and dire circumstances, integrity and good decisions sustained them.