

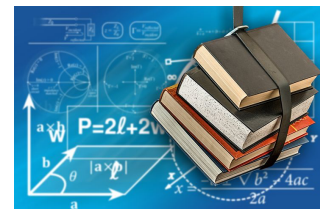
# THE IRRESISTIBLE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

**TEXT:** *Nehemiah 2:10: When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the Children of Israel.*

*Nehemiah 4:6: So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.*

## INTRODUCTION

Success does not just happen nor does it come by accident. Every successful undertaking, whether it be financial, material, military, political, or religious, definitely has a formula for its success. Plans have to be carefully made and executed. Patience and wisdom must come along with just plain hard work. If you want to be successful, you must have more than plans, more than a formula. You need some good honest elbow grease.



One of the great men of the Bible was Nehemiah. His biography is among the greatest success stories in all the Bible. He was one of the last of the great reformers of his day. God laid His hand upon him and touched his heart to the point where he was willing to deny himself in order to seek the welfare of the people of God. It seemed very unlikely that this man would ever make his mark in the world. His country lost a war, he had been exiled from his own land, and on top of all that he was a slave as a prisoner of war.

Nehemiah was reared in the Palace of Artaxerxes, King of Persia. He rose to cup-bearer for this oriental monarch. Now we find him amid the glamour and glory of a Persian court. He is the favorite servant of the king, adorned with the chains of gold. He is enjoying a measure of success which can be quite dangerous to some.



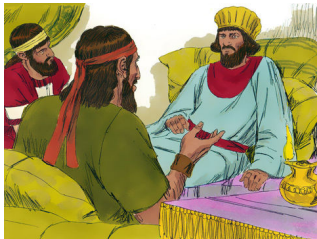
Many allow a little prosperity to go to their heads, and it becomes an end in itself. They never aspire to anything higher. This also happens in the work of the Lord, God has blessed, and some will make a feathered nest and settle down into it.

God often gives us just a measure of success to test our love, loyalty, and faithfulness to Him. When we pass the test, then He will lead us into the greater

things He has for us. Some who are blessed with success turn their noses up at others, become proud and arrogant, and become domineering. Then there are others who feel that they have “arrived”, and just sit down and park by their past successes and try to enjoy them. They allow themselves to become lazy and idle, and they deteriorate.



Nehemiah’s highly-favored position did not go to his head. It was an easy life —tasting the food and wines which were to be set before the king to be sure that they were not poisoned or drugged. He attended many top-level conference meetings and was often present at the great banquets. He might have thought the future looked pretty bright and secure. But this little measure of success was to be interrupted by the coming of Hanani, one of his kinsmen.



God had sent Hanani to Shushan, the palace, to commission this faithful servant to a higher commission in Divine service.



Nehemiah heard the shocking and disturbing news of the downfall of Jerusalem. The walls were broken down, the gates were burned, and the people were poor and suffering under great reproach from the enemy.

The bad news broke his heart and brought him down to his knees in intercessory prayer. He could have said: *“What is that to me? I’ve got too good a thing to leave. Tell the people back home that I’ll be praying for them and wish them good luck and better days in the future.”*

Nehemiah couldn’t do a thing like that, and God knew it. He was a man of character. He could see the needs of his people with the eyes of his soul, and his compassion for them rose to the surface, causing him to act. The first formula to success is:

**Visualize the Need Until it Moves you to Action.** The Bible says:



***Nehemiah 1:4: 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,***

God put a strong motivation within Nehemiah’s heart which challenged him to face all opposition and hindrances with divine strength. Nehemiah became willing to sacrifice his position in the court of Artaxerxes. He became willing to give up the luxury of living in the palace, and to sacrifice the comforts of his surroundings. He was willing to lay all his worldly favor down for the suffering affliction with the people of

God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He was willing to deny himself, to take up his cross, and to follow the Lord's Will all the way.



**To fast and weep and then do nothing about it is worthless. Our prayers must produce faith to act when we know God's mind.**

Nehemiah was determined to stand before the king and bring the needs of his people to his attention. In those days, no one was permitted into the king's presence with a sad and long face. A gloomy face could spell the end of his job or even death. When King Artaxerxes saw the grief and sorrow written on his face, he asked why his countenance had fallen. It is interesting to notice that the Bible says: *Nehemiah was "sore afraid"*, and this tells us enough about the attitude of the king toward sourpuss people. Nehemiah's faith and love for God and people carried him into danger without flinching. His courage found favor with the king and caused the king to ask what his request was.



When this man of God unburdened his heart to the monarch, his desire was instantly fulfilled. The king released him from his service, and even sent him to the Holy Land with supplies and an army for protection. This speaks of the confidence that the top leader of Persia had in Nehemiah and his purposes. But all this did not get the job done. The walls were still down, the gates were still burned, and Jerusalem was still an easy prey to her enemies.

Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, and for three days he hid his mission. At night time, he would walk out alone and observe the situation and plan his strategy. He did not say to the people: *"I've come to tell you what to do."*



***Nehemiah 2:18: Then I told them of the Hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work."***

This was a much better approach than demanding them to work with him because of his position.

When wisdom is coupled with humility, it wins people and inspires them to cooperate. The text of this study says:

***Nehemiah 4:6: So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.***

They mobilized their full potential, and each one joined their forces together for the great task before them. All kinds of people, from merchants to goldsmiths, worked together in the all-out effort to rebuild for God what the enemy had

destroyed. Entire families worked together in their assigned place to fill all the gaps. When we can win favor with the higher ups and also with other people, God has to be in the arrangements, somewhere. And He was.

No one ever worked for God without stirring up the enemies of the Lord. Nehemiah found this to be the case very soon after they began when their adversaries began to mock and ridicule their efforts. There were some men, a trio of them, whose names are: Sanballet, Tobiah, and Gesham the Arabian.

***Nehemiah 2:10: When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the Children of Israel.***

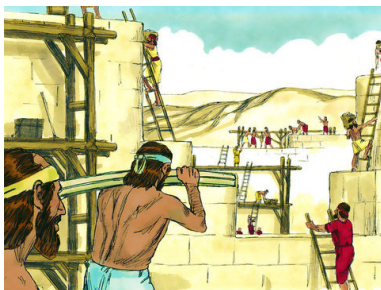
The system they used to hinder Nehemiah is the very same method which satan uses today.

1. First they laughed the builders to scorn. Tobiah said that a fox would be able to break down the wall by just running on it. Then all the loafers standing about began to laugh and jeer in union. God's servant and the Jews survived this mocking, humiliation, and scorn. Nehemiah urged the people to go on with the work and to disregard their foes. God had told them what to do, and they must do it regardless of the opposition.



2. Then the adversaries called in the army of the Samaritans to make a display of power and strength against the people of God.

***Nehemiah 4:12: And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.***



They threatened ten times to destroy them, but through the protective power of God and the good leadership of Nehemiah, the people continued on with the work of God. They placed lookouts with trumpets around the camp to warn the workers of any enemy attack. Then, each man worked with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. Finally, the enemies of Israel and their God gave up and quit.

3. Sanballet then tried a new tactic, a new device in his wiles to thwart the purposes of God. It is recorded in:

***Nehemiah 6:2: That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying,***

***Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.***

They wanted to negotiate and have consultations, as they are calling it today. Five times they sent this petition to Nehemiah, but Nehemiah would not fall into their trap. I liked his answer:

***Nehemiah 6:3: And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?***

He was too busy serving the Lord to waste his time listening to those whose words were snares and pitfalls. There can be no compromises with the forces of evil. A real servant of God will not come to terms with the devil's crowd, for it would be to his hurt and the beginning of his downfall. Many have fallen into this snare and have never recovered themselves.

**There can be no compromises with the forces of evil.**

4. The devil never gives up, and having failed to stop God's work, Sanballet made a last ditch effort, a final try. He found a false prophet by the name of Shemaiah who was willing to give a deceptive prophecy.

***Nehemiah 6:10: Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the House of God, within the Temple, and let us shut the doors of the Temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.***

If Nehemiah would have nibbled at this false bait and allowed the people to see cowardice in him, it would have weakened all the forces of righteousness. He would have lost his position as leader, and the unity of the spirit would have been broken. Listen to the tremendous response:



***Nehemiah 6:11: And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.***

***Mark 8:35: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it.***

## CONCLUSION

The Bible says:

***Nehemiah 6:15: So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.***

Nehemiah and the faithful workers were ultimately successful because every man stood in his place and refused to be scared off.



All those letters sent by Tobiah to put Nehemiah into fear . . .

***Nehemiah 6:19: Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.***

A woman by the name of Noadiah under demon powers could not find a crack in Nehemiah's spiritual armour. He knew what it meant to:

***Ephesians 6:11-13:***

***11 Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.***

***12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***

***13 Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.***



The walls of Jerusalem were restored, the gates rebuilt, and the Holy City was once again made secure and had protection from the outside forces of evil. The same steps which were taken back there in the historic past are as necessary today if we are to finish this great task of fulfilling the great commission of reaching the lost world for the Lord. Let us note again these ten steps which the servant of God took to accomplish that gigantic task.

- 1. He was made to realize the need.**
- 2. His heart was stirred to action.**
- 3. He met God with fasting and prayer.**
- 4. He was willing to deny himself and sacrifice his own life for the sake of others.**
- 5. He walked in real humility before God and the people.**

6. He refused to be discouraged by ridicule and scorn.
7. He was willing to fight when threatened.
8. He refused to fall into the devil's trap of compromise.
9. He would not be satisfied with partial success, insisting on complete victory, without appeasement.
10. He was faithful unto the end to God — all the glory to God for all that was accomplished.

***Nehemiah 6:16: And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.***

Then all the people began to worship the Lord.

You cannot lose when you keep God in all your endeavors. You cannot suffer defeat when you are on God's side and He comes to your help. Those who honor the Lord, He will honor, and He will never allow them to suffer defeat at the hands of the enemy.

**You cannot lose  
when you keep  
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endeavors.**

If we take these same ten steps to success right here today, we can begin a new life in Christ that will bring joy and gladness to all the children of God. For the joy of the Lord is our strength ...

***Nehemiah 8:10: Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the Joy of the LORD is your strength.***

God knows we need supernatural strength to resist wicked spirits and the powers of darkness working through those who are sinners, through backsliders, and even in carnal Christians.

We can be successful in our spiritual warfare, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

***2 Corinthians 10:4: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)***

We can be successful in our financial endeavors when we keep God first in our hearts by seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness, then all these things shall be added unto us.

***Matthew 6:33: But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.***

We can be successful in raising our children in this drug-polluted society with all its jungle beat, so-called music which hypnotizes the minds and senses of our youth. This formula for success will work in every situation that is challenging us to back down and retreat.

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