

The Family Time

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Isaiah 58:12 And [they that shall be] of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

As I said in our last session in reference to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, it was not sufficient to rebuild only the temple, but the walls also were to be rebuilt. Isaiah 58:12 makes that quite clear. The example of Abraham's family is one which, While often ignored, is a powerful illustration of what works. PP 141.1 says:

Abraham's household comprised more than a thousand souls. Those who were led by his teachings to worship the one God, found a home in his encampment; and here, as in a school, they received such instruction as would prepare them to be representatives of the true faith. Thus a great responsibility rested upon him. He was training heads of families, and his methods of government would be carried out in the households over which they should preside. {PP 141.1}

Let it be understood that Abraham's task was not an easy one. Listen to the second paragraph of Patriarchs and Prophets, page 141:

In early times the father was the ruler and priest of his own family, and he exercised authority over his children, even after they had families of their own. His descendants were taught to look up to him as their head, in both religious and secular matters. This patriarchal system of government Abraham endeavored to perpetuate, as it tended to preserve the knowledge of God. It was necessary to bind the members of the household together, in order to build up a barrier against the idolatry that had become so widespread and so deep-seated. Abraham sought by every means in his power to guard the inmates of his encampment against mingling with the heathen and witnessing their idolatrous practices, for he knew that familiarity with evil would insensibly corrupt the principles. The greatest care was exercised to shut out every form of false religion and to impress the mind with the majesty and glory of the living God as the true object of worship. {PP 141.2}

His task was not an easy one, and likewise, it will not be an easy task today. ST, December 13, 1883 par. 1 says:

Those who were restoring the defenses of Jerusalem did not go forward in their work unmolested. Satan was busy in stirring up opposition and creating discouragement. The principal agents in this movement were Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian. These idolaters had exulted in the feeble and defenseless condition of the Jews, and had mocked at their religion, and ridiculed their devastated city. And when the work of rebuilding the wall was entered upon, they with envenomed zeal set themselves to hinder the undertaking. To accomplish this, they attempted to cause division among the workmen by suggesting doubts and arousing unbelief as to their success. They also ridiculed the efforts of the builders, declared the enterprise impossibility, and predicted a disgraceful failure. {ST, December 13, 1883 par. 1}



The task seemed impossible. Listen to PK 628.2

The returned exiles were suffering affliction and reproach. The temple and portions of the city had been rebuilt; but the work of restoration was hindered, the temple services were disturbed, and the people kept in constant alarm by the fact that the walls of the city were still largely in ruins. *{PK 628.2}*

So what did Nehemiah do?

Overwhelmed with sorrow, Nehemiah could neither eat nor drink; he "wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted." In his grief he turned to the divine Helper. "I . . . prayed," he said, "before the God of heaven." Faithfully he made confession of his sins and the sins of his people. He pleaded that God would maintain the cause of Israel, restore their courage and strength, and help them to build up the waste places of Judah. *{PK 629.1}*

And As Nehemiah prayed, his faith and courage grew strong. When we pray, our faith will be strengthened. That is why Child Guidance page 517, paragraph 1 says:

The Need for Family Prayer.--Every family should rear its altar of prayer, realizing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If any persons in the world need the strength and encouragement that religion gives, it is those who are responsible for the education and training of children. They cannot do their work in a manner acceptable to God while their daily example teaches those who look to them for guidance that they can live without God. If they educate their children to live for this life only, they will make no preparation for eternity. They will die as they have lived, without God, and parents will be called to account for the loss of their souls. Fathers, mothers, you need to seek God morning and evening at the family altar, that you may learn how to teach your children wisely, tenderly, lovingly. *{CG 517.1}*