

Pt. 9 – The Spiritual Exercises – Step Up, Step Into Your Destiny

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Nathaniel Bronner: As Christians, we need to be honorable and diligent in everything we do, because you are representing Jesus and God.

Female: You are listening to brothersoftheword.com. This is Part 9 of the series titled, "The Spiritual Exercises", subtitled "Step Up, Step Into Your Destiny" by Nathaniel Bronner. This sermon is number 5854.

(Music Playing: 00:00:23 - 00:00:34)

And now for The Spiritual Exercises Part 9, Step Up, Step Into Your Destiny.

Nathaniel Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word, because brother, you need the word. I am still in the midst of a series simply called "Spiritual Exercises". Right now, this is Part 9, I've got one more to go after today. But basically, it's dealing with just practical exercises that you can do with virtual and no equipment.

I watched a documentary a couple days ago, and it was basically about people who were 80, 90, 100 years old, but they were living in the full vibrancy of life and there were two things that all of them had in common, the first thing they had in common was the attitude in life.

They said, "Find the good stuff and be nice to folks." That was the first thing they had in common, but the second thing they had in common, they all kept moving. Everyone of them was active, none of them were sitting down all day and you could see these people, the oldest person was 105 and they were just moving every single day. Most of them were still going to work every day. They were doing something every day. So, the spiritual exercises, they relate to our spirit but we want our bodies in good shape.

I told you last, we had two people kind of close who just passed away and they were all younger than I am. So, you can not only live and not get your fullness of days, but your final years. They're often filled with pain, and agony, and medicine. You don't have to be that way.

I believe God wants his people healthy. The main thing Jesus came to do was to save our souls, but his major miracle was in healing sick bodies so we don't have to be sick. But in order for

us not to be sick, we've got to do some stuff to help keep us from getting sick.

So, thus God has ordained the series called Spiritual Exercises. Today for Part 9 is simply entitled, Step up, Step into your Destiny. Now, this exercise really doesn't require a chair but you can do it with a chair. You can actually do it with steps which is what I recommend for the majority of people. All of these exercises you can do without equipment, the only piece of equipment is a chair. The step up is simply this, you just step up in the chair, do this, you come back down, you go up with your left leg first then up, back down, go up with your right leg, up, back down. By the time you do this a whole a lot, your legs will get in real good shape.

Everybody has a chair, and if you don't have a chair, or if the chair was too high, you just use steps. So, all you do is stand on the steps, up, down. My feet are kind of big so, I have trouble with steps. Special or short steps like that, but you use steps if you don't want to strain yourself, if your balance is not really good, if your legs are not strong don't use a chair, but if you can, use a chair. This is going to give you a whole lot more exercise.

Now, the step-up exercise was really relevant to me, because many of you know we just got back on our annual brothers' trip. For our annual trip, it was Pastor James' choice, we went to China. While we were in China, we went to the Great Wall of China. It was not the most rigorous set of steps I had ever encountered in my life. As a matter of fact, put up the first slide. The first slide -- this is a picture of actually what they had before you walked up the wall then it says, "If you have heart or brain disease, please climb the great wall according to your capability." I had never seen brain disease, I'm saying, "What did they mean if you had --" if you're crazy, because you almost had to be a little to crazy to climb that Great Wall of China" it was some serious, serious climbing.

You know, God just like that placard that was there, is not going to ask you to do anything beyond your capability, but he will ask you to step up. He's not going to ask you to do something that you cannot do. Now, he might ask you to do something that you think you cannot do.

But if God ask you to do it, it means, you can do it, or it means you can do it and he will empower you to do it or open the way for you to do it. When God asked you to do something most of the time, He is asking you to step up, but He will ask you based on your capability. It's like with the Parable of Talents. This is the master who gave each of the servants according to their own ability. So, he will ask you to do something and it will be within your capability.

Now, put up the second picture. Now, this is what the Wall looked like at the bottom getting ready to go up. That's just a small portion of the journey. We thought that were the top of the Wall when we were looking at it, but when we got there, that was only about a third in the way up. Behind the hill is a whole number set of steps and another massive mountain. That's the way it is sometimes when God would ask you to do something. You think it's a little bitty something, but by the time you get into that thing, it would take you longer and it's harder than you thought. But still, He will ask you to step up and He will ask you to go beyond your comfort zone to get done what is your destiny.

Now, put up the next picture. This is also a picture from the bottom, and you kind of see a little bit from the side but still, a lot of step you can't see. Now, go to the next picture. This is a picture of the brothers as were headed up. Do you know any climb or any great task is a lot easier if you're not alone? That's why Jesus never sent the disciples out by themselves. Anything you have to do, it's always a lot easier if you're not alone. You see, you're climbing the steps, the other person is not doing a thing to help you up, but it's just looking at somebody else struggling helps you. It really does when you've taken upstairs, "Man, this thing rough." (00:07:00) you know, that show is -- does something to just help you to make it because you can see somebody else making it.

Go to the next picture. Now, these are the steps about halfway up and the steps were steep, they were not even, some of the steps were really, really tall that you had to just stretch and some were really, really short. It was some of the toughest and most difficult steps I'd ever seen. Go to the next slide. Now, we actually separated into two groups and C. Elijah and I, we were together. So, this is when C. Elijah and I made it to the top.

Go to the last picture. This is C. Elijah smiling, getting ready to go down. Now, it is interesting that C. Elijah really smiled and laughed the whole way up and I asked C. Elijah I said, "Man, you're in real good shape," I said, "How are you in this kind of shape?" C. Elijah says this, he said, "You see, I play basketball with young kids in their teens and early 20s." C. Elijah said, "When I play basketball with young kids," he said, "I had to step up my game." So, he had to step up his basketball game but because he did that, when he got ready to make the Great Wall of China, he had the strength and the energy and he just smiled.

As a matter of fact, we were coming down and there was another man coming up and he asked because he was on our tour bus. He asked C. Elijah if he had seen his wife. C. Elijah said, "No, I haven't seen your wife." He says, "A matter of fact --" he said, "When I was coming up, I was moving so fast all of the people were just a blur." So, he was just having fun even in the midst of one of the roughest climbs. In the next two days, my legs were sore and I was in pretty good shape, but then the steps, I had just never been up a freight solid over a solid mile of just step (00:09:12).

You know, I was just coming up in the front in the ark. Can you imagine if you did that a whole mile and a half, just straight up steps, just real high and you got to walk that whole thing that distance. So, that's kind of what it was like, but see, when God asked you to step up, it may strain you but it will take you to your destiny. I want to use today even relating to our Great Wall experience and the biggest step challenge I ever had. I want to use in the Bible when Nehemiah had to rebuild the wall.

Now, many of you know the story, if you've been in church, you know the story of Nehemiah. Nehemiah is a relatively short book of only about 12, 13 chapters. But it deals with when the wall of Jerusalem had become torn down and they had raided the city and destroyed the city and they had destroyed the wall.

00:10:05

There, Nehemiah, he was in the king's palace and when his relative came to him and told him that the wall was destroyed, it began in Nehemiah Chapter 1 with him just pleading out to God about the wall and all of his forefathers and how he was so disheartened and yet, Nehemiah was a person who rebuilt the

wall or spearheaded rebuilding the wall in only 52 days and the wall of Jerusalem that goes around it, the wall is two and a half miles around. It's 40 feet high and eight feet thick. Still nowhere near the Wall of China but it's still a big wall to rebuild in 52 days.

But I want you to understand who Nehemiah was. A lot of people, if they're not familiar with the story, they think Nehemiah was a king. He wasn't the king, he just worked in the palace. Nehemiah was a cup bearer. Now what's a cup bearer? A cup bearer basically brings the king his wine. Nehemiah was a butler. He was a butler but yet, this butler was able to rebuild the great Wall of Jerusalem.

You know, have you ever looked out in the world or looked at a situation and saw just a bad or a messy situation and said to yourself, "Somebody ought to do something about that. Somebody ought to fix that. Somebody ought to make that situation better." Nehemiah looked out and heard about the wall and Nehemiah said, "I need to step up." It's easy to see situations and complain about situations, it's another thing for you to step up and do something about that situation. Nehemiah, looking at it in the logical was not in a position to do anything about it. He was not a contractor and he was not a wealthy man. Nehemiah was a butler. But Nehemiah had three things going for him that literally allowed him to do what would have been impossible under normal circumstances. What is it has been laid upon your heart that you figure you just can't do because of your circumstances?

But yet, Nehemiah I want to read in Nehemiah Chapter 2 from that first verse the INV version, "In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king." He was a cup bearer, a butler. "I had not been sad in his presence before, so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of Heaven, and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him,

asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?” It pleased the king to send me; so, I set a time. I also said to him, “If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king’s forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?”

Because the gracious hand of God was upon me, the king granted my request. The king had also sent army, officers and cavalry with me.” Now, I want you to understand this situation. This was a butler to the king and the king noticed that Nehemiah was sad. Then, this is the key part. He had never seen Nehemiah sad before. See, some folks you’ve seen them (00:14:35). Do you understand what I mean? Some folk if you see them sad or upset it (00:14:42). But here, Nehemiah and see to work for the king meant that you were in the inside, you were trusted. He had been there; he had worked his way up. He had been there a long time. It says that the king had never seen Nehemiah sad.

00:14:59

So, when he saw Nehemiah sad, he knew there was something unusual because the king says, “This is normally a man full of joy. So, if he has a sad (00:15:11) on his face, there’s something seriously wrong. And let me ask him what is wrong.” And then, when Nehemiah told him, the king asked a second question he said, “What is it that you want? What is it that you want?”

You know if God were to ask you like he asked Solomon. “What is it that you want?” Most folk don’t know what they want. They really don’t. If you ask them, “What do you want?” Most people got this one idea that pops in their head, “I want some money.” They really don’t even know about that. They really don’t even know about that. If you ask them, “Well, how much money do you want?” “Well, uhm?” They really don’t know. “What are you going to do?” “I don’t know.”

So, most folk don’t know what you want. Turn to the person and ask them, “What do you want?” See, that’s one of the main things about getting anything. See, Nehemiah, when the king asked him, he said, “Nehemiah, what’s wrong with you?” He could instantly tell him what was wrong with him and what about him.

It was about someone else in another land who was in trouble. Then he asked him, "How long is it going to take you?" Nehemiah told him. He told him how long.

See, this is the difference between a person who thinks but I want you to also understand that even when the king asked him before he answered the king he prayed. Before he answered the king, he prayed. He got a divine guidance. He got a divine guidance but he still gave natural wisdom and he had a serious track record. I didn't have to ask whether the king was fussing at Nehemiah about being late with his wine. He was right on time every day with the King's wine, with a smile on his face. See, you know, you got anybody in your life where if they're gone, you're worried about when they're coming back? There two extremes on that. There's the type that if they're gone, you're worried about when they're coming back.

Right now, Suzanne, the church administrator, she's also the main person in my business. She's out of town right now. I was wondering, "When is Suzanne coming back?" Do you know when you got somebody who's really good, who you can depend on, who always has a smile you wonder if they're missing.

The king asked Nehemiah, "When are you coming back?" Now, the king could have gotten plenty of folk to bring his wine. But do you know your food tastes different based on who's bringing it? Now, I know that doesn't chemically make sense, but your food taste different based on who's bringing your food. It tastes different based on who's preparing it. Somehow there's a spirit that goes into your food. I can't even explain it.

The little old ladies who make me my German chocolate cake every year, I'm trying to stop eating that cake but I remember one year, I just ate a whole load of it. I ate almost half the cake in one day. Normally, my skin is still super sensitive. It will break out with that much grease and sugar and it didn't break out. I was trying to figure out, "Why am I not reacting to this cake?" It took me a while to understand it. The cake was made with so much love, it wouldn't even bother me.

So, sometimes, the king was asking Nehemiah, "When are you coming back?" Nehemiah was able to tell him exactly when he was coming back and he told the king exactly what he needed and

why. Now, I want you to understand this, the king sent an army with his butler. He sent an army with his butler.

Too often, as Christians, we don't have do our job. The king didn't ask Nehemiah about his religion. He sent an army because his butler asked him but his butler knew exactly what he wanted. Exactly when he was coming back. He won't wishy washy and he knew exactly why. The king said, "This man has been faithful all these years. I've never seen him with anything but a smile on his face. Whatever he wants, I'm going to grant it."

God worked on his heart. But see, God can even work on a heart if he'd been a (00:19:32) employee. In our men's meeting, I had to deal with a situation we've had in the prior because we've had a couple of religious folks coming out talking about how they didn't have super natural debt cancelation because they just didn't pay their bills. I mean, they had no super natural debt cancelation, you just didn't pay your bills. There are no supernatural about that and you live a bad mark on Christianity because now, they're going to say, "I am Chris -- I am the pastor in particular didn't pay his bills."

00:20:00

I can guarantee his church can't get a bit of credit because they're going to check the pastor's credit first. You don't go through life with not paying your bills, telling about some supernatural, that ain't supernatural debt cancellation, that dead beat. That's the difference in that. See, there's no way in the Bible that tells you not to pay your bills, nowhere. In those scriptures, you're coming out there, (00:20:20) to do but you're not paying your bills. Jesus said, "Render unto Ceasar, what is Ceasar's, and unto God what its God." Pay your bills because it leads a bad mark on all Christians, when Christians and in particular, pastors don't pay their bills. They're go put their whole spirit over the man's whole congregation. He didn't pay his bills, you're sitting on the pastor, he didn't pay his bill (00:20:43) I got to pay mine.

That's why when I bought my townhome units, the contractor told me, three kind of folks don't you rent to. Don't rent to friends, don't rent to artist, and don't rent to preachers. I said, "My goodness, what do you mean don't rent to the man?" "Because he had experience with just like that man who wouldn't pay his bills."

So, Nehemiah was an honorable man and as Christians, we need to be honorable and diligent in everything we do because you are representing Jesus and God. Sometimes, the only people in the world that they will see of the church is going to be you. If they know you are a Christian, then they're going to look -- let me see how Christian's act. Let me see how Christian's work. Let me see how Christians talk. Let me see how Christians do. Let me see if a Christian would buy this hot stuff. When you buy it, Amen to that.

That's why Ghandi said, "If the world knew the Christ of Christians, they would accept him. But because they know the Christian's of Christ, they reject him." We got to be like Nehemiah. The king granted his request and sent an army with him because he was an honorable man and Nehemiah went and rebuilt the wall. So, what is it that you want?

I want you to just go to that first chapter of Nehemiah and just read the prayer that Nehemiah prayed when he heard about the wall. He thanked God and then, he told God, "Lord I know we have been disobedient to your Word." And he repented. And God showed favor on Nehemiah.

I want you to go and just read all what Nehemiah -- it wasn't that easy to get their own rebuild. Nehemiah had every kind of problem come up. He had folk friend that kill him. He has the folk within the Jewish community who would missed treating other Jewish that he had to get straight, he had one -- do you know when you go and build something, you're going to have challenges and issues trying to step-up? It's never easy stepping up because it goes against the law of gravity.

You have to fight flesh and you have to fight based in nature to step up, it's easy to go down. We're not that easy because coming down off that wall was about as hard as going up. C. Elijah was just bouncing down. Coming down was about as hard as going up because the steps were so deep. You had to almost jump down the step coming down or something. I said, "My goodness, you're coming down this wall to hurt your knee and you're way up there the top, you're going to be on a mess." But people, God has destiny for us and we have to step up, but we have to be honorable in everything that we do.

See, we got two incidences in the Bible where someone was close to the king, the other was Joseph, but if you noticed with Joseph, he was honorable, he was diligent, he took care business and everything that he did. The folk could just trust him from powerful to the jailer to even favor. They just put him in charged at everything because he handles stuff so well. That's the way we have to be. We have to be so when people see us, they see Christ.

Sometimes, when they look at this, "I don't trust them Christian. No, don't lend them Christians no money. Don't finance them Christian. Don't get them Christian no job because they don't know how to do it," we have got to be where we show the light of Christ in everything we say, and in everything we do because people will see Jesus and God in us because we are his representatives.

So, Nehemiah got that wall built. What has God not told you to build? What has God laid on your heart to do? It's outside of you. I'm not talking about this, well, you know, God have putted you in my heart, you need to get me a new car. No, no, no, what has God put on your heart for you to do that doesn't directly benefit you? What has he put in your spirit? See, when you really walk with God, he will put some stuff in you does not that you think for you. Everything that you do for someone else, in truth is for you because it goes into your heavenly bank account. But you cannot see that in the natural. So, what is it that God has ordained and put into your spirit for you to do? When you realize that, then you're going to have to step up and get started. But when you do blessings flow and when you get on the mission for God, he'll send an army to go with you.

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