

SIMnow

East Asia Edition

"And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection
against them day and night."

Nehemiah 4:9

DEEP RELIANCE ON GOD



Online Reading

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Editorial

EYE ON GOD

Mae Wong,
Assistant Editor



Relying on God does not come naturally to the people I know. Facing hurdles, they ask family and friends to pray for them but hardly pray themselves. Most times, they trust their own counsel rather than God's. A friend once remarked, "It is man's weakness to think that he should rely on a divine force for anything. Rely on yourself to avoid being disappointed."

My friend is wrong. Self-reliance that lures you away from God is foolhardy. Firstly, even the best plans can be frustrated if we don't seek God's counsel. Secondly, self-reliance is often a guise of pride. We're warned that **"one's pride will bring him low..." (Proverbs 29:23)**. Finally, our wisdom is foolish because **"there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Proverbs 16:25)**.

It is not a weakness to rely on God. Nehemiah is an example of a strong man who relied on God. Faced with overwhelming opposition, he responded by praying (Nehemiah 4:9). God's work needs God's help and Nehemiah understood that. He was unfazed, placing his complete confidence and trust in God. No stone was too heavy to carry and no wall too high to build. Nehemiah pressed on fearlessly, completely focused on the task because he was completely focused on God.

The apostles also encouraged us to keep our eye on God. Peter urges us to cast **"all your anxieties on him..." (1 Peter 5:7)**. Paul advises us that **"...in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6)**. James counsels that if anyone is suffering, **"let him pray" (James 5:13)**. The way to remain strong, fearless, and focused is to turn our eye on God, to **"pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)**.

Things happen when we pray. We develop new perspectives because everything is now viewed through God's lenses. Things that trouble us become insignificant. Perhaps, that's why Nehemiah could remain so steadfast. Perhaps, that's why Paul could declare, **"...I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10)**. God's strength courses through our veins when we pray.

So let us, like all God's servants before us, prostrate before God, bare our souls to Him and lay everything at His feet, trusting that **"all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28)**.

DEEP RELIANCE ON GOD

Lim Kheng Hai, Pastor-at-large, SIM East Asia



In Nehemiah 4:6-9, we see the Israelites' deep reliance on God as they face mounting opposition in their efforts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. This passage teaches us useful lessons about trusting God, especially when circumstances seem overwhelming.

1. Pursuing with Focus (Nehemiah 4:6)

Nehemiah 4:6 says, **"So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work."**

Despite the mockery and threats from their enemies, the Israelites remained determined to pursue the task of rebuilding the wall. Their focus was not on the ridicule but on the work God had called them to. Their commitment was rooted in a deep reliance on God, recognising that He was the One leading them to complete that task.

In our missionary endeavours, we often face distractions and challenges that try to pull us away from the work God has given us. Like the Israelites, we must remain focused on God's call and trust that He will equip us to carry out His will. Our reliance should not be on our own strength but on His.

2. Prayerfully Responding (Nehemiah 4:7-8)

As the opposition intensified, Nehemiah and the people did not rely on their own resources or strategies. Instead, they turned to God in prayer. Nehemiah 4:7-8 says, **"But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it."**

The enemies' anger and threats could have caused fear and discouragement, but Nehemiah chose to rely on God for protection. Prayer was their first response (v. 9) to the growing threat. By turning to God, Nehemiah revealed that ultimate security and success always come from God alone and not through human effort.

3. Participating with Accountability (Nehemiah 4:9)

Nehemiah 4:9 states, **"And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night."** Nehemiah didn't simply pray and wait passively for God to act. For accountability, he combined prayer with practical action by organising a guard to protect the workers. They prayed and they prepared. They were vigilant and alert. This shows that while deep reliance on God involves trusting in His protection and provision, it also involves actively participating in the work and doing what we can to fulfil His will.

Conclusion

Nehemiah 4:6-9 teaches us that deep reliance on God requires the pursuit of His work, prayer in times of opposition, and faithful participation. Like the Israelites, we are called to trust God completely, knowing that He is faithful to protect and guide us as we carry out His will. In the face of challenges, let us follow Nehemiah's example and rely on God for strength and wisdom, while taking the necessary steps to move forward in faith in His Mission.

Testimony

TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD

Renju and Serin, West Africa

It had never occurred to me that one day I would go to a West African country to serve. So, when I was offered an opportunity to serve in West Africa, I wanted my family to join me. I was excited because I had planned years ago that if God called me to serve in a West African country, I would bring my family along. After convincing both our families and against all odds, we set off in 2023 with our two boys, Nathaniel (then three) and Jonathan (then one).

Our kids were excited as this was the first time they were flying on a three-day trip, taking two flights to get to our destination. On the second flight Jonathan developed a sudden fever with an extremely high temperature. When he cried and refused to eat, we became anxious, as we hadn't brought any medicine with us. I laid hands on my son and asked God to be merciful. An hour



later, Jonathan started experiencing God's healing power. He was so full of energy when we landed, playing with his brother and asking for food. That was an unforgettable experience for me as a parent as I witnessed God's grace and power protecting His chosen ones when they rely on Him.

During these two years, my family and I have witnessed God's faithfulness. He was there with us in our travels, when our children struggled with language barriers, when we were sick, when we couldn't help our patients, when we faced uncertainties and when we were homesick. He was there always strengthening, protecting, assuring, and sending His people at the right time to help and guide us. Whenever I struggled with funding and thought of completing the dental therapy training project alone, sending Serin and the boys home, our God intervened and proved to be our Jehovah Jireh, our great provider.



There were times when I was tested, sad, and worn out. Serin lost her grandfather on Christmas Day in 2024. It was a shock for the entire family as a happy Christmas turned into a sad one forever. However, looking back at Serin's grandfather and how he had lived serving God and preaching His Word to many, I found comfort. Even as he was about to take his last breath, he prayed, **"I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth"** (Psalm 121:1-2, NIV). His testimony continues to strengthen and encourage me to rely on our Lord and serve Him always.



Testimony

MISSION ROOTED IN FAITH IN GOD

Jun and Armi, Philippines

NEHEMIAH 4:6 SAYS, “SO WE BUILT THE WALL...FOR THE PEOPLE HAD A MIND TO WORK.”

This verse captures the spirit of our journey with the Ethnic Community Engagement Scholarship Program—a mission rooted in faith in God, perseverance, collaboration, and hope.

Our goal is to expand educational access for under-represented ethnic communities. Early challenges were steep: generational distrust, cultural and language barriers, and difficult bureaucratic processes. Many families were hesitant due to broken promises of the past. But like Nehemiah’s builders, we stayed the course. By building strong relationships with community leaders and adapting our methods to reflect student cultures, we created space for genuine growth and belonging.

The results have been powerful. Students are not only achieving academically but also gaining confidence, pride, and a renewed sense of possibility. Their growth is transforming families and uplifting entire communities.

This work is more than education. It’s about building trust and creating lasting opportunities. Thanks to your support, we’re not just overcoming obstacles. We’re laying the foundation for generational change.

Together, we’re building more than walls. We’re building futures.



Transforming Lives

(A testimony of Adam*, helped by the program.)

The bustling Kasunduan market in Manila is worlds apart from the quiet village in Mindanao where Adam was once a respected tribal leader. Forced by economic hardship, he exchanged the steady rhythm of his home for the chaotic pulse of the city, striving to provide for his wife, *Jessie and their six children.

Despite his daily grind at the marketplace, his heart longed for the dignity and camaraderie of his past life. Then came a turning point—his son Freddy* received an education scholarship from SIM. It wasn’t just financial aid; it was hope. Through Freddy’s connection, their household agreed to attend a Bible study, planting seeds of faith that grew into a spiritual anchor amid their struggles.

Challenges deepened when Adam was diagnosed with a serious heart condition, forcing him to stop working. The family faced uncertainty; their dreams seemingly mocked by circumstances. Then, they reflected on Nehemiah 4:6-9 “So we built the wall... despite the scorn.” They, too, had a wall to build—a future shaped by resilience, faith and reliance on God.

Jessie remained steadfast, holding the family together through prayer. Inspired by their parents’ strength, their older children stepped up by finding work, taking on responsibilities, and supporting each other.

Adam, though burdened by illness, watched with gratitude as his family turned hardship into endurance, survival into worship. Their story mirrors Nehemiah’s rebuilding—not just of walls but of hope, love, and total reliance on God.

**Not their real names*

Testimony

IMPORTANCE OF “WE” IN THE VICTORY

Andrew, Southeast Asia

When we reflect upon the story of Nehemiah and how he relied on God, we see that Nehemiah wasn't alone in his journey and in his victory. The people were together in building the wall, together when praying to God, and together standing guard day and night. This has been our experience as well. The leader cannot be the only person calling out to God. This deep reliance on God needs to echo throughout the team or organisation. In our Centre, we try to foster this by intentionally setting aside time every Monday to come together as a team to spend time in prayer.

Only when the whole team, together in unity, learns to rely on God through all trials and tribulations, can the ultimate victory be won.



Jesus' Stories Erased My Pain

(A testimony of Hezekiah*, helped by the Centre.)

My teacher brought me to see a doctor and had X-rays taken of both my feet. His friend also came and applied traditional medicine on both my legs. Knowing that I could not work for at least the next five months, he and his friends brought me groceries on a weekly basis.

He also borrowed a wheelchair and a pair of crutches from a non-governmental organisation for my use. He never asked for a single cent from me.

Whenever he came to visit, he would tell me about the healing miracles of Jesus and would pray for me and my family before leaving the house.

I liked listening to the healing stories of Jesus as His miracles gave me the assurance that I would be healed if I prayed in His name.

At least eight people, including my wife and my three children, my sister-in-law and her three children who lived next door, would join me in my house to listen to the stories too.

We would listen attentively to the stories so that we could retell the stories later. But what I gained the most by listening to these stories was the experience of peace, joy and faith in God's miraculous working power.

Every week my teacher would ask about the progress of my healing, and I would tell him that my pain was lessening every week, although progress was initially quite slow.

Whenever I prayed at night, I would weep out of gratitude as Jesus had heard my prayers as I could feel my progressive healing. When my teacher went back to his hometown for two weeks, I missed his visits and stories. I was, nevertheless, encouraged because even when he was not able to visit, he would still call me.

**Not his real name*

New Appointment

Mar Atsongchanger, Director, SIM Northeast India



Mar was born and brought up in Mokokchung Village, Nagaland. He started his early schooling at the village school and later went to Oxford, England, where he completed his M.A. in Publishing. After attaining his theological education at United Theological College in Bangalore (B.D., M. Th.), he completed his Doctorate at Serampore College. He is an ordained minister. He worked as the Director of the Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, for the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI-CLC) before joining the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), Nagpur, as the Secretary for Communication & Public Relations. He was later invited by his church to lead Ao Baptist Church Association (ABAM), as Executive Secretary. After serving two terms, his home church, Mokokchung Baptist Church, sent Mar and Amenla as missionaries to serve in Indonesia, and they were commissioned in 2021. Mar begins his first term as SIM Northeast India Director on 11 August 2025.

Amenla is a trained counsellor and served first at Naga Christian Fellowship, Guwahati, and later at Impur Christian Hospital. They are blessed with three children and a granddaughter.

Project Introduction

Chinese Diaspora Ministry (Project Number: 90810)

In 2008, SIM East Asia established the SIM Chinese Diaspora Ministry (SCDM) to share the gospel with the Chinese diaspora, provide discipleship training, and mobilise them for mission work. Since the 1980s, global migration has steadily increased, and by 2020, the dispersed Chinese population reached an estimated 60 million. Many of them have lived and worked abroad for extended periods, facing various challenges and requiring pastoral care and support. Among them are many Christians who need discipleship training and shepherding, as well as encouragement to become dedicated warriors for God's kingdom.

The vision of SCDM is: **"Where there is a Chinese restaurant, there is a Chinese church; where there is a mission field, there are Chinese mission workers."** Currently, this ministry focuses on mobilising Chinese churches in Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and at the same time providing opportunities for ministry in South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, and Japan.

For enquiries contact eastasia.scdm@sim.org stating the project number and name.

