

## “Rebuilding the Wall”

Thomas Carlyle wrote *The History of the French Revolution* by hand before computers or even typewriters existed. After three years of writing and lengthy research, he had a 1500 page manuscript. He gave his finished work to John Stuart Mills to edit and proof read. Mills put the manuscript in a basket so that he could work on it in the evenings. While he was on a trip his maid saw the stack of paper and thought it was there to help start a fire!! The entire manuscript was destroyed by the time Stuart Mills returned.

When Thomas Carlyle found out about this, he went into deep depression. He drew the blinds and refused to eat. After a couple of weeks he opened one of his blinds.

Across the street he saw a man working on a brick wall that had broken down in front of an old church. For three weeks, eight hours a day, Carlyle watched the man rebuild that wall, one brick at a time. When the wall was rebuilt, it looked as good as new.

“If he can rebuild that wall brick by brick,” Carlyle said, “I can rebuild my manuscript page by page”. He began to write and within two years he finished it. Today Thomas Carlyle’s, *The History of the French Revolution*, is a classic of historical literature.

We too have lost something infinitely more valuable. Our young people are disengaging from their faith in frightening proportions. Recent surveys have found that between 60-90% of our teenagers that have grown up in our churches are turning their backs on Christianity.

The walls of our families have been broken down and by and large parents are no longer the primary nurturers of their children’s faith.

In the forward of Mark Holmen’s book, *Church+Home*, George Barna writes that all his research concludes that, while “the local church plays a role in the (Spiritual) growth of children, its involvement is not the key to success in raising godly children. The critical factor is what takes place in the home.”

As communities of faith we need to be much more intentional in supporting and empowering parents for that role.

I have been inspired in reading about rebuilding walls in Nehemiah.

In particular, when halfway through the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, in the face of impending attack, Nehemiah sees the peoples fear and discouragement and rises up as their leader and reminds them of two significant things: (Neh 4:14)

Firstly “Remember the Lord who is great and awesome”

And secondly remember whom you are doing this for. “Fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”

It was interesting that Nehemiah assigned a portion of the wall to each family.

He was making the point, that the reason that they needed to stand together and fight, was not for some nameless faceless generation but it was for their sons and daughters, their grandchildren.

Everyday they were rebuilding the wall they were being reminded, that unless they did their part, their families and the next generation one day could potentially be lost.

It is thrilling, that when the walls were built in record time by a people who the Bible says, “had a mind to work,” three things happened:

1. The surrounding nations recognized that God had built the walls.  
They changed their beliefs of who God was.
2. The Jews began to listen to God and pay attention to His Word as they had never done before.  
They changed their hearts toward God.
3. A celebration, like none ever seen before in the history of the Jewish people broke out!

My heart cry is “God let it be so in our time!!”

Like no other time the church and parents need to partner together to rebuild the broken walls. My prayer is that God would “strengthen your hands,” as we rebuild together, brick by brick, faith filled families.