I. Let’s remember that CHRONOLOGY and THEOLOGY need to connect in Bible study.

A. 586 B.C. Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylonians

B. 538 B.C. (48 years later) First exiles return to Jerusalem

C. 516 B.C. (70 years after its destruction) temple is completed (under Zerubbabel)

D. 458 B.C. Ezra comes to Jerusalem (58 years after temple was completed)

E. 445 B.C. Nehemiah comes to Jerusalem to rebuild its wall.

F. 52 days later the wall is completed (Nehemiah 6:15)

II. Nehemiah reminds us of the practical purposes behind the theology of spiritual gifts.

A. As individuals undertake ministry tasks, familiarity with the following NT passages

is needed and is most helpful.

1. Romans 12

2. 1 Corinthians 12

3. Ephesians 4

4. 1 Peter 4

B. We can all work hard and not smart. Spiritual gifts help eliminate that problem.

1. Simple test: Where do you achieve maximum effect with minimum effort?

C. Effectiveness and Efficiency are both Biblical principles. Does one trump the other?

III. Nehemiah and Ezra illustrate the theology of spiritual gifts along with tact and diplomacy.

A. Nehemiah works for the king; however, he knows how to work the king.

1. Nehemiah 2:2: Think before you speak.

B. Nehemiah demonstrates the theology of confidence in the face of opposition.

1. Nehemiah 2:10-20: The less said, the better. No attack, no defense.

IV. Nehemiah was a master in the art of delegation.

A. Nehemiah 3 demonstrates that delegation is science: See Neh. 3:28 for example.

B. Nehemiah knows about “buy in.”

C. Nehemiah reminds us that those who deputize must be willing to agonize.

1. Chapter 4’s opposition and Nehemiah’s response tell a story. Nb. Neh. 4:16

V. Chapter 5 reminds us that Steven Covey did not invent “Principle-Led Leadership.”

A. Nehemiah 5:9: “What you are doing is not right.”

B. Nehemiah is a study in single-mindedness. Neh. 5:17- 6:3: Staying on task.

C. What would it take to intimidate Nehemiah? Neh. 6:14

1. Courage = Fear + Faith.

VI. The principle of shared authority and teamwork are seen in Chapters 8-13.

A. Ezra and Nehemiah exercise their gifts. Both are necessary.

1. One leader cannot do it all. God intended it this way.

2. The division of laity and clergy needs to be seen in the light of this story.