



Course 6, Session 3 Student Notes: Give People Real Ownership

Hand Out Owned Sections, Not Vague Help

Big Idea: People rise when they own a clear piece of the work. Hand out defined, owned sections, not vague help, and let people take real responsibility for what is theirs.

How to use these notes. These are yours to study on your own, before or after the session. Read each section slowly. Under every principle there is a **Notes** space to write what stands out to you, and a **Reflect** question to answer honestly in writing. Keep your Bible nearby. Take about 30 minutes, and end in prayer. Come ready to name who really owns what on your team. Bring your notes and questions to the group.

Open in Prayer

Before you begin, pray this simple prayer, or your own: "Father, You gave each of us a real part to play in Your body. Teach me to give people ownership the way You do, with trust and with room to carry it. Amen."

The Scripture for This Session

Read these slowly, out loud if you can:

- **Nehemiah 3:28**, "From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house."
- **1 Corinthians 12:14**, "For the body is not one member, but many."
- **1 Corinthians 12:18**, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."
- **Nehemiah 3** and **1 Corinthians 12:14 to 20**, which we study below.

Reflect: Think of a time you were told to help with something, versus a time you were put fully in charge of something. Which one made you care more, and why?

The Big Picture

Last session you learned to multiply yourself, to reproduce your skill in faithful people by showing them, doing it together, and letting them try. Tonight we go one step further, and it is a step many trained leaders never

take. It is not enough to train people and then keep handing them small tasks that you still control. If you train someone and then keep every real decision in your own hands, you have made a skilled helper, not an owner.

Here is tonight in one sentence: vague help produces vague results, and clear ownership produces real ones. When a person owns something specific and visible, they bring a level of care and drive that no assigned task will ever pull out of them. We will look at a chapter most people skim right over, Nehemiah 3, which turns out to be a masterclass in ownership, and at Paul's picture of the body with many parts. Read each principle, write your notes, and answer the reflection.

Principle 1: Vague Help Produces Vague Results. Clear Ownership Produces Real Ones.

Most leaders think they are delegating when they say something like “can you help me with the newsletter” or “keep an eye on the volunteers.” That is not ownership, that is fog. The person does not know where their responsibility begins and ends, they do not have the authority to make the calls, and so they hover, they wait, they check with you on everything, and nothing really moves. You end up frustrated that they are not taking initiative, and they end up frustrated that they are not trusted with anything real.

The problem is not the person. The problem is that you handed out fog instead of a defined, owned piece of the work. Clarity is a gift. When people know precisely what they own, where it starts and where it stops, they stop waiting and start building. The cure for a hovering, passive team is almost never more motivation. It is a clear line drawn around who owns what, so that each person can finally step into a piece that is unmistakably theirs.

Reflect: Where on your team have you handed out fog instead of a defined, owned piece, and what has that cost you?

Notes:

Principle 2: Divide the Big Job Into Clear, Defined Pieces People Can Fully Own.

Look at how Nehemiah handles this. When he rebuilds the broken wall of Jerusalem, chapter 3 reads almost like a boring list, this person repaired this gate, that family repaired the next section, the goldsmiths took a stretch, the perfumers took another. But do not skim it. Nehemiah did not stand in the middle of the rubble shouting general instructions and trying to supervise every brick. He divided the entire wall into named sections and gave each family and each guild a specific, owned piece.

And the wall, which had lain in ruins for generations, went all the way up in fifty two days. Not because Nehemiah worked harder than everyone, but because he gave dozens of people real, defined ownership of a real, defined piece. The whole wall was too big for anyone, but a single section between one tower and one gate was doable, and dozens of doable, owned sections finished the whole thing fast. Take the overwhelming

thing you are carrying and break it into clear pieces, each one specific enough that a person could own it end to end and know exactly where it begins and stops.

Reflect: What is one overloaded area of your work that you could break into three or four clear, owned pieces? Write the pieces.

Notes:

Principle 3: Give People the Section They Care About Most, and Let Them Build It.

Read Nehemiah 3 closely and a phrase keeps returning: people repaired the wall “over against his house,” the stretch right in front of their own home. There is deep wisdom in it. People were given, or chose, the section they had the most reason to care about, the wall that would protect their own family. Ownership lined up with investment, so motivation took care of itself. Give someone the piece they are naturally invested in, and you will not have to push them.

Motivation is far easier to tap than to manufacture. When ownership matches what a person already loves, the drive comes built in. So think about what each person on your team naturally cares about, and try to hand them the piece that sits closest to their own heart. And then, crucially, give them the section and step back. Nehemiah did not stand over people rebuilding their walls for them. Chapter 3 is not a record of one leader redoing everyone’s work, it is a record of a leader who assigned real ownership and trusted people to carry their own piece to completion.

Reflect: Whom on your team could you give a piece that lines up with what they already care about, so their motivation comes built in?

Notes:

Principle 4: Ownership Means Authority, Not Just Labor.

Here is where it gets uncomfortable, so let us say it plainly. If you tell someone they own the volunteer teams but every decision about the volunteer teams still has to run through you, you have not given them ownership, you have given them your errands. Real ownership means the person gets to make the calls inside their section. They will make some calls differently than you would. Some of those calls will be better than yours, and some will be mistakes, and both of those are the price of ownership.

Paul gives us the theology of it in 1 Corinthians 12. The body has many parts, and every part has its own work. The eye is not the hand, the foot is not the ear, and the body would be a monstrous thing if it were all one giant

eye. God did not design His people so that one person does everything and the rest just help. When you insist on owning everything yourself, you are trying to be a whole body made of one part, and it does not work. It exhausts you and it starves everyone else of the chance to do the thing God shaped them to do. A leader who cannot stand to let someone run their own section their own way will never actually give anything away.

Reflect: Where are you still trying to be the whole body yourself? What decisions, not just tasks, would you have to release for someone to truly own their part?

Notes:

The Story: Building the Wall Section by Section (Nehemiah 3)

Read a portion of Nehemiah 3 out loud, even just the first ten verses. On the surface it is the most skippable chapter in the book, a long roll call of names and gates. Underneath, it is one of the clearest pictures of good leadership in all of Scripture, and it is the reason a ruined wall became a finished wall in under two months.

Set the scene. Jerusalem's wall had been broken down and its gates burned for a very long time. The city was exposed, its people ashamed. Nehemiah arrives, surveys the damage, rallies the people, and then in chapter 3 he does the thing that actually gets it built. He does not try to rebuild the wall himself, and he does not just tell everyone to pitch in wherever. He divides the whole wall into sections and assigns each one to a specific group with a specific owner. Watch the pattern repeat: a named group, a named section, again and again. "Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate." "Next unto him builded the men of Jericho." And notice the detail that is easy to miss, many of them worked on the piece nearest their own home, the part they had the most reason to care about.

Pull out the lessons. Nehemiah made every assignment clear and specific, not "help with the wall" but this group, this gate, this stretch. He divided a huge, overwhelming job into owned pieces small enough to actually finish. He let people own the part they cared about most, so motivation took care of itself. And he gave the section and then trusted them to build it. Paul explains why this works: the body is many parts, each doing its own real work rather than waiting for one part to do everything. Nehemiah built a body, and the wall rose.

Reflect: What section of the wall is God asking you to hand to someone else, and whose growth are you holding back by keeping it in your own hands?

Notes:

Put It Into Practice

1. Map the ownership. Pick one area of your work that feels overloaded, fuzzy, or too dependent on you. Break it into three or four clear, defined pieces, the sections of the wall. Each piece should be specific enough that a person could own it end to end.

The overloaded or fuzzy area I will divide, and the clear pieces it breaks into:

2. Hand off one section, with authority. Choose the one piece and one person you will actually hand off this week. Then write the authority you are granting: what decisions does this person now get to make on their own, without checking with you first?

The piece I am handing off, and the person who will own it:

The decisions this person now gets to make on their own:

This week's assignment. Sit down with the person you named and give them the section clearly. Tell them exactly what is theirs, where it starts and stops, and what decisions they now own without needing you. Then step back and let them repair their section of the wall their own way. Write one sentence about where you felt the pull to take it back.

Go Deeper (Optional)

- **Read:** *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni, and *Extreme Ownership* by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, run through a biblical filter, on pushing clear ownership down to every level.
 - **Listen:** the *EntreLeadership Podcast*.
 - **Study:** Nehemiah 3; 1 Corinthians 12:14 to 20.
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Close in Prayer

"Father, You are a God of order who gave every part of Your body a real work to do. Free me from the fog of vague delegation and the pride that hoards the whole wall. Teach me to divide the work into clear, owned pieces, to grant real authority and not just tasks, and to let people carry their own section with dignity and pride. Bless the ones I entrust with real ownership this week, and let what I am building rise faster and stronger because it is being built by many owned hands, not one tired pair. In Jesus' name, Amen."

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