



Adventist
MEN'S MINISTRIES

North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist
Church

“Too Legit to Quit”

Men's Ministries Day of Prayer
September 3, 2016

About the Author



Dr. Jeffrey Brown has diplomas in Theology, Counseling, Education, and French from Newbold College, Herbert Gray College, the University of Oxford, and the Adventist University of France. He has a BA Theology degree from Washington Adventist University, and a Master of Divinity from Andrews University, and Ph.D. in Religious Education, with an emphasis in Family Life Education and Counseling, also from Andrews University.

Dr. Brown pastored in Toronto, Canada, then became full professor of religion, religious education, and pastoral care at Oakwood University, before being called to be President of the Bermuda Conference. While there, he also served as adjunct professor and doctoral advisor at Northern Caribbean University, Atlantic Union College, and Andrews University. After ten years as president, Dr. Brown was called to be Executive Director of the Bradford Cleveland Brooks Leadership Center and professor of religion at Oakwood University. He also served as Vice President for Publications for the Adventist Association of Family Life Professionals as well as Editor of the Association's *Family Life* magazine. From there he was called to be Associate Secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association and Associate Editor of *Ministry Magazine*.

Dr. Brown also has 12 years overseas experience. He served in the Trans European Division as church pastor, college professor, and Director of Pastoral Studies at Newbold College. He also served in the West-Central Africa Division teaching religion at Bekwai and Agona-Ashanti Seventh-day Adventist Secondary Schools in Ghana.

He and his wife Pattiejean have two young adult children and are the authors of five books including *What On Earth Am I Doing? Leadership Lessons For Clergy Spouses* (2009) and *The Four Love Seasons: Finding Love in Unlikely Places* (2014)

Suggested Order of Service

Men's Ministries Day of Prayer
September 3, 2016

Call to Worship/Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn -- Let All the World #9

Offering

Children's Story

Scripture Reading -- Nehemiah 4:1-6

Pastoral Prayer -- (1) Men as Christian Role Models; (2) Men as Christian Fathers; (3) Men as Christian Husbands; (4) Men as Christian Change Agents

Special Music -- "Stand" <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/donniemcclurkin/stand.html>

Sermon (Provided) -- *Too Legit to Quit*

Closing Hymn -- Higher Ground #625

Closing Prayer

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TOO LEGIT TO QUIT

Nehemiah 4:6

Why are you looking so sad? What on earth is wrong with you? Are you sick? Don't worry, I'm not insulting you, I'm merely repeating the words that King Artaxerxes in 445 BC spoke to the prophet Nehemiah. "Can't you at least smile?" asks the king. And back comes the answer, "How can I be happy, when the city of my fathers lies in ruins and the walls are broken down?" So the king grants Nehemiah permission to go to Jerusalem and see what can be done.

Nehemiah surveys the land. He does a needs assessment. He procures the architect's drawings, gets a building permit, and starts his construction. He does a good job, too. But the closer he gets to finishing, the more stares he's getting. The stares turn to jeers and the jeers become threats. Look with me at Nehemiah 6:9-11 (NKJV): "For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, 'Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.' Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands. Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who was a secret informer; and he said, 'Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night will they come to kill you.' And I said, 'Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!'"

When I read these words and heard Nehemiah's question, "Should such a man as I flee?" I asked myself the question, Why didn't you flee, Nehemiah? Why did you stay and keep on building? Nehemiah thought he'd come to do the people of Jerusalem a favor. He didn't need all this hassle, why didn't he flee? He had a highly responsible job before this, in Susa. Susa was the principal palace and winter residence of the king. Nehemiah holds the offices of cupbearer and

master of ceremonies. He would test the food and drink for poison before it was served to the king. Constant threat of assassination caused the king to live a lonely life in his quiet retreat. What the king needed was somebody he could trust, somebody astute, somebody wise, somebody discrete, and that somebody was Nehemiah. Nehemiah was the CEO, but he put service before success. He put family before fortune. He went back to Jerusalem and exchanged his Mercedes for a Mini. He bartered his BMW for a Beetle and he handed over his Hummer car for a humble car. But my question is, What prompts a man to make such a decision to go back? And when he goes back and the going gets tough, what makes him stay? Nehemiah, I'm puzzled because I've got college debt, bank loans, house mortgage, bills up to my ears, and what's coming in is not covering what's going out. I'm trying my best with these work colleagues that my job gave me. I'm trying my best with this child that God gave me. I'm trying my best with this spouse that sometimes I wonder who gave me. Nehemiah, I feel like running away, I want to see if the grass is greener on the other side. And it's not just we older ones, the young people ask the question why shouldn't they quit. Like the 16-year-old who said, "The world goes by and no one sees me, no one takes notice of me. I do drugs. I rob houses. No one cares. I have no love for the world or for myself. I've lost my way in the world. Somebody help me before it's too late. Somebody please love me for who I am." Nehemiah, why didn't you give up?

Shelton Vanauken wrote a book called, *Under The Mercy*. In it, he tells how he gave up faith in Christianity when he was a teenager: "There were four specific inadequacies in the only Christianity I knew: it was not exciting, not positive, not big enough, and not relevant to life. Who could believe that here in this stuffiness, with all the beauty and laughter and pain of life held at bay outside the church -- who could believe that here were the truths of life and death? I could not, and I doubted whether anyone else did. I turned away from this religion and declared

for atheism.” Did you hear your marching orders, men? Reasons why Nehemiah couldn't quit, number 1,

1. **It's too big to quit.** Vanauken said, This faith-thing is not big enough, so I'm quitting, but Nehemiah said, It's too big to quit. Nehemiah 6:3: “So I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?” It's too big to quit. Here Nehemiah is talking about your **vision**. *Fathers don't run away, there's too much at stake.* It gets passed on to the third and fourth generation, and the results are deadly. 63% of youth suicides are by children from fatherless homes. 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes. 85% of all youth in prison grew up in fatherless homes. 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes. Men are killing men for small stuff. I've got sneakers that you want. I looked at you the wrong way. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. But this is bigger than the street you live on or the group you belong to. Our message is not national, it's international, our gospel is not local, it is global, three angels flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, it's too big to quit.

“My interpreter pointed to a tall man in a suit who sat in the first row of my evangelistic meetings in Rwanda.” So wrote evangelist Nancy Costa. “Uziel had not been to church since the genocide.” They told the speakers not to say anything about the genocide. It was too sensitive a topic. It might appear that you are taking sides. So Nancy simply spoke about biblical forgiveness. “When God forgives us,” she said, “it's a gift that He gives us. When we forgive others, it's a gift that we give to ourselves.” She said, “It's not dependent on the merits or worthiness of the offended, but forgiveness is for the victim because we deserve to be free from the burden we're carrying.”

Uziel was under conviction by the Holy Spirit. When Nancy gave her appeal, he jumped out of his seat, ran down to the front of the church, and hugged her. He then asked for the microphone and said, “Many of you know my story, but today I’m coming back to Jesus and to you.” The church cheered. Nancy says, “The spirit that flowed through the congregation was so incredible that I can’t describe it.” Hallelujah. You say, well that’s not such a big deal. Did I tell you that Uziel’s father, mother, and sister were killed in a home right across the street from a Seventh-day Adventist church? Did I tell you that by the time Uziel ran home, his house was ablaze and his family was dead? Did I tell you that Uziel’s father was a pastor? And did I tell you that those who killed him were the sons of another Seventh-day Adventist pastor?

2 Chronicles 7:14, “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” There’s a man here today that needs to do some forgiving. Your blessing is on hold because there’s somebody you need to forgive today. Your healing is on hold because there’s somebody you need to forgive today. Your salvation is on hold because there’s somebody you need to forgive today. God’s got something big He wants to do through your life, but He needs your permission, He needs your consent, He needs your surrender. If a genocide could not stop Uziel from doing what God wants, what’s stopping you? 98,298 souls were baptized throughout Rwanda during that campaign, the largest number of baptisms in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But being big is not about quantity it’s about quality. It’s not about vastness, it’s about **vision**. God told Gideon 32,000 men are too many, I only need 300. It doesn’t take thousands of people for God to take notice, where two or three are gathered together in My name, that’s a church, it’s too big to quit. Reason number 2,

2. **It's too relevant to quit.** Vanauken said, Not only is this faith-thing not big enough, it's not relevant enough, so I'm quitting, but Nehemiah said, It's too relevant to quit. Nehemiah 2:18, 19: "And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' Then they set their hands to this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, 'What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?'" It's too relevant to quit. Here Nehemiah is talking about your **values**. *Husbands don't run away, there's too much at stake.* When you stand up for truth you will discover that folk laugh at you. Marriage between one man and one woman, folk will despise you. Abstinence before marriage and faithfulness in marriage, folk will mock you. Be ye not unequally yoked together believer with unbeliever, folk will ridicule you. But it's still relevant, it's still in the Bible, and it's still the truth.

Read a prayer by a girl called Jane, entitled, *Wedding Day*. "Dear God," she said, "I can hardly believe that this is my wedding day. I know I haven't been able to spend much time with You lately with all the rush of getting ready for today -- and I'm sorry. I guess too, I feel a little guilty when I try to pray about all this since Larry still isn't a Christian. But, oh, Father, I love him so much. What else can I do? I just couldn't give him up. Oh You *must* save him some way, somehow. You know how much I've prayed for him, and the way we've discussed the Gospel together. I've tried not to appear too religious, I know, but that's because I didn't want to scare him off. Yet he isn't antagonistic, and I don't understand why he hasn't responded. Oh, if only he were a Christian. Dear Father, please bless our marriage. I don't want to disobey You, but I do love him and want to be his wife. So please be with us, and please don't spoil my wedding day."

In the book *Education*, page 57, these words are written, “The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”

Make no mistake about it, our **values** are relevant for these last days. And relevance doesn't mean the latest gossip. We've got some people who always want to take you off-track by showing you some failing in the church, some website, or some conspiracy theory. These people are here in this church. I can give you their names, if you would like: Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab. But our response ought to be, “I've got my mind made up, and I won't turn back, 'cos I want to see my Jesus someday. *I've got my mind made up, and I won't turn back, 'cos I want to see my Jesus someday.*” In other words, “I'm on the battlefield for my Lord. I'm on the battlefield for my Lord. And I promised Him that I would serve Him till I die, I'm on the battlefield for my Lord,” this mission is just too relevant to quit. Reason number 3,

3. It's too positive to quit. Vanauken said, Not only is this faith-thing not big enough, and not only is it not relevant enough, it's not positive enough so I'm quitting. But Nehemiah said, It's too positive to quit. Nehemiah 4:6: “So built we the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.” It's too positive to quit. Here Nehemiah is talking about your **voice**. *Men don't run away, there's too much at stake.* In the face of tremendous odds the wall was finished in 52 days. Men, this is your verse to shout on: “So we built the wall.” They said I couldn't do it. They said I wouldn't amount to much. But I'm the first man to finish college in my family. I got off drugs, I got out of prison, I've stayed off the streets,

and I've stayed in school. When the police stop me I say yes sir, no sir. I'm a soldier for God, I'm a child of God, I'm a man of God, it's too positive to quit. My children need me. Boys need fathers to model manhood. They need to find respect in dads not drugs, goals not gangs, and God not guns. Girls need fathers to facilitate womanhood. They need a father who will provide for their mother not provoke her, who will serve their mother not strike her, and who will love their mother not leave her. Children need fathers who will discipline them not punish them, protect them not violate them, and pray for them not prey on them. If family violence is in your family tree, draw a line in the sand and say this destructive way of life ends right here!

Like the young African pastor martyred for his faith, lift up your voice and declare, "I've stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His and I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed. My present makes sense. My future is secure. I'm done and finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, or first, or tops, or recognized, or praised, or rewarded. I live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by Holy Spirit power.

My face is set. My gait is fast. My goal is heaven. My road may be narrow, my way rough, my companions few, but my Guide is reliable and my mission is clear.

I will not be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice or hesitate in the presence of the adversary. I will not negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze

of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, or let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ.

I am a disciple of Jesus. I must give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until He comes. And when He does come for His own, He'll have no problems recognizing me. My colors will be clear." It's just too positive to quit. Reason number 4,

4. **It's too exciting to quit.** Vanauken said, Not only is it not big enough, not only is it not relevant enough, not only is it not positive enough, but lastly, it's not exciting enough so I'm quitting. But Nehemiah said, It's too exciting to quit. Nehemiah 6:10: "Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who was a secret informer; and he said, 'Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night will they come to kill you.'" It's too exciting to quit, here Nehemiah is talking about your **victory**. Talk about excitement, you could even lose your life.

If a Caleb Moore can risk his life doing backflips in a Winter Olympic Games snowmobile, if a Victoria Soto can risk her life trying to save her students in Newtown, and if a Man called Jesus can lay down His life for His friends, then can't we try a little more, pray a little more, work a little more, commit a little more, and dream a little more? Young people, show us the way with this. Somebody said if you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space. It's just too exciting to quit. And in these last days, *Great Controversy* pages 635, 636 says: "The people of God—some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death... With shouts

of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth... [But] It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people.” Hallelujah.

I can't quit because He said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

I can't quit because He said, “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

I can't quit because I'm marching to Zion, the beautiful city of God.

I can't quit because I'm just a nobody, trying to tell everybody about Somebody who can save anybody.

I can't quit because He that hath begun a good work in me is going see me through.

I can't quit because in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

I can't quit because weeping may endure for a night but joy will come in the morning.

I can't quit because I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I can't quit because I was accepted before I was acceptable and I was justified before I was qualified. In fact, if you sum it all up, because of Jesus, I'm just too legit to quit.

And you can't make me quit because you did not give me my vision, you did not give me my values, you did not give me my voice, and you surely did not give me my victory, it was the blood that Jesus shed for me, way back on Calvary. I can't quit because it's the blood that gives me strength from day to day, and it will never, ever, ever, lose its power.