

REBUILD

NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH, PART 2: RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

The story of Nehemiah moves from prayer to planning. Nehemiah's heart was broken by the news that Jerusalem still lay in ruins, over 100 years after its destruction. After praying, Nehemiah brings to the king his plan to rebuild the city walls. Having a vision builds our faith and serves as a constant reminder of our dependency on God. But it will take some courage and discomfort on your part.

BIG IDEA: God uses your experiences to prepare you for His purpose, but it will take courage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

** Remember the goal is to use the questions to generate discussion, not to complete every one.*

1. Think about a time when you had to do something outside your comfort zone in order to achieve a goal. What was the situation? What steps did you take?
2. With your Bible or Bible App, read [Proverbs 21:1](#).

Just as water is turned into irrigation ditches, so the Lord directs the king's thoughts. He moves them wherever he wishes. [Proverbs 21:1 \(TLB\)](#)

3. Chris said, "What He originates, he orchestrates." Last week, we saw that God birthed a burden & passion for rebuilding Jerusalem in Nehemiah. After reading the above verse, who is really in control—the Lord or the King?
4. With your Bible or Bible App, read [Nehemiah 2:1-3](#).

¹ Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. ² So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You don't look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled." Then I was afraid and terrified... [Nehemiah 2:1-3 \(NLT\)](#)

5. 4 months have passed from Nehemiah 1 to Nehemiah 2, all the while Nehemiah has been waiting, praying and planning. What part does prayer play in your planning?
6. Why was Nehemiah afraid and terrified when the King asked why he was sad? How can times of sadness or fear become opportunities to grow in your faith?
7. Why did it take courage for Nehemiah to speak to the King on behalf of the Jewish exiles living in Jerusalem?
8. With your Bible or Bible App, read [Nehemiah 2:4-8](#).

Then I was afraid and terrified³ but I replied, "Long live the king! How can I not be sad? For the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and the gates have been destroyed by fire."⁴ The king asked, "Well, how can I help you?" With a prayer to the God of heaven, ⁵ I replied, "If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried."⁶ The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, "How long will you be gone? When will you return?" After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request. ⁷ I also said to the king, "If it please the king, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, instructing them to let me travel safely through their territories on my way to Judah. ⁸ And please give me a letter addressed to Asaph, the manager of the king's forest, instructing him to give me timber. I will need it to make beams for the gates of the

Temple fortress, for the city walls, and for a house for myself.” And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

[Nehemiah 2:1-8 \(NLT\)](#)

9. Nehemiah didn’t even consider bringing his concerns to the king without 4 months of prayer. Do you pray before you act?
10. During those 4 months of waiting and planning, Nehemiah spent time in two different exercises: *anticipatory thinking* and *strategic planning*. Nehemiah began to anticipate what he might need, his timeline, and what he might do if God gave him the opportunity to do something about the problem.

When the king asked Nehemiah what he wanted to do, Nehemiah had a detailed plan ready to present. It’s important to pray for opportunity, but are you ready for those prayers to be answered? If tomorrow you were given the thing you most wanted, would you be ready for it? Are you planning as well as praying?

11. Making plans and having faith in God are both important and are not contradictory. *With your Bible or Bible App, read [Proverbs 16:1](#) and [16:9](#).*

We should make plans—counting on God to direct us.

[Proverbs 16:9 \(TLB\)](#)

We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God’s hands.

[Proverbs 16:1 \(TLB\)](#)

12. What do the 2 verses in Proverbs 16 tell us about the tension of human plans and our relationship with God?
13. When the king asked Nehemiah what he wanted, Nehemiah was ready to answer. Many of us would have been tempted to stay silent in that moment – things would have turned out very differently if the king had been angered by Nehemiah’s request! Are we willing to act courageously when the time comes? What keeps us from doing so?
14. Is there anything in your Christian life right now that demands courage from you?

MOVING FORWARD

What are you doing to prepare yourself to be used by God? What role does prayer and planning have in that preparation? What opportunities is God placing in front of you? What purpose do you see Him working out in your life?

If you’re still struggling with what God’s purpose for your life might be, many times God uses experiences in our past that gives us a passion and burden to act. Pray 2 things: *pray that God would help you see people around you the way He sees them*, and *pray that God would burden you with the things that burden Him*.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Then I was afraid and terrified, when the king asked, “Well, how can I help you?” With a prayer to the God of heaven, I replied, “If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried.”

Nehemiah 2:3-5 (NLT)