

“How To Tackle A Tough Job (Nehemiah, Part 2)”

Text: Nehemiah 2:1-20

In Nehemiah 2:1-10 we see that Nehemiah had at least five tools he used to tackle the path of rubble and destruction in front of him; and in 2:11-20 we can identify five tasks that he undertook. The *first* tool Nehemiah used was **waiting** (2:1). After Nehemiah prayed, it was natural for him to ask God to provide an early, if not immediate opportunity to speak to the king. But he waited patiently on the Lord for an answer. Nothing happened for four months. But waiting time is not wasted time. A *second* tool Nehemiah used was **trusting** (2:2-3). Unable to conceal his grief for Jerusalem any longer, the king asked why he was dispirited. This caused Nehemiah to be *dreadfully afraid*, because everyone was expected to be perfectly content in the king's presence, and he knew he was about to make a huge request of the king. But fear didn't paralyze him, instead, it propelled him to action. A *third* tool Nehemiah used was **praying** (2:4-5). We can learn much about prayer from the Book of Nehemiah. In the brief moments between the king asking Nehemiah what his request was, and before he answered, verse 4 says that he “*prayed to the God of heaven.*” Next, Nehemiah used the tool of **planning** (2:5-8a). Nehemiah practiced both dependent praying and deliberate planning. He was prepared to answer the king's questions, and he had thoroughly bathed the matter in prayer. What a powerful combination! The *fifth* tool Nehemiah used was **testifying** (2:8b-10). Nehemiah gave testimony to the goodness of God in answering his prayers, guiding his mind, directing his speech and meeting his needs. He recognized that everything that was happening was because of God's arranging, not because of human contriving.

In Nehemiah 2:11-20 we can identify five tasks that Nehemiah undertook. *First* of all, Nehemiah **replenished his resources** (2:11). After making the long and emotional journey to Jerusalem Nehemiah first rested. Likewise, we shouldn't try to make big decisions or take on huge tasks when we're tired. *Secondly*, Nehemiah **assessed the need** (2:12-16). Nehemiah needed a firsthand understanding of what needed to be done. So, alone in the darkness on a moonlit night he secretly scouted the ruins and made notes to himself. He knew it was going to be a demanding and dangerous job that was going to require the entire group's cooperation and participation. *Third*, Nehemiah **recruited workers** (2:17). Nehemiah gathered a large group of prospective partners and laid out both the challenges and the approach they were going to take. He helped them see the spiritual perspective behind the physical reality. This helped them realize that they were doing God's work, not just working for Nehemiah. *Fourth*, Nehemiah **inspired confidence in the people** (2:18). While rebuilding the walls was an important job, the central theme in the Book of Nehemiah is *the sufficiency of God*. It's important for us to dwell on the goodness and greatness of God. When we see what God is doing and has already done it inspires faith for what He will do in the present and future. Instead of being complacent or discouraged from past failures, when presented with Kingdom assignments let us positively declare, “*To the glory of God we will arise to such a task.*” *Finally*, we see how Nehemiah **handled opposition** (2:19-20). Whenever we get serious about Kingdom work Satan will oppose us through verbal onslaughts, demoralizing tactics, and enemy opposition. To counteract this, like Nehemiah did, we must focus primarily on God getting all the glory in the project.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Are you good at tackling problems?
2. Have you ever had to wait for God to answer a prayer?
3. How can you make sure fear propels you to follow God's leading instead of paralyzing you?
4. Aren't you thankful that we can pray to God at any time and in any place?
5. Are you more inclined to pray? Or to plan? Do you see the need to do both?
6. What are your testimonies from *the good hand of our God being upon you*?
7. Rest and refresh yourself.
8. Face reality without weaking in your faith.
9. Are you able to discern the unseen spiritual forces behind the physical realities you see and hear?
10. Is your confidence in the sufficiency of God?
11. Are you focused on making sure God alone gets all the glory?