



Midweek Study

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REBUILDING my BROKEN WORLD

Through Nehemiah

When Opportunity Knocks

Nehemiah 2:1-8

“In the days when blacksmiths were common, people would often say, ‘Strike while the iron is hot.’ If the blacksmith heats a piece of iron in a forge to just the right temperature, the hot iron becomes malleable, and you can hammer it into any desired shape. If you strike the iron before it is sufficiently hot, or after it has cooled, you cannot reshape it. But strike the iron while it is hot and fresh from the forge, and you can bend it to your will. Down through history, wise men and women have understood the importance of just the right moment, of being prepared to take advantage of an opportunity. Too early or too late, and your enterprise will be doomed to failure. But seize the opportunity at just the right moment, and you’ll achieve success.”^a

What do I need to do to seize the opportunities that have been on my heart?

1) **TIMING** (Nehemiah 2:1-2)

1a: “One day in April four months later” (2:1, Living Bible)

Four months of prayer and planning from the time he heard about the broken walls and the time that he requested from his king. He was the cupbearer, which was similar to our modern day Secret Service. This was a trusted position, and he was continually bringing the wine to the king. For four months, the grief on his mind was not displayed to the king.

See Galatians 4:4 – “at just the right time, God sent Jesus.”

Why was Nehemiah afraid (v.2)? “The answer can be found in Ezra 4. There we see that Cyrus, king of Persia from 559 to 530 BC, had previously given an order to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. Years passed, and certain enemies of the Jewish people wrote a letter to a later Persian king, saying, “The Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicket city... They will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired” (see Ezra 4:12-

^a Ray Stedman, *God’s Blueprint for Success* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 2017), 37-38.

13). In response, the king ordered that all work on the temple in Jerusalem should immediately stop. So the work of rebuilding was thwarted.”^b

2) **TACT (2:3-4)**

- A. Your life, King, is not in danger! “Long live the king!” (see v.3)
- B. Nehemiah did not mention Jerusalem. Jerusalem had a troublesome reputation for revolution. Instead, he refers to it as “the city...where my ancestors are buried” (v.3 and v.5).
- C. He asks with the queen in the room. v.6 says the queen sat beside the king. Perhaps Nehemiah knows the queen, and she could have some pull with the king. Artaxerxes was the son of Xerxes, whose wife was Esther. This phrase “the queen” could reference his wife, or the mother. It’s very possible Esther is sitting beside Artaxerxes. Other scholars believe that Esther could have been the mother of Artaxerxes.

3) **THOUGHT OUT (2:5)**

How long would it take? (Nehemiah 5:14 says it ultimately took 12 years)
God blesses proper planning. When the King asked Nehemiah how he could help, he was able to clearly communicate his goal and plan. Nehemiah knew who the people were that he needed help from. King, I need three things: 1) Your permission (a leave of absence); 2) Your protection; 3) Your provision (“I need a purchase order on the king’s credit card so that I can buy all the timber.”).

If you could accomplish any goal, what would it be? Are you praying for it? Are you planning for it? If someone were to ask you how they could help, could you answer them with a thought-out, thorough plan?

Luke 14:28, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it.”

Opportunities seem to open up for people who are ready to walk through them.

4) **TRUST GOD IN PRAYER (2:4b)**

Nehemiah threw up a quick prayer, a silent prayer, a spontaneous prayer. God answers this kind of prayer.

Proverbs 21:1, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

Proverbs 16:1, “The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.”

Don’t let opportunities to pass you by. God wants you to interact with the right person at the right time. That friend finally asks you, “Why do you believe what you believe?” Are you ready for the moment?

Ephesians 5:16 “redeeming the time” or “make the most of every opportunity”. See also 1 Peter 3:15 and Galatians 6:10.

^b Michael Youssef, *God, Help Me Rebuild My Broken World* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2016), 40.