

# Pray Hard. Plan Well. Give God the Credit.

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## **Nehemiah 2:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. <sup>2</sup>And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid.

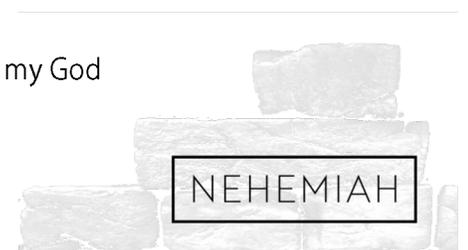
<sup>3</sup>I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

<sup>4</sup>Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. <sup>5</sup>And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.”

<sup>6</sup>And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), “How long will you be gone, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

<sup>7</sup>And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, <sup>8</sup>and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.”

And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.



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June 12, 2022

**Open:** When have you had to do something you've never done before? How did you go about it?

**Read & Discuss:** Nehemiah 2:1-8

1. It had been four months since Nehemiah heard about the condition of Jerusalem (2:1). What does the longevity of Nehemiah's heartache over the condition of Jerusalem tell us about his values? What is something you prayed about over an extended period of time? How did praying over that extended period change you or your perspective?
2. How might Nehemiah's role to the king (1:11) have uniquely positioned him to be used by God to lead the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem? What are some positions or experiences you have (or have had) that God has or may use for His purposes?
3. Why might Nehemiah have been afraid, as verse 2 describes? (*Consider Esther 4:11.*) How have you found fear to negatively affect your perspective? What lessons could we learn from Nehemiah's example in verses 3-5 about how to deal with such fears?
4. If you had been in Nehemiah's situation, what might you have prayed when he uttered his brief prayer as he stood before the king (v. 4)? Why? How might our spiritual lives benefit from both lengthy times of prayer (1:5-11) and short, spontaneous prayers (2:4)?
5. In verses 5-8, where do you see evidence that Nehemiah had a plan for the task ahead of him? Do you tend to be more of a planner or a go-with-the-flow type person? Why? When discipling a new believer, how would you explain the place of plans in the life of a believer? (*How might James 4:13-15 be helpful in this regard?*)
6. Nehemiah gives God the credit for his success before the king (2:8). How do we make sure we give God the credit for our successes? What might be some subtle ways we rob God of the credit He deserves for such things?

**Apply:** How are you encouraged or challenged by Nehemiah's example here? What are one or two specific ways you will apply that encouragement or challenge?

**Pray:** Pray that God will grant us passion, courage, and wisdom as we seek to follow His leading regarding meeting the needs of His people however He may lead us.

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