

Broken Down Walls
Recognizing Opportunities – Nehemiah 2
July 10 & 11, 2010

Effective leaders Rely on God

O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honoring You. Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me. Nehemiah chapter 1 verse 11 (371)

- Pray!
- Ask others to pray
- Tell God what you need
- Tell God where you need Him to work

Effective leaders wait patiently for God

- ***In late autumn...*** Nehemiah chapter 1 verse 11 (371)
- ***Early the following spring...*** Nehemiah chapter 2 verse 1 (371)
 - 4 months pass between chapters 1 & 2. For 4 months, Nehemiah's been praying & fasting, asking God to show up in this situation
 - Nehemiah refused to "go it alone!"

Am I leaning on God?

- Do I pray & fast, asking God to intercede in the "big" areas of my life? (*As you read the Bible, you see that fasting is a regular & routine part of asking for God's blessing & figuring out God's will*)
- How long am I willing to wait on God to show up...before I start trying to fix things on my own?

Effective leaders recognize when God shows up

Early the following spring...I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. 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 terrified, 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."

Nehemiah chapter 2 verses 1 - 3 (371)

- Because Nehemiah had been praying & fasting for months, he recognized this as an opportunity from God
- How do you recognize your "God-opportunities" in life?

Effective leaders know they're nothing without God

- ***The king asked, "Well, how can I help you?"***
- ***With a prayer to the God of heaven, I replied...*** Nehemiah chapter 2 verses 4 & 5 (371)
 - Lots of us are used to going through life in our own strength & wisdom
 - We're not even sure what life would "look like" if we invited God into it
 - As good as your life is, as good a leader / person you are, how much more could you do with God leading you?

Effective leaders are ready & bold

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.” 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. Nehemiah chapter 2 verses 5 & 6 (371)

- Ready: faithful in little - “if you are pleased with me”
- Ready: know what you’re asking for - “send me to Judah”
- Ready: anticipate follow-up questions - “I told him how long I would be gone”

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. 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.”

Nehemiah chapter 2 verses 7 & 8 (371)

- Bold: Dare to ask God for BIG things - “I also said to the king”
- Bold: Sense God’s leading & go for it! - “And...”

Bold Faith

And because of their unbelief, Jesus couldn’t do any miracles among them except to place His hands on a few sick people and heal them. Jesus was amazed at their unbelief.

Mark chapter 6 verses 5 & 6 (766)

- What is it that God is READY & ANXIOUS to do for you, but isn’t doing for you because of your unbelief?
- Don’t confuse the “except” stuff in your life with the BIG MIRACLES God has in store for you!
- Is God amazed at your belief or your unbelief? How do you know? Your life shows it...

Bold faith...because Jesus is awesome!

Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o’clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, but when they saw Him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking He was a ghost. Mark chapter 6 verses 47 - 49 (767)

Effective leaders live lives that Honor God

And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

Nehemiah chapter 2 verse 8 (371)

Next Weekend: Effective leaders understand those they’re leading (*Nehemiah chapter 3*)