

October 14/15, 2023

"Time to Get Moving"

Pastor Jeff Manion



**Beyond the
Weekend**

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2023 SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Intentional activities to deepen our relationship with God and mold us to be more like Jesus.

OCTOBER PRACTICE Serving

Day 1 Nehemiah 2:1-10 | Time to Get Moving

In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. Nehemiah 2:1a

It's been four months since Nehemiah heard about Jerusalem. He knows Israel was conquered and exiled 140 years ago but the people have been allowed to return to their homeland for 90 years. Yet the wall protecting the city is still in pieces and the few people who chose to return are in trouble. Nehemiah prays, fasts and likely seeks advice during those four months. He's sad and afraid but ready to get moving.

Nehemiah's forward movement helps us as we consider our own "rebuids." This week Nehemiah's story reveals what it takes to begin moving forward. We see Nehemiah move beyond sadness, show courage during fear, volunteer to be sent and anticipate the challenges ahead. There are times when a rebuild is necessary in our lives. It might be a relationship, our finances, or something else. May we learn from Nehemiah and begin to take steps forward this week in whatever rebuild we face.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY Worship with the Ada Bible Worship team as they sing [Build My Life](#). Declare to God, "I will build my life upon your love, it is a firm foundation." Remember he is worthy and the only firm foundation on which to rebuild. End your time by inviting God to show you where you may need to rebuild this week.

Day 2 Nehemiah 2:1-3 | Beyond Sadness

I had not been sad in his presence before, so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." Nehemiah 2:1b-2a

Nehemiah is deeply saddened about Jerusalem and the people's living situation there. He gives himself time to grieve. He hears the news in the month of Kislev ([Nehemiah 1:1](#)) but doesn't take steps forward until the month of Nisan, four months later. He is obviously still grieved but willing to courageously reveal his sadness to the king. He knows sadness won't rebuild the wall in Jerusalem and decides to begin taking steps to get started.

Deep sadness can push us toward two common pitfalls. One is avoiding it by numbing ourselves with busyness, substances, relationships, etc. The other is to get stuck in the sadness and not move beyond it. Nehemiah models a response that avoids both. He grieves without numbing his pain (the king can see it on his face) AND at the appropriate time, Nehemiah takes steps to move beyond the sadness. The timeframe for moving forward will differ for each of us. Some of us have grieved appropriately and it's time to begin forward movement. It's time to call a counselor, invite someone to help our marriage, send that first job application, go to AA or pick a Bible reading plan. It's time to rebuild.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY Consider what one step you might need to take today. Write in your journal what God brings to mind and commit to begin taking that step today. If you are struggling to figure out how to move forward, pray and ask God to show you the way. If you would like to talk to someone, please email care@adabible.org. We would love to chat with you and come alongside you as you seek to move forward.

Day 3 Nehemiah 2:1-5 | Courage

I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” Nehemiah 2:2b-3

Nehemiah is the cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes. He works directly with the notoriously volatile leader of the greatest nation on earth, and Nehemiah is afraid. Showing sadness in the presence of Eastern royalty could bring dire consequences. But Nehemiah drops his guard, despite his fears. It is a big risk, but the task is too important. It's the right thing to do and he will be faithful. He knows God is with him and prays as he takes the step amid his fear.

Fear can paralyze us. Fear can prevent us from performing our most important tasks if we let it. Nehemiah shows us we can have confidence our God is with us in the uncontrollable and fear-filled situations we face. When we feel like God is calling us to rebuild, we don't need to let fear stop us from moving. This might be a parent who is afraid, prays and has a difficult conversation with a child. It could mean praying and telling a trusted friend about what's really been going on and asking for help. We don't know how these situations will turn out, but we can be confident God is with us when we courageously do the right thing.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY Memorize [Joshua 1:9](#). Commit this verse to memory and be ready to recall it when fear threatens to keep you from your most important tasks. Consider writing it down on a notecard or on your mobile device and keep it with you as you go about your day. May this verse remind you that our God is with you just as he was with Joshua and Nehemiah.

Day 4 Nehemiah 2:4-9 | Send Me

The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.” Nehemiah 2:4-5a

The king asks a simple question, “What is it you want?” Nehemiah doesn't ask the king to set up a rebuilding committee or to send money to Jerusalem. Instead, Nehemiah's answer is surprising and simple, “Send me.” He wants to be actively involved in the rebuild. He also anticipates God's goodness around this project. Because he trusts God, he humbly asks for resources such as building materials and letters for safe passage. He anticipates God's help and blessing as he seeks to honor God with his efforts.

We can trust God to meet us as we seek to rebuild and honor him. It does not mean that everything will be easy. But we can trust God to meet us in the search for a counselor as we seek to honor him and repair our marriage. We can trust God to walk with us as we seek to honor him and break an addiction. We can trust him to be with us as we seek to honor him by rebuilding our finances. We can trust our gracious God as we get actively involved in the building projects in our lives that honor him.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY Pray and invite God to send you. Tell him that you want to be actively involved in a God-honoring rebuilding project. Invite him to show you, ask him to prepare you and thank him for being with you in it.

Day 5 Nehemiah 2:9-20 | Anticipating Challenges

When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites. Nehemiah 2:10

Reading [Nehemiah 2:1-9](#) may make it seem as if this building project is going to be easy. Nehemiah gathers the courage to speak to the king and receives his blessing. The king provides letters for safe travel and lumber, and even army officers and cavalry. The project has the blessing and favor of God himself. Yet, even with this support, Nehemiah will face challenges. Verse 10 foreshadows this. These men are going to show up again and again and they will actively oppose this project.

It is tempting for us to believe that when we do something God-honoring everything will fall into place. However, Nehemiah's story reveals something different. We will face challenges even when we do something God-honoring. Some people may like things as they are and don't want us to rebuild. We may try to change a sinful habit and find opposition even in ourselves.

We may find family or friends do not support our new decisions. We may find the relationship we seek to rebuild gets more challenging at first. When we say “Yes” to something God-honoring we can anticipate his presence, but we can also anticipate opposition.

IN YOUR CHAIR TIME TODAY Think about what you are seeking to rebuild. Reflect on challenges you may face along the way. Write down the things that come to mind. Then use Jesus’s words from [John 16:33](#) to pray a prayer of trust. “God, I know that in this world I will have trouble. As I seek to bring you honor and rebuild, help me take heart and trust in you. Help me honor you in the way I respond to the challenges that may come. Amen.”