



PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Nehemiah 2:1-20

- **To live strong, successful lives we first need to pray and get vision from the Lord (Nehemiah 1), and then we need to develop goals and plans that will enable us to live like God has called us to live and do what He's called us to do.**
- *"We can make our own plans, but the Lord gives the right answer. . . . Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed."* (Proverbs 16:1, 3)
- *"We should make plans -- counting on God to direct us."* (Proverbs 16:9 LB)
- *"Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity . . ."* (Proverbs 21:5)
- *"Failing to plan is planning to fail."* - Anonymous
- **To live successfully we need to have physical, financial, relational, vocational and spiritual goals and plans for our lives.**
- ***What can we learn from Nehemiah that will help us to better plan out our lives, and experience God's direction and blessings regarding our plans?***

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

PRAYING AND THINKING ABOUT DIRECTION FOR OUR LIVES

- Nehemiah - *"Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine."* (Nehemiah 2:1)
- **Nehemiah had been praying for the people in Jerusalem for four months (Nehemiah 1:1-11), and thinking what he could do to help them.**
- *"Nothing is more profitable and demanding than serious thinking."* - Howard Hendricks
- **Successful people make time for "thinking time."**
- *"Wise people think before they act; fools don't - and even brag about their foolishness."* (Proverbs 13:16)
- **Questions to ask ourselves include: 1) Where am I in my life, relationships, career and ministry now? 2) Where do I want to be? and 3) How will I get there?**
- **When we spend time thinking and praying, the Lord will give us revelation (Jeremiah 33:3) and direction about steps we need to take in our lives.**

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES

- Nehemiah - *"The king asked me, 'Why are you looking so sad?' . . . 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 2:1-3)
- Nehemiah's "sad face" revealed that he was troubled, and when asked about his "burden" he took advantage of the opportunity to share what was on his heart.
- *"Make the most of every opportunity . . ."* (Ephesians 5:16)
- Nehemiah's response to the King involved a risk, which reminds us successful people courageously take advantage of opportunities in spite of their fears.
- *"God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."* (2 Timothy 1:7)
- **We need to look for opportunities that not only help us but also help others.**
- *"Don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."* (Galatians 5:13)

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

ESTABLISHING SOME PRIMARY GOALS

- Nehemiah - *"The king asked, 'Well, how can I help you?' With a prayer to the God of heaven, 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.'"* (Nehemiah 2:4-5)
- Nehemiah had a goal in mind - rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem so that the people who lived there would be protected from their enemies.
- **Goal-setting is crucial for successful planning and accomplishment.**
- "If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it!" - Rick Warren
- **Questions to ask when establishing goals include: 1) What do I want to be? 2) What do I want to do? and 3) What do I want to have or accomplish?**
- **Common errors in goal setting are that we often: 1) don't write down our goals, 2) set our goals too low or too high, and 3) try to accomplish our goals too quickly.**
- **We need to set such big goals in our lives (as we are directed by the Lord to do so) that God has to bail us out in order for us to accomplish those goals.**

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

SETTING SOME DEADLINES

- Nehemiah - *"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 2:6)
- **Goals must have deadlines, or they are only wishes.**
- **We need to ask ourselves, "How long will these projects and plans take?" and then schedule the plans or project(s) on our calendar.**

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

ANTICIPATING SOME PROBLEMS

- Nehemiah - *"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.'" (Nehemiah 2:7)*
- **To accomplish great goals, we need to ask, "What could hold me back?"**
- *"A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences."* (Proverbs 22:3)
- **Most people focus on solving "today's problems," but successful people focus on solving "tomorrow's problems."**

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

CALCULATING THE COSTS

- Nehemiah - *"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 2:8)
- **Successful planning includes careful budgeting.**
- Jesus - *"If one of you is planning to build a tower, he sits down first and figures out what it will cost to see if he has enough money to finish the job."* (Luke 14:28)

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

PREPARING FOR OPPOSITION

- Nehemiah - *"The king, I should add, had sent along army officers and horsemen to protect me. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of my arrival, they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel."* (Nehemiah 2:9-10)
- **There will always be opponents and obstacles when we're pursuing godly plans, so we need to "armor up" (Ephesians 6:10-20) and surround ourselves with supportive people who will help us overcome those obstacles and opponents.**
- Paul - *"There is a wide-open door for a great work here, although many oppose me."* (1 Corinthians 16:9)
- Paul - *"If God is for us, who can ever stand against us?"* (Romans 8:31)

To Plan For A Successful Life We Need To Engage In:

RALLYING SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

- **After Nehemiah finished his planning while in Persia, he did some additional planning when he arrived in Jerusalem before speaking to the Israelite people about his goals and plans (Nehemiah 2:11-15).**
- Nehemiah - *"I had not yet spoken to the Jewish leaders . . . But now I said to them, 'You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace.' Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king. They replied at once, 'Yes, let's rebuild the wall!'"* (Nehemiah 2:16-18)
- **We learn from Nehemiah's planning that it's good to ask others for assistance.**

- Nehemiah asked for the King's permission, protection and provision, and received what he had asked for (Nehemiah 2:1-8).
- "You have not because you ask not." (James 4:2)
- **We learn from Nehemiah's planning that *the best ventures are those attempted after prayer and planning.***
 - "Seek His (God's) will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take." (Proverbs 3:6)
- **We learn from Nehemiah's planning that *when we have a vision and plan from the Lord that He will provide the resources.***
 - Nehemiah - "The king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me." (Nehemiah 2:8)
 - "God will supply all your needs from His glorious riches . . ." (Philippians 4:19)
- Nehemiah - "When Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed . . . I replied, 'The God of heaven will help us succeed.'" (Nehemiah 2:19-20)
- "If God is your partner, make no little plans." (D.L. Moody)

FOLLOWING UP

- **Address The Question - *What are some physical, financial, relational, vocational and spiritual goals I need to have in 2023?***
- **Develop a Project/Plan Sheet for each Goal, and began to write down some plans after spending time in prayer seeking direction from the Lord.**
- **After writing down your goals and your initial plans, ask a mature Christian to give you some feedback about those goals and plans.**
- **Put "Action Steps" on your weekly calendar that will help you begin to make progress towards accomplishing your goals and plans.**