

# NEHEMIAH 2-3

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## SMALL GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

TO DISCUSS ON \_\_\_\_\_

### PART 1: A HISTORY OF OPPOSITION

TO BRIDGE CHAPTER 2 & 3 OF NEHEMIAH, WE WILL BEGIN BY LOOKING AT LETTERS TO AND FROM KINGS THAT RECORD THE OPPOSITION LEADERS FACED. WE WILL ALSO DEVOTE MORE TIME TO SCRIPTURES FOCUSED ON FEAR AND PRAYER.

*EZRA 4:1-6:15 record some of the oppositions that Zerubbabel and Ezra faced during their time of rebuilding the temple and the spiritual literacy of the people. These accounts are not in chronological order, but rather were grouped together to highlight the persistent opposition to God's people over the years. Read the letters recorded in these verses and then, let's make a few highlights on the next 2 pages.*

*In EZRA 4:3 we see another verse that parallels what we read in NEHEMIAH 2:20. What is asked of Zerubbabel? What do Zerubbabel and the other heads of the families say when the enemies say they wanted to help rebuild the temple?*

*What was King Artaxerxes urged to consider in EZRA 4:13-16 to disrupt the work of rebuilding the temple?.*

*EZRA 4:21-24 tell us it was effective. Write what happened in your own words:*

*Based on this response of King Artaxerxes, how important might Nehemiah's prayers been for the four months between NEHEMIAH 1 AND 2?*

*We never know how God will use our prayer, or how He is working behind the scenes. King Artaxerxes had a documented history of stopping the Jews from rebuilding the temple, and yet was later moved to send Nehemiah to rebuild the walls and gates of the city, giving the city fortitude and protection. Our Lord delights in changing hearts and lives when we pray.*

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**LORD, we do not see clearly or completely as You do. Remind us you are always working behind the scenes, and quicken our minds to pray with confidence because of it.**

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## PART 2: A DECREE FROM KING DARIUS

*Let's visit EZRA 5 and read a separate letter to King Darius at another time.*

*Notice the important detail in EZRA 5:17. What is being requested of King Darius?*

*EZRA 6 is the response from Darius.*

*What does EZRA 6:1-5 say King Darius did?*

*Continue reading and record what Darius decreed in these verses:*

VERSE 6

VERSE 7

VERSE 8

VERSE 9 AND 10

VERSE 11

VERSES 14 & 15

*Let's go back and revisit a verse from last week. What action did Cyrus do after he made his proclamation in EZRA 1:1?*

*Cyrus recording the work of the Lord moving his own heart to fulfill the prophecy of Jeremiah is what King Darius found. The Lord used that writing to remobilize His people through the decree of Darius, and despite opposition the temple was rebuilt and completed.*

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**LORD, discipline my heart to pray. Steady my heart to a stillness that prepares me for Your presence. Direct my eyes to be watching for your answers to all that I lift to You.**

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## PART 3: FAITH OVER FEAR

*Let's jump to ACTS 9 where my favorite overcoming fear story is found. It is the story of Saul's conversion to Paul and right in the middle of it all Ananias has a fear crisis that I can relate to.*

*What does ACTS 9:10-12 say the Lord calls Ananias to do?*

*How does Ananias respond in VERSES 13 AND 14?*

*I don't know about you, but if the Lord called me to go touch the man who has been brutally killing and arresting believers-I would definitely be afraid.*

*What do these verses record as a result of:*

VERSE 17

VERSE 18

VERSE 19

VERSE 20

VERSE 21

VERSE 22

*Nehemiah was faced with the same faith over fear crisis. Just like Ananias had to muster up a few moments of human courage coupled by an overpowering fear of God and take a big risk to fulfill a calling. Had Nehemiah succumbed to his fear, the walls would not have been rebuilt and a work of the Lord would not have been on display for the world. Had Ananias let fear win, the scales would have not fallen from Paul's eyes making the invisible grace of God visible, forever marking the transformed life of a murderous man also on display for the world. A display and testimony that has helped shape the faith of countless believers from that moment on, including me. Faith and the fear of God overcomes the fear of man.*

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**LORD, when obedience seems unsafe, when You are asking the ordinary to do the extraordinary, when faith collides with fear in my heart, may the fear of God win.**

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## PART 4: PAUSING TO PRAY

TODAY, WE ARE GOING TO PRACTICE PAUSING TO PRAY. BEFORE YOU GIVE AN ANSWER TO SOMEONE TODAY, INTENTIONALLY PRACTICE SPONTANEOUS PRAYER, LIKE NEHEMIAH DID. COLLECT YOUR THOUGHTS, YOUR NEEDS, OR THEIRS AND LIFT THEM UP TO GOD AND RECORD YOUR PRAYER HERE LATER. LEARNING TO PRAY SPONTANEOUSLY ISN'T ACCIDENTAL, IT IS INTENTIONAL. WE WON'T JUST STUMBLE UPON IT, WE MUST TRY TO PUT IT INTO PRACTICE, SPONTANEOUS PRAYER CAN BECOME PART OF OUR DAILY LIFE IF ARE INTENTIONAL ABOUT IT.

*Look up some or all of these verses to encourage your prayer life today. Make notes as you would like.*

2 KINGS 20:5

PSALM 6:9

PSALM 42:8

COLOSSIANS 4:2

JEREMIAH 29:12

MATTHEW 7:7-8

JOHN 14:13-14

ROMANS 12:12

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

*Get comfortable and take a few minutes to pray. Ask God for opportunities to practice spontaneous prayer.*

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**LORD, discipline my heart to pray. Steady my heart to a stillness that prepares me for Your presence. Direct my eyes to be watching for your answers to all that I lift to You.**