

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

NEHEMIAH SERIES

These questions are for the **September 11, 2016** sermon, "Sadness of the Heart." Please read the sermon passage (Nehemiah 2:1-8) together out loud.

Sermon Outline:

PLAN AHEAD PRAYERFULLY, DISCERNING GOD'S HAND IN . . .

1. **The observations others make (1-3)**
 - a. Nehemiah's (unbelieving) employer (the king) noted that he was truly sad.
 - b. Nehemiah used his words wisely. He appealed to the king's tendency (to let people go back to their home land) without using controversial words (like "Jerusalem").
 - c. Nehemiah made a courageous (and huge) request of his boss: that he would let Nehemiah return to Judah. "The highest degree of courage is seen in the person who is most fearful but refuses to capitulate to it." -J. Oswald Sanders
2. **The opportunities conversations present (4-5)**
 - a. When the king (his boss) asks for a conversation, Nehemiah prays first.
 - b. "A good prayer doesn't have to be long." -Pastor Gary
3. **The obstacles we anticipate (6-8)**
 - a. Nehemiah's boss (the king) appeals to an outside party (his wife, the queen) for counsel.
 - b. As we look ahead, there are next steps, next trials and next big roadblocks to anticipate.
 - c. In all of this, Nehemiah's prayers were answered as God's good hand remained on him.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: What comments have people made to you that seemed critical, unfeeling or hurtful? In what ways did those comments contain truth? How did they ultimately help?
2. Based on #1, above: Words are so important. Nehemiah planned out what he would say and what he would not say. Do you plan out your words before you have important conversations?
3. Based on #1, above: There are times in life when we must make a huge verbal appeal to others. The king had the power to refuse Nehemiah's request. But Nehemiah overcame the fearful moment and said what he needed to say. Do you sense God calling you to overcome fear, speaking clearly and graciously to someone?
4. Based on #2, above: Even if the conversation comes on suddenly, catching you off guard, do you stop and pray before you speak? Why or why not?
5. Based on #3, above: Even when we proceed with prayerful wisdom, future obstacles will arise. What future obstacles do you anticipate in your prayerful plan? How might God's good hand lead you through?