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PRAYER

Father, we pray the prayer of Nehemiah, that those in authority would find pleasure and value in our proposal (if it pleases the King). May we find favour with those whom we approach to see your Kingdom advancement (and if your servant has found favour in your sight). Lord, may you go before us and send us to the areas within our city (that you send me to Judah) and use us as vessels to help bring life to our city (to the city of my fathers' graves), "that we may rebuild it." In Jesus' name, Amen.

-Prayer based on Nehemiah 2:4

WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

Have you ever worked on something special with someone or a group of people? Who were the people you worked with, what did you work on, and what made it so special?

NOTES

WORD

⁹ Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. ¹⁰ But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.

¹¹ So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. ¹² Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode. ¹³ I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. ¹⁴ Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. ¹⁵ Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. ¹⁶ And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.

¹⁷ Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." ¹⁸ And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. ¹⁹ But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" ²⁰ Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."

[NEHEMIAH 2:9-20](#)

"Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem and rallies Jerusalem's Jews to join his wall project. But all is not milk and honey in the Holy Land! Nehemiah realizes that three non-Jewish local governors—Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab—are seething about the Jerusalem rebuilding plan. They fear, quite reasonably, that a walled Jerusalem will be a mightier city, and a threat to its neighbors.

The whole scene is almost too depressing—or too funny—to believe. Consider the first and only conversation between a Jew and an Arab. When Geshem and his cronies heard that Nehemiah is rebuilding the wall, they "mocked and ridiculed" him. Nehemiah responds by saying: 'The God of heaven is the one who will give us success, and we, His servants, are going to start building; but you have no share or claim or historic right in Jerusalem' (emphasis added). That's right, 2,500 years have passed, and it's the same argument!

Under Nehemiah's command, the Jerusalemites begin rebuilding the gates and walls of the city. The three enemies harass and terrorize the Jews so much that Nehemiah has to suspend the wall project...The security situation is so bad that they can't get any reconstruction done. Eventually, Nehemiah sends his men back to the walls, but half of them have to provide security, while the other half piles stones."

-David Blotz, *The Complete Book of Nehemiah*

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1-10 (1 = none at all; 10 = extreme), how would you rate your capacity to build good relationships with people that are helpful? Why have you rated yourself this way?
2. What are some ways you can know the right people to build good relationships with?
3. What do you think God has called you to build that glorifies him in this season of your life? If you don't know, would you like to pray about it now?
4. Have you experienced people talking badly about something you were working on, in a similar way that Nehemiah experienced it? What happened, and were you able to finish the work that you were doing?
5. If you are not yet a follower of God our Father, would you be willing to acknowledge him as your God, and enable him to have all authority as the one who calls the shots in your life as your Father who loves you? Would you like to enter into a saving relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.