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## LESSON OF PRAYER FROM NEHEMIAH

Not everyone has a mind to work as diligently as the man Nehemiah, cupbearer of King Artaxerxes. Nehemiah was driven by his devotion to God and his earnest desire to help his people. While serving in the king's court, Nehemiah was overwhelmed with the plight of his people in Jerusalem as he explained, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire" (Neh. 2:3)? The king allowed Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and under the oversight of this man of faith the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in fifty-two days (Neh. 6:15). Throughout the book of Nehemiah the ridicule, fear, guile, corruption and vicious attacks did not hinder his goal of rebuilding the walls of the city. His work did not end with the building of the wall as he

went on to help Ezra reestablish the Law and to exhort the people to confess their sins. The key to Nehemiah's success was rooted in his deep love of prayer. Before approaching the king with the request to go to Jerusalem and before undertaking the enormous task that lay before him – Nehemiah went to God. "O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man" (Neh. 1:11). There are four things that Nehemiah prayed for that will help you and I come to a fuller understanding of the nature of prayer. First, he begins by asking God to hear his prayer. This is where faith opens the door of prayer. "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for

he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8). Faith had declared in Nehemiah's prayer the "awesome" (Neh. 1:5) God and repentance representative of the nation of Israel and plea for forgiveness (Neh. 1:5-7). He pleads the promises of God (Neh. 1:8-10) and asked for mercy in his prayer. Our prayers should begin in faith and the recognition of the sovereignty of Him who is "awesome" and "Our Father which is in heaven (Matthew 6:9). There is none like Him (Isa. 40:18). Second, Nehemiah recognizes the importance of fear before the Lord. Those who do not fear the name of the Lord will not prosper (Prov. 1:28-33). "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD" (Deut. 28:58). Prayer is coupled with the fear of the Lord. Nehemiah will need this courage later in the story (Neh. 4:14) and the people will proclaim it in Nehemiah 9:32. The third part of his prayer is asking for the Lord to allow him to prosper and to do the work he wanted to do. The

request was tempered by the fourth element of prayer – the mercy of God. Nehemiah only wanted to serve the Lord and his prayer was to seek prosperity not of himself but the cause of his God. How often do we pray that God's will be done (Matt. 6:10) and not our own and to accept the answer given by God – even if is not the answer we desired. Prayer is the expression of our faith in the wisdom of God to carry out His will through us. Nehemiah guided the people to the incredible task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days. What can we accomplish with prayer? – Kent Heaton

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3,4). **ALTHOUGH GOD'S GIFTS ARE GIVEN FOR OUR OWN BENEFIT, THEY ARE ALSO GIVEN FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS.** There is an important sense in which the good things of God have been given to us as a stewardship or a trust. We've been entrusted with these things on the assumption that they're to be used to accomplish His purposes. It is a serious

misappropriation of God's grace to spend it all on endeavors that are simply self-centered. Even when we see the importance of SEEKING God, we often don't see the importance of our MOTIVES in seeking Him. Yet this is a matter that must be carefully considered. When we seek God, why do we do so? Is it, first and foremost, in order to be rightly related to Him, so that we can make the contribution He wants us to make within the web of relationships we're a part of? Or is it simply to get what we want for ourselves, so that we can have the kind of life we prefer? No matter how diligently we seek God, the outcome will always hinge on our motives. God's blessings must be seen as furthering His purposes, not our own agenda. One of the most impressive things about the apostle Paul was the purity of his motives in helping others. Toward the end of his life he wrote to one church, "For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:23,24). And to another church, he simply said, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Corinthians 12:15). It's no coincidence that a man with this kind of motivation found himself endowed with great resources from God

Concerning Himself, Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). As He carried out His mission, there were times when He needed support and sustenance. We read of a time when "angels came and ministered to Him" (Matthew 4:11). He never failed to be helped when He needed help, because He never failed to use His Father's gifts for their proper purpose. "God comforts us not to make us comfortable but to make us comforters" (John Henry Jowett). – Gary Henry



***"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."***  
**2 Cor. 5:18-19**

# BIBLE TRIVIA

## C H A L L E N G E

**DIRECTIONS:** After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

**1. To the church in Ephesus, Jesus said they hated the deeds of the \_\_\_\_.**

- a) Kardashians
- b) Nicolaitans
- c) Bereans
- d) Judaizing Teachers

**2. To the church in Smyrna, Jesus said \_\_\_\_ would cast some in prison.**

- a) Herod
- b) Nero
- c) Pilate
- d) The Devil

**3. To the church in Pergamum, Jesus said to those who overcame He would give some of the hidden \_\_\_\_.**

- a) Manna
- b) Truth
- c) Treasure
- d) Gold

**4. To the church in Thyatira, Jesus said they tolerated the woman \_\_\_\_.**

- a) Sarah
- b) Martha
- c) Mary
- d) Jezebel

**5. To the church in Sardis, Jesus said there were a few who had not \_\_\_\_ their garments.**

- a) Soiled
- b) Lost
- c) Sold
- d) Ripped

**6. To the church in Philadelphia, Jesus said He would keep them from the hour of \_\_\_\_.**

- a) Sleep
- b) Death
- c) Power
- d) Testing

**7. To the church in Laodicea, Jesus said to those He loves He \_\_\_\_.**

- a) Rewards
- b) Blesses
- c) Disciplines
- d) Commends

**8. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and \_\_\_\_."**

- a) Sleep
- b) Knock
- c) Attack
- d) Rebuke

**9. Jesus said "Blessed is he who \_\_\_\_ the words of the prophecy of this book."**

- a) Reads
- b) Teaches
- c) Heeds
- d) Knows

**10. Jesus said, "I am the Alpha and the \_\_\_\_."**

- a) Centurion
- b) Lion
- c) Lamb
- d) Omega

- 1) B, Reference: Rev. 2:6  
 2) D, Reference: Rev. 2:10  
 3) A, Reference: Rev. 2:17  
 4) D, Reference: Rev. 2:20  
 5) A, Reference: Rev. 3:4  
 6) D, Reference: Rev. 3:10  
 7) C, Rev. 3:19  
 8) B, Rev. 3:20  
 9) C, Rev. 22:7  
 10) D, Rev. 22:13