



January is Small Group Sign-Up Month.

Big Valley Grace is a **big** church and it's easy to feel disconnected. God makes clear in His Word the importance of doing life with others.

We desire that every person who calls Big Valley Grace home would attend church each weekend and belong to a small group.

January is small group sign-up month for the winter trimester (February - May).

You can sign up to join a group at www.bigvalleygrace.org.



Stay Connected

www.bigvalleygrace.org

Latest news and events
Audio messages and sermon notes
Information about our ministries

Our Purpose

why we exist

The purpose of the church is to bring glory to God.

Our Mission

what we do

Love God • Love People • Make Disciples

Our Core Values

how we do it

Worship - lifting up the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
Connect - living in community, loving and supporting one another
Grow - equipping believers to live in obedience to God's Word
Serve - helping people discover and use their God-given talents
Reach - transforming lives and communities with the good news of Jesus Christ

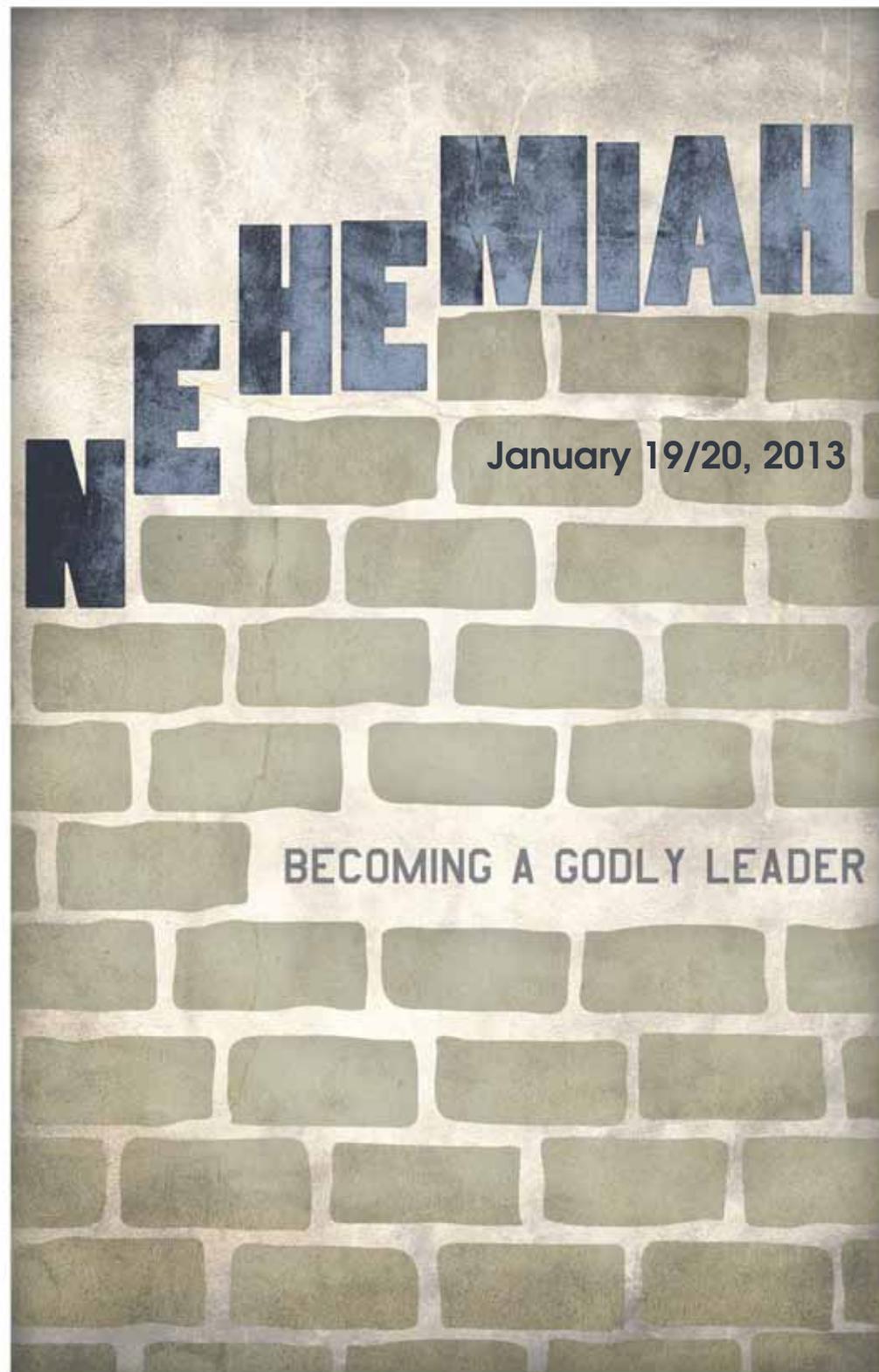
Contact Information

Church Address: 4040 Tully Road
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Office Hours: Monday - Thursday: 9 A.M. - 5 P.M.
Friday - Sunday: Closed

Phone Number: 209.577.1604

Website: www.bigvalleygrace.org



Good leaders pray then plan

Nehemiah 2:1-9
Pastor Rick Countryman

Why leaders plan

1. Leaders plan because _____.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace... 1 Corinthians 14:33 (NLT)

2. Leaders plan because _____ us to plan.

But let everything be done in a right and orderly way. 1 Corinthians 14:40 (NCV)

Plan carefully what you do, and whatever you do will turn out right. Avoid evil and walk straight ahead. Don't go one step off the right way. Proverbs 4:26-27 (GN)

3. Leaders plan because it's _____ to plan.

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT)

Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You don't look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled."

Then 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."

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."

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.

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. 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." And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

When I came to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, I delivered the king's letters to them. The king, I should add, had sent along army officers and horsemen to protect me. Nehemiah 2:1-9 (NLT)

Characteristics of a good leader

1. A good leader always allows time to _____, _____ and _____.

Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. Verse 1

Wise people think before they act; fools don't... Proverbs 13:16 (NLT)

2. A good leader doesn't allow _____ to _____ him from taking action.

Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You don't look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled."

Then 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." Verses 1-3

3. A good leader always knows what the _____ is.

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." Verses 4-5

4. A good leader always sets _____.

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. Verse 6

5. A good leader always anticipates _____.

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. 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." And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me. Verses 7-8

Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later. Proverbs 27:12 (GN)

6. A good leader always understands the _____.

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." Verse 8

A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, "If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!' Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

Luke 14:25-33 (NLT)



Journaling

Writing out the Nehemiah verses each day will give you opportunity to look more closely into God's Word. You may want to use a journal or make a file on your computer. By the end of this series, you will have copied the entire book of Nehemiah.

Stop telling God how big your problems are, and start telling your problems how big your God is!

Monday – Begin the day in prayer. Write or type Nehemiah 3.

Read Nehemiah 3:1-32. List the occupations in verses 1,7-9,12, 26, 28 and 31-32. What impresses you about this list?

Why do you think the people in verse 5 felt the way they did? What do you think would happen if most Christians adopted this attitude?

What principles regarding work can you learn from:

1 Corinthians 10:31 -

Ephesians 6:7 -

Colossians 3:23-24 -

How might implementing the attitude of these verses impact your work?

Tuesday – Begin the day in prayer. Write or type Nehemiah 4:1-5.

From where do ridicule and criticism come?

Based on Monday's study, why do you think this tactic can be expected?

Verse 5 in the New American Standard version says they demoralized the builders. How can this type of discouragement affect you?

What is Nehemiah's immediate response to the intimidation?

Who responded and how in the following:

1 Samuel 17:41-47?

Luke 22:63-65 and 23:35-37?

Hebrews 11:36?

How can you use opposition as an opportunity for spiritual growth?

Wednesday – Begin the day in prayer. Write or type Nehemiah 4:6-9

What was the attitude of the builders in verse 6? What was accomplished because of it? What can you learn from this?

What was the reaction of those in opposition?

How did Nehemiah lead the people in response to the threats?

What can you learn from Nehemiah's leadership?

How could this be an example and an encouragement to you today?

Thursday – Begin the day in prayer. Write or type Nehemiah 4:10-18.

What fears did the builders have in verses 10-12? How is the opposition referred to in verse 11?

What did Nehemiah tell the builders to remember? What do you do to be reminded of God's character? How do you think this will be a legacy to future generations?

What happened to the plans of the enemies? Why were the people able to continue the work? What practical principles can you apply from verses 15-18?

What similarities do you find by comparing Nehemiah's instructions to those in Ephesians 6:10-20?

Friday – Begin the day in prayer. Write or type Nehemiah 4:19-23.

How did Nehemiah set the example of serving? How might you apply one of these examples this week?

What new characteristics of leadership did you see in Nehemiah this week? List leadership qualities you have learned from Nehemiah's life.

How do Psalm 33:10-22 and Isaiah 51:12-13 encourage you during fearful situations? Where are believers to find their strength?

Personal Reflection & Application

Personalize Psalm 34 as a prayer for yourself or someone you know who is going through a difficult time.

Reaching Out

Call the person you know who is going through a difficult time and ask if you can pray for him/her.