



**Warm-up question:** Ask everyone to imagine a desired future in one of the following areas and finish the sentence:

*I can see...*

*A family that...*

*A company that...*

*A church where...*

*A world in which...*

Pray that God will help us be more like Nehemiah and become *worthy* of leading.

**Ask the following Thought & Discussion Questions giving plenty of time for discussion.**

1. List all the things you can think of that Nehemiah did to go from cupbearer to leader (risks, sacrifices, planing, praying, researching, traveling, speaking, etc.). Which of these do you find most difficult to put into practice in your efforts to lead better? Which do you find easier? Explain?

2. When Nehemiah got to Jerusalem he kept his counsel to himself for three days until he got a chance to inspect the walls (at night). Why do you think he waited before casting his vision? How can that help you as a leader?

3. Do you feel like you have good ideas and solutions to problems, but nobody listens? What things does Nehemiah do or say in his speech that causes people to listen and act that you can learn from?

4. Nehemiah made many sacrifices and called upon others to change what they were doing in order to create a better future. Is it ever possible to create a better future without making changes in the present? Why is this so important to remember?

5. If we find ourselves unable to articulate our visions succinctly, convincingly, and compellingly to others, what might this mean?

6. How many comparisons can you make between the leadership of Nehemiah and the leadership of Jesus?

**This Week:** Write down the burden/vision you have been developing over the past few weeks. Keep working at it until you can express it in a clear and compelling way that: 1. Describes the problem. 2 Proposes a solution. 3 Shows why something must be done. 4. Shows why something must be done now.

**Close by singing** Psalm 19

1. The law of the Lord is perfect,  
Converting the soul;  
The testimony of the Lord is sure,  
Making wise the simple.

2. The statues of the Lord are right,  
Rejoicing the heart:  
The commandment of the Lord is pure,  
Enlightening the eyes.

Chorus:  
More to be desired are they than gold.  
Yea, than much fine gold:  
Sweeter also than honey  
And the honeycomb.

3. The fear of the Lord is clean,  
Enduring forever;  
The judgments of the Lord are true  
And righteous altogether.

## **Casting A Vision** Nehemiah 2:11-18

Being a leader is not automatically a good thing. It all depends on whether the leader has legitimately earned the right to lead and most importantly, where he is leading those who follow him.

Nehemiah's example answers two essential leadership Questions:

How do I become *worthy* of leadership? (What you do in private)

How do I *inspire others* to follow my lead? (What you do in public)

A simple cupbearer earned the right to lead God's people. First, he paid attention to the burden God put in his heart by noticing the difference between what should be (from God's word) and the way things were (in the world). Second, he nurtured this burden into a vision as he fasted, prayed, and planned for four months. Third, before he asked anyone else to lift a finger, he made the initial investment by asking the king for leave to go and rebuild. Fourth, he carefully investigated every detail so he would thoroughly understand the problem and how to solve it. All of this was done in private. *Leaders are seen in public but they plan in private.* Nehemiah spent untold hours preparing himself to deliver a two-minute speech.

A leader is not a leader until people follow him. Leaders must be able to communicate their vision in a way that inspires others to join in the mission. Nehemiah's short but impactful speech reveals four essential parts of casting a vision.

### **1. Define the problem** - V.17a *You see the trouble we are in...*

The people living in Jerusalem had put up with the rubble so long, they hardly noticed it anymore. Nehemiah shows us that a leader is someone who sees what others miss and defines the problem clearly.

So, what do you notice that others don't? All around us are tragic problems begging for solutions, but there are very few people seeking to understand them well enough to diagnose them in words. Christians should be able to see more clearly the rubble and the ruins of a shattered world than any other people.

### **2. Propose the solution** - V.17b *Come let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.* Nehemiah **envisioned** a walled city!

It is one thing to sense that something's wrong, but seeing a path from how things are to how they should be takes careful research and deep thinking. No person should put forth a solution to any problem until they have done their homework and is able to describe the desired outcome with verbal clarity.

### **3. Show Why something must be done** - V.17c *And we will no longer be in disgrace.*

It is true that some appeals to emotion are wrongheaded, but all visions that describe a preferable future will touch our emotions. The condition of Jerusalem was a shame! It was a problem that could be felt as well as seen. A good vision caster will help people see how their solution will resolve the tension we feel between what is and what should be and will be when we achieve it.

### **4. Show Why something must be done NOW** - V. 18a *I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.*

People are busy and tend to procrastinate. In order to do what you propose, they will have to leave off doing something else. Casting your vision means showing them the urgency of the need for action. In Nehemiah's case, it was clear that God was moving and this was Israel's opportunity to get on board with Him. It reminds me of Mordecai's words to Esther when she hesitated to risk her life by going before the king... *If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place...And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* (Esther 4:14).

When Nehemiah had finished casting his vision, the people said - *"Let us rise up and build"* (v.18b).

As Jesus followers, we should strive to lead others toward the preferred future that we see set before us!