

DANIEL BISHOP ——— *Lead Pastor*

RISK TAKING ACTION

Nehemiah

Out of 17,000 US high school students surveyed in late 2021, nearly 60 percent of teen girls reported persistent sadness or hopelessness.



APPLICATION QUESTION

Can you think of any fears keeping you from risking taking action for God?



DR. JOHN MARSELUS

“There is no greater book on leadership that has ever been written than the book of Nehemiah.”

POST-EXILIC RETURNS TO JERUSALEM

	DATE	SCRIPTURE	JEWISH LEADER	PERSIAN RULER
FIRST	538 BC	Ezra 1-6	Zerubbabel Jeshua	Cyrus
SECOND	458 BC	Ezra 7-10	Ezra	Artaxerxes
THIRD	445 BC	Neh. 1-13	Nehemiah	Artaxerxes

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel,



NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

² that Hanani, one of my brothers,
came with certain men from Judah.

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

³ And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame.



NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

The wall of Jerusalem is broken down,
and its gates are destroyed by fire.”

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

⁴ As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

⁵ And I said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

and keep his commandments, ⁶ let your ear be attentive
and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel
your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel,



NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

which we have sinned against you.
Even I and my father's house have sinned.

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

7 We have acted very corruptly against you
and have not kept the commandments, the statutes,

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

⁸ Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples,

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

9 but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them,
though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven,

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.'

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

¹¹ O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name,

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 (ESV)

and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king.

1

Nehemiah's leadership was built upon:
Compassion, Prayer, Action



APPLICATION QUESTION

What has God put in your heart making you
compassionate for His people and work?

NEHEMIAH 1:5 (ESV)

O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,



NEHEMIAH 1:11 (ESV)

and give success to your servant today...

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king.



NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

Now I had not been sad in his presence.

² And the king said to me,

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

“Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick?
This is nothing but sadness of the heart.”



NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

Then I was very much afraid.

³ I said to the king, "Let the king live forever!



NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

Why should not my face be sad, when the city,
the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins,

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

⁴ Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?"

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵ And I said to the king,
“If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight,

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves,
that I may rebuild it."

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

⁶ And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him),
“How long will you be gone, and when will you return?”

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.
7 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, ⁸ and a letter to Asaph,

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple,



NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

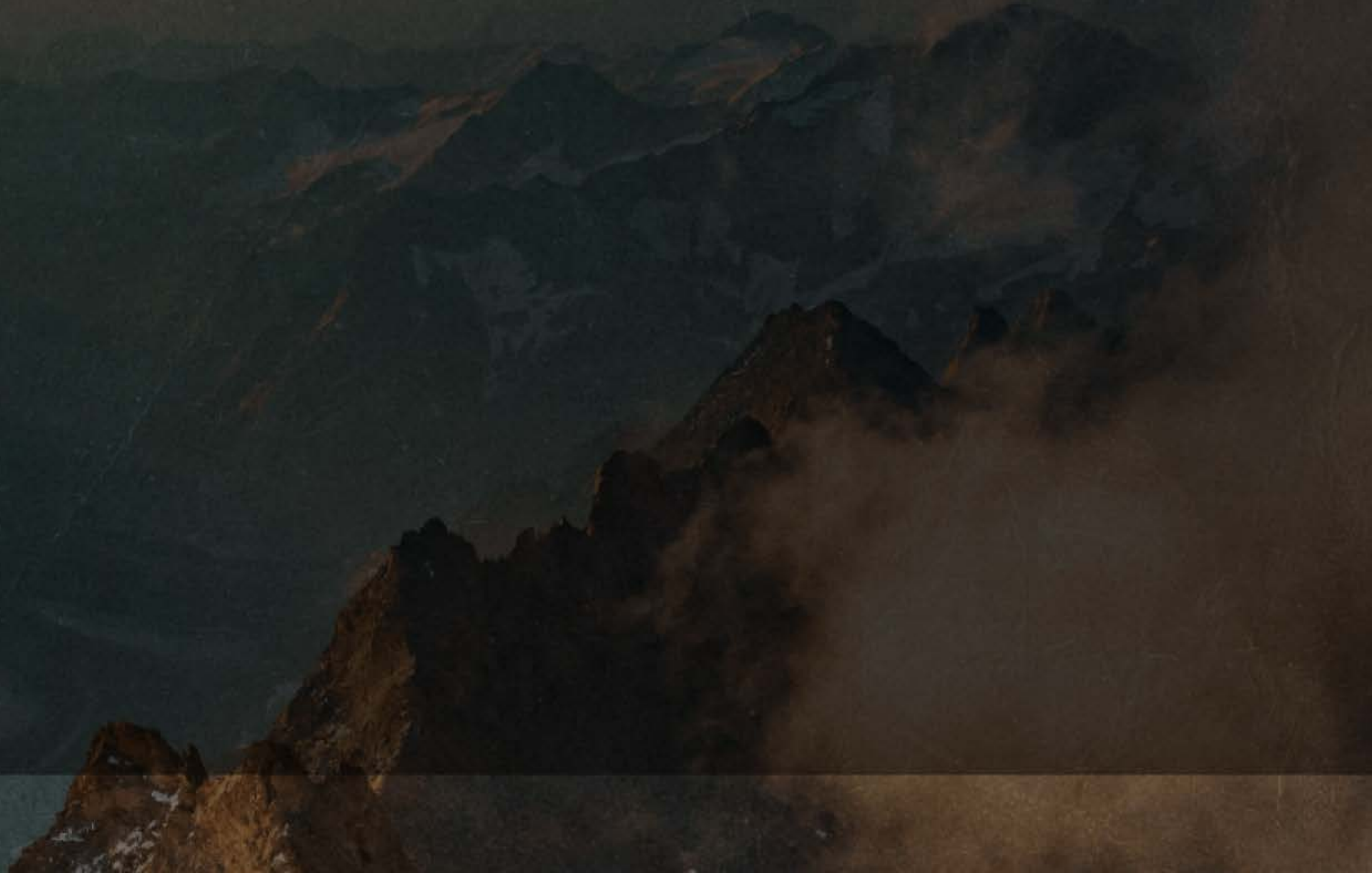
and for the wall of the city,
and for the house that I shall occupy."



NEHEMIAH 2:1-8 (ESV)

And the king granted me what I asked,
for the good hand of my God was upon me.

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:
i. at the appropriate time.



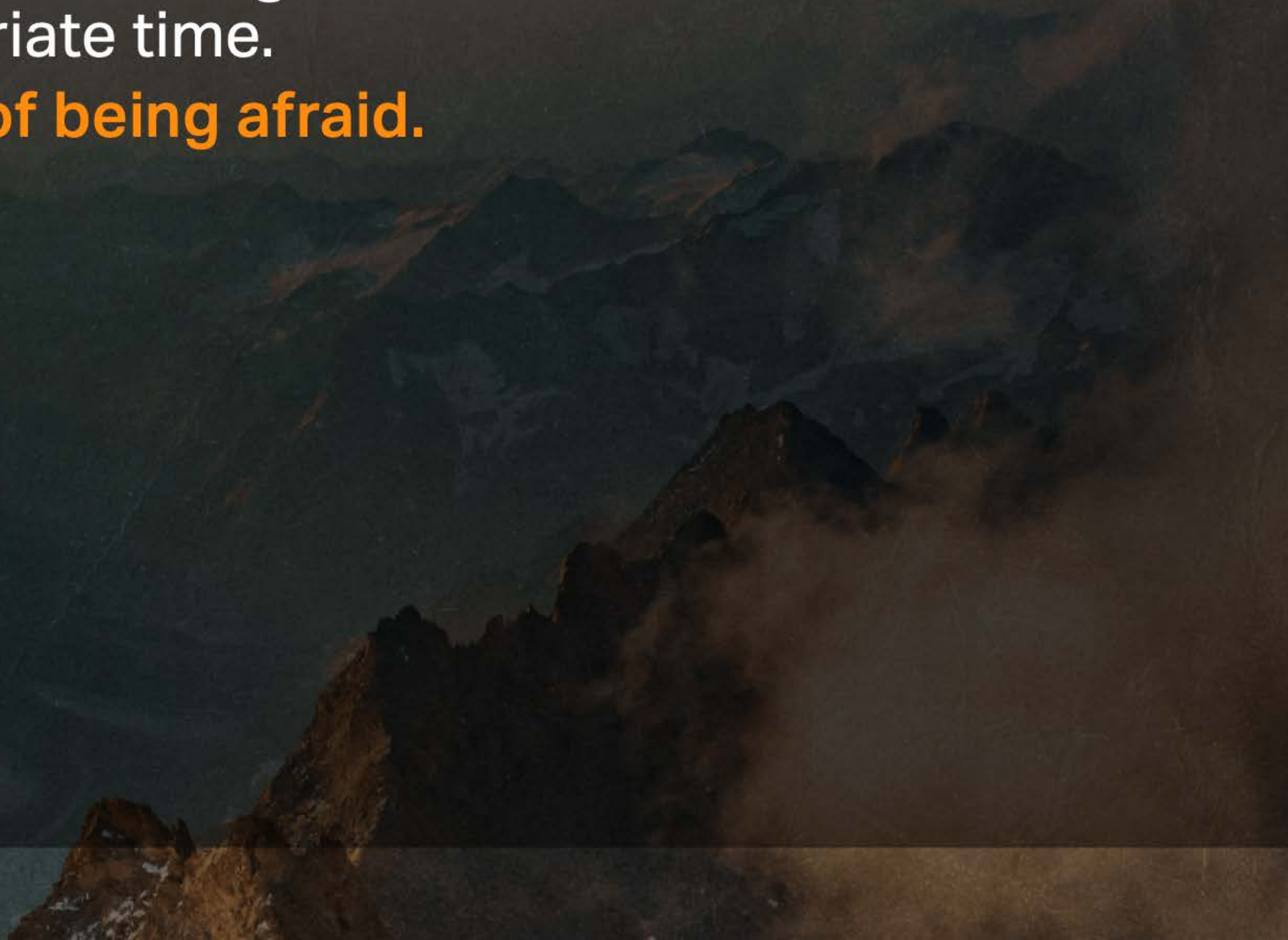
NEHEMIAH 2:2 (ESV)

And the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid.

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

i. at the appropriate time.

ii. in the midst of being afraid.



NEHEMIAH 2:4 (ESV)

Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?"
So I prayed to the God of heaven.

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.

iii. while continuing to be in prayer.

NEHEMIAH 2:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah,

NEHEMIAH 2:5-6 (ESV)

to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it."
6 And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him),

NEHEMIAH 2:5-6 (ESV)

“How long will you be gone, and when will you return?”
So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.
- iii. while continuing to be in prayer.
- iv. with a calculated plan.**

NEHEMIAH 2:8 (ESV)

And the king granted me what I asked,
for the good hand of my God was upon me.

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.
- iii. while continuing to be in prayer.
- iv. with a calculated plan.

v. by convincing the King by the hand of God.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

9 Then I came to the governors of the province
Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen.
10 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

- 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.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

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.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

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



NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

that were broken down and its gates
that had been destroyed by fire.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

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.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

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.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

¹⁶ And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews,



NEHEMIAH 2:9-16 (ESV)

the priests, the nobles, the officials,
and the rest who were to do the work.

NEHEMIAH 2:12 (ESV)

And I told no one what my God had put into my heart
to do for Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH 2:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned.



NEHEMIAH 2:17-18 (ESV)

Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem,
that we may no longer suffer derision."

NEHEMIAH 2:17-18 (ESV)

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.



NEHEMIAH 2:17-18 (ESV)

And they said, "Let us rise up and build."
So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.
- iii. while continuing to be in prayer.
- iv. with a calculated plan.
- v. by convincing the King by the hand of God.
- vi. by secretly surveying the walls and publicly sharing the plans.**

NEHEMIAH 2:19-20 (ESV)

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

NEHEMIAH 2:19-20 (ESV)

and said, "What is this thing that you are doing?
Are you rebelling against the king?"

NEHEMIAH 2:19-20 (ESV)

²⁰ Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build,

NEHEMIAH 2:19-20 (ESV)

but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.
- iii. while continuing to be in prayer.
- iv. with a calculated plan.
- v. by convincing the King by the hand of God.
- vi. by secretly surveying the walls and publicly sharing the plans.
- vii. in the midst of opposition**

NEHEMIAH 4:1 (ESV)

Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews.

NEHEMIAH 4:3 (ESV)

Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!"

NEHEMIAH 4:8 (ESV)

And they all plotted together to come
and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.

NEHEMIAH 4:14 (ESV)

And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them.

NEHEMIAH 4:14 (ESV)

Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.
- iii. while continuing to be in prayer.
- iv. with a calculated plan.
- v. by convincing the King by the hand of God.
- vi. by secretly surveying the walls and publicly sharing the plans.
- vii. in the midst of opposition
- viii. in doing more and expecting less**

NEHEMIAH 5:9 (ESV)

So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good.

NEHEMIAH 5:9 (ESV)

Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God
to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?

NEHEMIAH 5:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year

NEHEMIAH 5:14-15 (ESV)

of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers
ate the food allowance of the governor.

NEHEMIAH 5:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁵ The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration

NEHEMIAH 5:14-15 (ESV)

forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people.
But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.



APPLICATION QUESTION

In what ways is God wanting you to risk doing more and expecting less?

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.
- iii. while continuing to be in prayer.
- iv. with a calculated plan.
- v. by convincing the King by the hand of God.
- vi. by secretly surveying the walls and publicly sharing the plans.
- vii. in the midst of opposition
- viii. in doing more and expecting less
- ix. with Ezra in rebuilding the people's faith**



NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

And all the people gathered as one man
into the square before the Water Gate.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

² So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard,



NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)
on the first day of the seventh month.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

³ And he read from it facing the square
before the Water Gate from early morning until midday,



NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

in the presence of the men and the women
and those who could understand.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

⁴ And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Michael, Malchijah, Hashum,

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

⁶ And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord
with their faces to the ground.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

⁷ Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites,



NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

helped the people to understand the Law,
while the people remained in their places.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8 (ESV)

8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

2. Nehemiah risked taking action:

- i. at the appropriate time.
- ii. in the midst of being afraid.
- iii. while continuing to be in prayer.
- iv. with a calculated plan.
- v. by convincing the King by the hand of God.
- vi. by secretly surveying the walls and publicly sharing the plans.
- vii. in the midst of opposition
- viii. in doing more and expecting less
- ix. with Ezra in rebuilding the people's faith
- x. with great passion for obedience in the hope of pleasing God.**

NEHEMIAH 13:25 (ESV)

And I confronted them and cursed them
and beat some of them and pulled out their hair.

NEHEMIAH 13:25 (ESV)

And I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying,
"You shall not give your daughters to their sons,

NEHEMIAH 13:25 (ESV)

or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves."

3

Godly **leaders** take the right **risks** for the right **reasons**
for the right **results**.

Nehemiah's greatness came not in building the wall,
but in building his life upon the convictions
God put in his heart and acting on them.