



# VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

## Weekly Bible Study - 03:11:2010

Website: [www.victoriouschristianministry.org](http://www.victoriouschristianministry.org);

### **Study 5: PROGRESS THROUGH PRAYER, INITIATIVE AND ACTION**

#### **Nehemiah 2:1-8**

God is rich enough to provide for all the needs of the entire world, but His special favours are for the Godly, and especially the selfless ones who would use His provisions for the benefit of others (Ecclesiastes 2:26; Daniel 4:32; James 1:17). It is commonly said that "God's grace provides where His will directs" (I Kings 17:2-15; Psalms 78:13-16,24-29). This statement is true but often God requires the co-operation of man to appropriate divine provisions. For example:

1. God gave the Israelites the Promised Land, but they still had to leave Egypt, travel through the wilderness, and wage war with the inhabitants in order to possess what was given to them.
2. In the wilderness, God provided them free food (manner) but they still had to walk to where it was piled up, collect them, and prepare the meal, before they could eat.

Nehemiah obtained all he needed for his personal upkeep as well as for the demands of the work through prayer, planning with foresight and being proactive in taking the necessary practical steps that would lead to the realization of what he prayed for. Just as James pointed out that "... as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26); in the same way it could be said that prayer without corresponding action is illusion. We learn from this, not only of the riches of God's grace but also of how the Godly can tap into these resources to meet his needs. There is time for prayer and there is time for planning and action; and both prayer and action are indispensable to success.

#### **1. THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE**

Philippians 4:19; Ephesians 1:15-23; Deuteronomy 8:2,3,10-18; Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 8:32; 2 Peter 1:3; Isaiah 46:4; Psalms 37:25; Revelations 3:7

Though God adequately provided for the needs of man, yet ignorance, lack of foresight / vision, unbelief or inaction can keep one perpetually out of the reach of these provisions. The elusiveness of godless pursuit can be exchanged for the enjoyment from the satisfaction of God's prosperity when the believer recognizes the riches of His grace and takes the necessary steps to appropriate them. Remember, your future is as bright as the promises in the word of God (Isaiah 34:16), but you need to take steps in the right direction so as to inherit the bright future. Never forget that prayer without corresponding action is nothing more than wishful thinking and ritualistic / vain daydreaming.

#### **2. THE RESOURCES FOR THE GODLY**

Like money in the bank, essential conditions must be fulfilled to obtain God's resources for the Godly. For Nehemiah these included priority, prevailing prayer, persuasion, petition, perception, planning and purposeful pursuit.

**Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern**

i) Priority in Prayer: Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4; Job 1:20-22; Matthew 26:41,56b  
Nehemiah prayed before planning, talking or acting. When the king gave him opportunity to make a petition, he decided to pray first. His prayerfulness stems from his deep convictions on the supremacy of God – a prerequisite to answered prayer (Hebrews 11:6). In times of problems, trials or calamity, the first course of action that comes to our mind reveals where our priority lies. Hurrying to save time (by not taking time to pray but rather rushing into action) only serves to waste the time later and cause failure for many Christians. **To the believer, prayer should be a ‘steering wheel’ rather than a ‘spare tyre’.**

ii) Prevailing in Prayer: Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4 Zechariah 7:1-13; Isaiah 58:1-14; James 4:3; 2 Corinthians 1:4,5; 5:18,19; Matthew 5:7  
It is one thing to pray and entirely another to prevail in prayer. The priests prayed for 70 years without prevailing but Nehemiah prevailed in less than four months, because he lived upright, prayed aright and backed up his prayer with fasting. Besides, he was prepared to be a part of the answer to the prayer. God does not waste his resources on loafers but endows more on channels of blessings who make use of what they presently have for the benefit of others and the extension of His Kingdom. **“Give and it shall be given unto you...”** is more than a golden rule, it is a spiritual law that God jealously watches over to fulfill.

iii) Persuasiveness in Petition: Nehemiah 2:5-7; Matthew 10:16; Galatians 2:2  
Nehemiah was polite and persuasive in making his petition to the king. A soft answer turns away wrath. We ought to be wise, gentle, polite, gracious, persuasive but firm in sharing the gospel with others and in inviting them to Christ. When a man’s ways pleases the Lord, He makes his enemies to be at peace with him.

iv) Perception in Planning: Nehemiah 2:7,8; Ezra 4:4, 5, 24  
Nehemiah had insight not only to foresee possible problems but also assess the requirements for the work, and he made adequate provision for them. His perception and insight influenced the content of his requests from the king – thereby enhancing his success in the work. Prayerfulness is not synonymous with a crucifixion of our brain and mental powers. When these are exercised along with prayers, they increase the magnitude of the resulting miracles. Our plans and actions should reflect clear perception of our mission; for where there is no vision, the people perish.

v) Purposeful in Pursuit:  
Another reason Nehemiah’s prayer found immediate answer is because he was pursuing God’s purpose and plan rather than personal objectives. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33) is not just a good advice but a divine mandate with associated blessings. Identification with God’s plan, purpose and programmes will place us in a position of friendship and partnership with God – with all its attendant blessings, favours and answered prayers.