

Reacting to Bad News¹

Nehemiah 1:1-3

INTRODUCTION:

1. The book of Nehemiah is practical.
2. In Nehemiah 1:1-3, we are introduced to the problem that will be the focus of the entire book.
3. When Nehemiah heard the bad news from Jerusalem, he wept and mourned.
 - a. "Weeping" was the original reaction of Nehemiah, but, as the days passed, he continued to cry, which is expressed as "mourning."
 - b. It is also possible that the mourning was more of a ceremonial act.
4. Nehemiah understood that there is nothing wrong with showing emotions over things that are important.
5. Moreover, his bold and positive reaction to the news was prayer.

DISCUSSION: As did Nehemiah, when bad news comes your way...

I. Remember how awesome and good God is.

- A. Nehemiah called "the Lord God of heaven, "the great and awesome God" (1:5).
- B. When times are good and when times are bad, take the time to praise God.

II. Remember who you are.

- A. Nehemiah referred to himself as God's "servant" (1:6, 11).
- B. We must make sure God is first and that we are simply serving Him.
- C. It may take tragedy or bad news to remind us of that.

III. Pray much.

- A. Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
- B. God loves you, and He wants to hear from you.
- C. We need to live a life of prayer as did Nehemiah.

IV. Be honest and admit error.

- A. Nehemiah mentioned the sins of the entire nation of Israel (1:7).
- B. Using the plural pronoun, "we," he included himself in the sins.
- C. It takes a truly big man – a real hero – to admit when he is wrong.

V. Believe that God will keep His promises.

- A. Nehemiah prayed to God, "Remember the word..." (1:8).
- B. When we pray, we need to have the promises of God in mind.

¹ Adam Faughn, "Reacting to Bad News," *Building a Hero A Study of Nehemiah for Young People* (Haleyville, AL: Christian Homes Publishers, 2006), pp. 3-7. Adapted by Andy Kizer (07/06/2012).

VI. Ask for God's help.

- A. Nehemiah asked for *God's* mercy when he appeared before the *king* (1:11).
- B. No matter what the circumstance, we can ask for God's help and providential guidance.

CONCLUSION:

1. Nehemiah did not try to accomplish a difficult task on his own nor did he go to the king as if he deserved something. Instead, he humbly bowed before God to pray.
2. Nehemiah often talked to God in prayer (1:4-11; 2:4; 4:4, 9; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31).
3. Remember: A true hero prays; or, just maybe, prayer makes one a true hero.