

“MAKING CHANGES IN CHURCH” TALK:

I am getting that from a couple of our coaching participants. I am going to take some time to address changes and how to help the people who are digging their heels in, to move forward. Unfortunately, it does take some time... and prayer.

Here is my suggestion: get a couple people together whom you trust and who ‘get’ the idea of church health and growth. Make them your inner circle (think: Peter, James and John). Share your heart for church HEALTH and GROWTH in your churches. Invite them to pray with you for God to show up in a new and fresh way.

At the same time, figure out what strategies we are sharing at coaching that you can do without ‘permission’ ... handwritten notes ... thank you note for giving for the 1st time, etc. Do those. Then, figure out what small things you can present to your church councils that might not get too much resistance and if you can implement them, there might be some results. ***“Hey, I’m learning such-and-such in the coaching that I’m in and I’d like to try _____ for 6 months and see what happens...”*** BABY STEPS!!

That statement might get some resistance, but not near as much as saying, “We’re changing this!”

Advanced Tactic = let your leadership know that you are concerned about an area of ministry, such as: “We are having a hard time getting people who are guests in our churches to come back. What do you think we should do?” After they have had a chance to engage that for a while, ***give a concise strategy*** ... like ***“I think that if I started sending every 1st time guest an email on Monday and then sent a handwritten note with a gift inside to every 1st time guest, we might get some of them back.”*** That way, you are doing the work (which you would have done anyway☺), so they don’t have to put forth extra effort, and hopefully they will start to SEE RESULTS of YOUR EFFORTS.

Again, this LEADERSHIP THING is like that FLYWHEEL... a weighted wheel that takes A LOT of EFFORT to get spinning. BUT, once it’s SPINNING, the weight of it KEEPS the WHEEL GOING with LESS EFFORT from an OUTSIDE SOURCE (you). Once people around you experience the WHEEL SPINNING or the BALL ROLLING, the ones with the RIGHT HEART will want to get on board!

ADVANCED “BIBLICAL” TACTIC =

1. “We have a PROBLEM ... we don’t have enough money to do the ministries we need to do!” “We have a PROBLEM ... the people coming to worship CAN’T HEAR what is being said!” “We have a PROBLEM ... if we believe ***John 14:6***, we have to do some ministry in this part of the world!” “We have a PROBLEM ... America is an UNCHURCHED Country ... the 8th largest nation in the world ... a TOP 5 Mission Field on the planet!”
2. We have an opportunity to SOLVE these problems...

Do you know where that’s from? NEHEMIAH. We have a PROBLEM: The walls of the city are DOWN and we are an easy target for ATTACK by our ENEMIES. Wouldn’t you AGREE?!? “Yeah! We’ve got a PROBLEM!”

Then, Nehemiah tells them that he has secured the RESOURCES and NOW the TIME is RIGHT to REBUILD the WALL!

Nehemiah 2:11-20 ... The BACKGROUND on this is that Nehemiah, in Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2, has done A LOT of PREPARATION. He's spent time SEEKING GOD and what God would have him do ... GOD GAVE NEHEMIAH a VISION!! NOT a COMMITTEE!!

He's spent time praying for RIGHT TIMING with making a REQUEST of the KING. He has secured MATERIALS and TRAVEL to JERUSALEM and has PRAYED through a NEW PLAN for JERUSALEM...

Then, Nehemiah gets to Jerusalem ... *Nehemiah 2:11-12 = ¹¹ So I arrived in Jerusalem. Three days later, ¹² I slipped out during the night, taking only a few others with me. I had not told anyone about the plans God had put in my heart for Jerusalem. We took no pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding.*¹

Two things here:

1. The whole PLAN started just between NEHEMIAH and GOD. That's a LEADERSHIP STRATEGY. You have been CALLED by GOD to LEAD in your CHURCH(es). LEADERS LEAD! Please don't go to your Leadership Teams without being ready to GUIDE THEM!
2. Nehemiah took "ONLY A FEW OTHERS" with him. PLEASE, when it is TIME to TALK out loud about what GOD has placed on YOUR HEART, SHARE ONLY with the PEOPLE who have a HEART for GOD'S KINGDOM!

Speaking of which...

*Nehemiah 2:13-16 = ¹³ After dark I went out through the Valley Gate, past the Jackal's Well, * and over to the Dung Gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates. ¹⁴ Then I went to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but my donkey couldn't get through the rubble. ¹⁵ So, though it was still dark, I went up the Kidron Valley* instead, inspecting the wall before I turned back and entered again at the Valley Gate.*

*¹⁶ The city officials did not know I had been out there or what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to anyone about my plans. I had not yet spoken to the Jewish leaders—the priests, the nobles, the officials, or anyone else in the administration.*²

Nehemiah now has a FULL EVALUATION of the PROBLEM ... he's SEEN IT with his own eyes, but has NOT SHARED with ANYONE YET who can SHOOT IT DOWN! My guess is that Nehemiah did some PRAYING on his tour of the City Walls...

Now, these next FOUR VERSES go FAST. There is a LOT of INFORMATION in them...

Let's press on ... *Nehemiah 2:17 = ¹⁷ But now I said to them, "You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!"*³

Nehemiah has said, "WE HAVE A PROBLEM!" Max DePree has said that "The first responsibility of a leader is to **define reality**. The last is to say 'thank you'. In between, the leader is a servant." Nehemiah just DEFINED REALITY for the people...

Nehemiah also answered the KEY QUESTION: "WHY?" We need to rebuild the wall, because it is a DISGRACE to our GOD!

*Nehemiah 2:18a = ¹⁸ Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king.*⁴

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ne 2:11–12). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ne 2:13–16). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ne 2:17). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ne 2:18). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Nehemiah has now answered the SECONDARY KEY QUESTION: “WHY US?” He lets them know that because of his conversation with the KING, he has ALL OF THE SUPPLIES to DO IT! We are FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED! The LEADER has LED and the people recognize it...

Nehemiah 2:18b = *They replied at once, “Yes, let’s rebuild the wall!” So they began the good work.*⁵ Easy answer ... the people recognize that the LEADER has a PLAN and GOOD REASON to DO IT and has MADE the necessary arrangements ... LET’S BUILD!!

BUT, don’t miss what happens IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING the EXCITEMENT of the PEOPLE to MOVE FORWARD ... Nehemiah 2:19 = *But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously. “What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” they asked.*⁶

You will have people who are WITHOUT all of the FACTS (nor will they care if they have all of the facts) who SCOFF CONTEMPTUOUSLY! These people want to be in CONTROL. My guess is that at least 5% of the people in your churches will NEVER BE HAPPY! It’s not going to matter much what you do ... WHY?!? Churches attract HURTING PEOPLE, and “HURT PEOPLE, HURT PEOPLE!”

I love how Nehemiah ANSWERS ... Nehemiah 2:20 = *I replied, “The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem.”*⁷

This is why YOU NEED to KNOW WHO GIVES WHAT in your CHURCH! We’ll talk more about that in a little while...

PLEASE don’t give CONTROL in the CHURCH that GOD has CALLED YOU TO, to people who are NOT AIMED in a KINGDOM of GOD DIRECTION! Notice that Nehemiah said ... “We, His Servants...” about himself and the workers on the wall and then said, “BUT, YOU...” (NOT His Servants!)

Here’s the TAKEAWAYS for being CHANGE AGENTS in OUR CHURCHES ... I took this straight from a commentary on Nehemiah ...

“To accomplish more for the sake of God’s Kingdom, we must PRAY, PERSEVERE and SACRIFICE, as did Nehemiah.”

“Being God’s leader ... requires planning, hard work, courage and perseverance.”

“In order to lead others, you need to listen for God’s direction in your own life.”

“We must recognize that there are no triumphs without troubles. When problems arise, we must face them squarely and press on to complete God’s work.”

“God does not want half-hearted measures.”

Now, just about every book you pick up on LEADERSHIP will have a section on CHANGE and how to work through that. I have some examples of books on CHANGE up here ... “Visioneering” by Andy Stanley = Nehemiah. “Change Reaction” by Bob Whitesel = Good Wesleyan. “Right Turns” by Dick Hardy ... very practical book! “There’s Hope for Your Church” by Gary McIntosh ... a foremost authority on Church Growth and for Turnaround Churches...

⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ne 2:18). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁶ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ne 2:19). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁷ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ne 2:20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.