
A Time to Build: *a blueprint for visionary leadership*

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Sermon Study Guide - Part 1 of 7 - "Leaders Take Risks" - 9/8/19

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Welcome to This Brand New Series!

A Time to Build will be a 7-week series about vision and leadership. Leadership is the ability to *influence* people, and the big idea behind this series is that **every follower of Jesus is called to be a leader**. As we follow him, **Jesus expects us to influence others to follow him as well** (Matthew 28:19).

So if you're following Jesus, surprise - you're a leader!

Do you see yourself as a leader? On a scale of 1 (Michael Scott of *The Office*) to 10 (George Washington), how would you rate your own leadership skills?

How do we understand and maximize our influence?

Throughout this series we'll be following the Old Testament story of Nehemiah, a natural leader who demonstrated incredible instincts at a particularly difficult time in Israel's history. By studying Nehemiah's actions, we'll identify several principles of leadership that every follower of Jesus can develop as we seek to influence people to follow him, too.

Nehemiah 1:1-4, 11

The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven...

I was cupbearer to the king.

Who was Nehemiah?

(Write down everything you know about the context of his life and times.)

Nehemiah 2:1-8

In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it." Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me, so I set a time.

I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests.

What are the signs of Nehemiah's leadership potential in this passage?

The Power of a Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." - Proverbs 29:18

What is a vision, and what does vision have to do with leadership?

What did Nehemiah risk for the sake of pursuing his vision? What does risk have to do with leadership?

How (and Who) Are You Leading?

How are you leveraging your influence to lead others toward the hope of Jesus?

Your Notes: