

FRIDAY, March 26, 2010:

Nehemiah 2:6 *"How long will your journey be? And when will you return?"*

You know a little of the story by now. God put Nehemiah in a position where he was able to get together a team to go back to his homeland to rebuild it, restore law and order and hopefully bring prosperity.

But the king, his direct report, shows some leadership savvy and teaches us a couple of good leadership principles at the same time. What did he do? He **asked for details** and **expected accountability**.

Some people see the role of leadership as being the one that says, "No." But that is not what leadership is about. Good leaders are facilitators; they help make things happen. However, they also understand that they are stewards of the resources that are under their charge. Therefore a good leader also does their homework by asking for details and on-going feedback (accountability).

You may be asking, "What does this have to do with me? Simple, everyone of us lead in some area. It may be as a parent, a Sunday School teacher or civil leader, but you are responsible for something or someone. Take that responsibility seriously by knowing the essential details of what is happening in your area of responsibility and by expecting some feedback.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 4:13

"You can expect what you inspect."
_John Maxwell

SATURDAY, March 27, 2010:

Nehemiah 5:7 *"After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers..."*

If by chance you have been tracking with me by reading the book of Nehemiah this week, you will know that the background behind today's bible verse is that Nehemiah had a tough decision to make. He had to decide whether or not to confront the leaders of Israel.

This is nothing new to you or me; we've all had to make tough decisions. But here is the key:

*Nehemiah only made the decision after **serious thought**.*

I've heard it said that you should never pull the trigger on an important decision until you've slept on it for two nights. I try to practice this and have found that it works.

The key is: serious thought is required. In this fast-paced, information-overload life that we are living, it is easy to "get in a zone" (a bad zone), simply reacting, going through your paces instinctively with little serious thought and prayer.

Somehow I feel that I am writing to someone today who needs to make some important decisions. Today is Saturday; you have two nights to sleep on it before a new week begins. Why not use this weekend to slow down a bit and give your life some "serious thought"?

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 27:12

"My life began changing when I stopped setting goals for where I wanted to be and started setting the course for who I wanted to be."
_John Maxwell, *The 360 Degree Leader*, p. 151



Pastor Kemp's Weekly Devotional

For the week of March 21, 2010

Daily Reflection Questions:

- Reflection: Of what eternal benefit was my day?
- Reflection: What eternal truth(s) did I observe today?
- Reflection: Did my behavior match my values?
- Reflection: What am I thankful for today?

What I am thankful for this week:

MONDAY: _____

TUESDAY: _____

WEDNESDAY: _____

THURSDAY: _____

FRIDAY: _____

SATURDAY: _____



MONDAY, March 22, 2010:

Ezra 2:66 "...their mules two hundred and forty-five..."

When I read the Bible, sometimes the strangest things stand out to me. Today an example. This passage comes from a rather boring passage (sorry Holy Spirit! about a time in the history of Israel when God is bringing them back to re-inhabit their homeland. (Remember, last week's devotional about the Sabbath years need to be kept?)

The thing that I would like for you to notice today is how meticulous the people were in taking inventory, right down to the number of mules they had.

They understood the importance of counting the cost before taking a journey. They understood that there has to be some measure of whether or not you are making progress.

Nothing has changed today. I have found that most people do not have a "number" for the important things in their lives. Most people, families and companies miss it in the little details. They do not take time to do regular inventories.

Please remember that today is about more than just getting through this day. Ezra and his companions, you are on a journey. Over the next few days let me encourage you to take a careful inventory of your life. How are you really doing?

I would suggest that a good place to start your inventory is around the seven pillars of building a wise life: Your – health, vocation, work, finances, intellectual growth, recreation and devotional life.

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 27:23-24

"If you do not specifically identify your values, they will be defined for you by the whims and influences of the world." _George Barna, Turning Vision into Action

TUESDAY, March 23, 2010:

Nehemiah 1:11 *"For I was the king's cupbearer..."*

God has put you in the position you are in for a purpose. That is what Nehemiah discovered. He had an extremely important job – "the king's cupbearer." This allowed him access to the most powerful ruler of that day.

There came a time when Nehemiah learned that God put him in that position for a very specific reason – to help his fellow Israelites find freedom.

The truth of the matter is, God has put you in a very special position also. Whether you are a mother, a master builder or a major in the army, the real agenda for your life is not your happiness and prosperity (though I pray they come). The real purpose is your service.

So remember...give your B-E-S-T today; your actions matter, they really do.

SCRIPTURE: Esther 4:14

"Leaders can achieve their goals and yet be out of God's will. Reaching goals is not necessarily a sign of God's blessing. Spiritual leaders do not use their people to accomplish their goals; their people are the goal. Spiritual leaders have a God-given responsibility to do all they can to lead their people on to God's agenda." _Henry & Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership, p. 122

WEDNESDAY, March 24, 2010:

Nehemiah 2:6 *"How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" ...and I set a time."*

The book of Nehemiah is one of the best resources ever written on leadership and management (corporately and personally).

Today's verse is a reminder that thinking through what you are doing is vitally important.

Nehemiah had made a big request and the king, rightfully so, asked him for details and accountability. The important thing is that Nehemiah was prepared to answer; he had thought through what he was doing.

We've all seen people make major decisions, purchases, and plans without thinking them through. The results are usually disastrous, for both them and those they love.

The lesson being taught today is: *"Don't live cautiously; but do live carefully – think through what you're about to do."* I have found the old adage – "The devil is in the details" – so true!

SCRIPTURE: Luke 14:28

"Until you can confidently state your values, every philosophy, every behavior and every desire known to humankind is a potential substitute." _George Barna, Turning Vision into Action

THURSDAY, March 25, 2010:

Nehemiah 2:7 *"Furthermore...if it pleases the king..."*

One of the big reasons that people struggle and even fail is that they are afraid to ask for help. Believe me, as a pastor, I have learned this truth; I have overcome, big time, the fear of asking people to do something or give something! (I've probably asked you for something haven't I? And if I haven't, don't worry, you are on my list☺)

Do you know how I overcame my hesitation to ask? **I had to overcome it** – the need was so great that if the mission was going to be fulfilled it would require more than me to "get er done!"

That's why every week I have literally hundreds of people that volunteer to help me fulfill and underwrite the mission of the FMCOG.

Matter of fact, one measure of how successful you are could be the number of people you are asking to help you. Little vision, few asks; big vision, many asks!

Nehemiah's mission was so big and so critical that he asked the king for help. It could have cost him his head! For most of us, the most it will cost us is being rejected. That is a small price to pay for a great mission.

How many "asks" have you been making lately? If the answer is few, maybe it's time to get going on something truly worthwhile.

SCRIPTURE: James 4:2b

"The future is purchased by the present." _Samuel Johnson, 1709-1784