

Improving Our Presenting

Improving Our Influence, part 4

Pastor Bob Johnson, February 3rd, 2019

1. Expect ...

(Nehemiah 2:9-10, 1 Corinthians 16:8-9)

2. Wait ...

(Nehemiah 2:11-12, Ecclesiastes 3:7, 8:6)

Three Possibilities:

- R
- R
- R

3. Get ...

(Nehemiah 2:13-16, Proverbs 23:23; 18:13; 14:15)

4. Connect ...

(Nehemiah 2:17a)

5. Identify ...

(Nehemiah 2:17b)

- He appealed to their ...
- He appealed to their ...

6. Ask ...

(Nehemiah 2:17c)

Influencers are both ...

7. Encourage ...

(Nehemiah 2:18)

God's leading has both: C _____ & C _____

(Nehemiah 2:19-20)

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This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to week 4 of our small group session!

We are glad that you have taken this journey with us digging into God's Word with others. We pray this is a time of growth, encouragement, and fun as you deepen friendships and make new friends along the way! This session of our small groups will wrap up the week of March 24th.

Getting Started:

How are you? Let's take a minute and catch up with one another? Anything encouraging or not so encouraging happen recently?

Last Sunday's sermon unpacked Nehemiah 2:9-20. Nehemiah was able to ignite the people to join in on the wall re-building project God laid on his heart. When were you called upon to present a challenge or new direction to a group of people in an attempt to influence positive change?

The following describe the seven keys to improving our presenting that we learn from Nehemiah's story and some questions and other passages to help us dig a little deeper together.

1. Expect Opposition

Before Nehemiah even got to Jerusalem, there were people ready to oppose his ideas. (Neh. 2:10, 19) Why do some people find it easy to oppose most new ideas they hear?

When have your new ideas been opposed? How did you respond?

Read John 15:18-25. What is Jesus telling us about opposition? As a Christ follower, what is your response to this reality?

2. Wait for the right timing

When have you had a great idea that was shot down because of bad timing?

When Nehemiah finally arrived in Jerusalem after traveling from Persia, he took a few days to rest his body, review his plans and raise curiosity in the city before sharing his plan with others. (Neh. 2:11-12) How can we "wait responsibly" for God's timing and not simply be "idle" waiting for the right to share?

Read John 15:26-16:4 Jesus is preparing the disciples for the reality that he will be crucified and that they will remain on earth to carry on the ministry. They do not get the full impact of what he is talking about. What does Jesus tell us about His timing in these verses?

3. Get the facts first

Proverbs 18:13 in the Living Bible paraphrase says, "*What a shame - yes how stupid, to decide before knowing the facts!*"

When have you paid the price for not getting enough facts before moving forward with a plan?

Read John 18:1-11. What facts did Peter misunderstand or refuse to accept that prompted Jesus' rebuke in v11?

When have you misunderstood the facts or denied the facts and acted inappropriately?

How will accepting the fact that the world around you will reject your faith at times, help you to live a more effective Christ-centered life?

4. Connect with those around you

We get a better response from others (our kids, co-workers, friends etc.) when we talk with them and not at them ... when they feel that we understand them and identify with their problems. How can you insure that you are connecting with those you are attempting to influence before trying to lead them in a particular direction?

Read Matthew 9:35-38. How did Jesus connect with the disciples during his three years with them? Who are the people you are connecting with in order to have an impact for Christ together with them?

5. Identify the size of the problem

Nehemiah drew attention to something that was broken for over 90 years. (Neh. 2:17) It is a fact of life that when we live in a bad situation long enough, we start getting used to it and even learn to ignore it (walking around the rubble). What has broken in your house that used to bother you, but now doesn't seem to matter? As you look at your life, our church, and our surrounding communities, what "broken" things have you come to accept that God would want "repaired"?

What is the problem Jesus identified in Matthew 9:37?

What is our response to this problem?

6. Ask for a specific response

People of lasting influence work at being both realistic and optimistic. Which of these two do you more naturally lean toward? When have you done something (or tried to do something) by yourself that realistically required the assistance of others? What is the cost of being connected and committed to working as a team?

What response does Jesus ask for in Matthew 9:38? After Jesus died and rose again, but before he went back to heaven, he asked for a specific response from his disciples.

Read Matthew 28:16-20. How do these verse impact you as a realist and an optimist?

7. Encourage with a personal testimony

Nehemiah shared that he had experienced the gracious hand of God on his life. (Neh. 2:18) What testimony can you share about how God has worked in your life to bless/influence the lives of others?

Last Sunday Bob shared that God's leading has both calling and confirmation. Nehemiah was called by God to build the wall. God confirmed that call by prompting a positive response from the King's heart and by providing the provision and people to build the wall.

How do you know when something is really a call from God?

How many confirmations are needed before you can move ahead confidently?

What is the balance between waiting on God for a confirmation and moving forward with a call you believe is from God?

As we wrap up with some prayer time, let's share something our group can pray about. Related to what we discussed, is there any opposition you are facing? Are there any facts you need to gather? Are there any people you need to connect with? Are there any responses you would like others to make to your influence in their lives?

What else is on your mind that we can lift up in prayer?