

1. Time.
 - a. "I want it now!" Veruca Salt
 - b. Patience is not our strong suit.
 - i. Iceland's parliament is over 1000 years old.
 - ii. Their parliament, Althing, was founded in 930 at Thingvellir (thing fields or assembly fields).
 - iii. The Icelanders would remind me that the USA was the youngest government (200 years old) and that we were just snot-nosed children when governing a country.
 - iv. As you read some of the history of the Althing, you can understand their attitude better.
 1. Althing governed Iceland from 930 to 1262 when Norway took over the rule.
 2. Althing continued to meet until 1800.
 3. Althing started meeting again in 1845 by royal decree.
 4. In 1903, Iceland regained its independence, and Althing began to govern again.
 - c. Britain started colonizing America around 1607.
 - i. The settlements formed into the 13 colonies in the 1700s.
 - ii. The colonies were established by royal charter in 1763.
 - iii. By 1773, we were tired of British rule without representation (the Boston Tea Party).
 - iv. The Revolutionary War began in 1775; by 1776, we had declared independence from Britain.
 - d. The whole idea of the history lesson is to show that we are not patient.
 - i. Iceland spent 631 years without their parliament, being ruled by Norway or Denmark.
 - ii. America spent ten years from the royal charter declaring the 13 colonies to the Boston Tea Party.
2. A Plan
 - a. Nehemiah receives word of Jerusalem
 - i. Nehemiah 1:1: "The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel,"
 - ii. In the Hebrew calendar, Chislev is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar and equates to November 4 through December 3.
 - iii. Nehemiah 1:2-3: "that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire."
 - b. His response is to weep, fast, and pray.
 - i. Nehemiah 1:4-7: "As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house

- have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses."
- ii. He reminds himself (God already knows) how they (the nation of Israel) arrived in captivity with Jerusalem broken and the wall destroyed.
 - iii. He also reminds himself (God already knows) of the promise of their redemption and release from captivity.
 - iv. Nehemiah 1:8–9: "Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.'"
- c. Nehemiah also develops a plan.
- i. Nehemiah 1:10–11: "They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king."
 - ii. Nehemiah asks for the success of his plan.
3. Prayer and patience.
- a. We have all made plans.
 - i. After you planned your vacation, did you wait patiently for the time to arrive?
 - ii. A few years ago, we went to Corpus Christi.
 - 1. I have no attachments to the city.
 - 2. I had no family or friends and didn't know anyone there.
 - 3. This was our first 'real' vacation in some years (we usually plan our time off around church camp, workshops, or the cabin in New Mexico with friends).
 - 4. We planned where we would stay, where we might eat, and what we would do (the USS Lexington, the Texas State Aquarium, Padre Island National Seashore).
 - 5. We did this a year before going on our trip.
 - 6. I thought about our trip every day; I researched more things to do and places to see.
 - 7. We anticipated this trip with eagerness.
 - b. I imagine that is what Nehemiah was doing constantly.
 - c. he planned to pitch to the king to let him go to Jerusalem.
 - i. Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer.
 - ii. He was in the presence of the king quite a bit.
 - iii. I would think Nehemiah prayed every time he went into the king's presence.
 - iv. Nehemiah 2:1: "In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence."
 - v. Chislew to Nisan is four months (Nisan is the first month of the Hebrew calendar and equivalent to March 12 through April 11).
 - vi. This must have been on Nehemiah's mind whenever he went before the king to bring him a drink (you don't casually talk to the king).
 - vii. Nehemiah said nothing, waiting for God to soften his heart.
 - viii. For four months, the king was not aware of any change in Nehemiah.

- ix. Nehemiah 2:2–6: "And the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, "Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it." And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time."
- 4. Prayer and boldness.
 - a. Nehemiah then boldly asks for the resources and letters to make the journey and complete the task.
 - i. Nehemiah 2:7–8: "And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy." And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me."
 - ii. Do we think this happened because Nehemiah wished it so?
 - iii. No, all this happened because of Nehemiah's prayers!
 - b. Look at the boldness of the apostles.
 - i. They were arrested for preaching about Jesus and healing the man at the Gate Beautiful.
 - ii. Acts 4:29–31: "And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."
 - iii. The apostles are arrested again, beaten, and charged not to teach or preach about Jesus.
 - iv. Acts 5:40–42: "and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus."
 - c. Prayer asks God to intervene and bless you with the ability to complete His will.
- 5. The Prayer of your servant.
 - a. There are 13 chapters in Nehemiah.
 - b. There are 14 recorded prayers in Nehemiah.
 - i. I am sure Nehemiah prayed more than 14 times.
 - ii. I would have prayed every time I went into the king's presence.
 - iii. I would have prayed every day they were rebuilding the wall.
 - iv. And I would have prayed many other times.

- c. Philippians 4:6–7: "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- d. James 5:16: "And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."