

Next Steps: Nehemiah worked as a cupbearer to the king. On one hand, he spent a lot of time with royalty... on the other hand, his job was to ensure drinks he served to the king and his guests were not poisoned. As such, he was expendable to the king... but not to God. God had a purpose for Nehemiah that went beyond his job. What happened in Nehemiah's life that caused him to think deeper about his purpose? (Nehemiah 1)

After an extended time of mourning, praying and fasting, Nehemiah moved beyond the theoretical, pie-in-the sky, purpose to a literal, boots-on-the-ground, purpose. What did Nehemiah bravely ask of the king? How did the king generously respond? (Nehemiah 2:1-9)

After the king was so generous, Nehemiah must have thought that the hardest and most dangerous part of living out his purpose was done. But, then we are introduced to the opposition in Nehemiah 2:10. The problems pile up, and they are persistent. Describe the problems you read about in the following verses with one word or a short phrase:

- Nehemiah 2:19; 4:1-3
- Nehemiah 4:6-9
- Nehemiah 4:10a
- Nehemiah 4:10b
- Nehemiah 4:11-12
- Nehemiah 5:1-6
- Nehemiah 6:1-9
- Nehemiah 6:10-14

When we do what God has created us to do, we sense God's blessing on our lives... no matter how challenging and painful God's purpose might be. But there is also an altruistic benefit. When we are doing what God has created us to do... others are blessed, as well. Have you seen people blessed by our obedience? If so, describe one such time. If not, take an honest look at your life and ask yourself if your heart breaks for the things that break the heart of God... maybe you will need to mourn and pray and fast. Like Nehemiah, this is where we discover and lean into our purpose in life.

Next Week: Next week, we will take a look at the life of Philip and how God worked in him so that God could work through him. Most of what we know about Philip is found in Acts 6:5, Acts 8 and Acts 21:8.