

# Nehemiah 2:1-9

## “A Man with Godly Guts”

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 2:1-9 and Jeremiah 29:10-14

**Memory Verse:** Romans 8:31b “*If God is for us, who can be against us?*”

**Lesson Focus:** Continuing in our study of Nehemiah from last week, we will see how God began to answer his prayer from chapter 1 by giving him “godly guts” before the King of Persia. Nehemiah shows tremendous courage and we will encourage the children to follow His example of first trusting in God and then doing great and “gutsy” things for God.

**Activities and Crafts:** Nehemiah Before the King Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>.  
Craft for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>: Cup of Courage

**Starter Activity:** Things That Take “Guts”

We will keep all of the kids in the Summit Room for this starter activity that includes a quick video. We will get things started by asking the kids what it means “to have guts”. \*  
**To have “guts” or courage means you do what is right even if it is scary or seems too hard!**

Then we will show a quick video from the movie *Home Alone* where little Kevin shows he had guts in defending his home from the bad guys.

Q: What are some ways that Kevin showed guts in this video?

While I expect none of us will ever have to defend our home like that, all of us are often put into situations where we have to make a choice. Will we have the “**guts to do what is right**” or will we be too afraid or proud that we choose what is just easy or even wrong? Here is one example: \*

A new kid shows up at school and no one is being friendly toward them. Your friends might even laugh at the kid because he/she looks different:

Q: What would be the easy thing to do?

Q: As a Christian, would you have the guts to be friendly toward the new kid?

Last week we started a new book of the Bible, Nehemiah. We saw that he was an ordinary guy that believed and trusted in the one and only extraordinary God. We looked at his prayer to God last week and today we are going to see how God begins to answer that prayer. God is going to give Nehemiah the courage to do some pretty “gutsy” things. Let’s take a look!

## Bible Study:

**Nehemiah 1:11a:** This is the end of Nehemiah's prayer that we studied last week. Remember that Nehemiah *poured out his heart before God* (Psalm 62:8) as he was deeply saddened by the state of his city, people, and homeland.

But as we will see, his prayer leads him to ACTION! Nehemiah was asking God to favor him as he inquires of the king about his broken city and people. He didn't just pray to God, but was willing to be the person God will use to answer his prayer!

Q: How many of you have ever prayed that God would comfort someone who is sick? Have you ever thought maybe God would answer your prayer by having YOU be the one to reach out to them, maybe with a kind letter or a friendly visit?

**Nehemiah 1:11b:** Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer. That means that he was responsible for tasting any drinks served to the king to ensure they were good and not poisoned. This was a HUGE responsibility as the king entrusted his life to Nehemiah!

**Nehemiah 2:1:** Nehemiah is in close quarters with king Artaxerxes, the most powerful man in the world at the time! It would be like serving our president food in the White House today! (**Teachers:** Consider doing a quick skit with a few volunteers. Have one pretend to sit on a throne as the king, another bring a cup of water, and then you pretend to be Nehemiah tasting the drink before serving it to the king. With another couple of kids being guards, pretend it was poisoned having the guards seize the guilty one!) \*

**Nehemiah 2:2:** The king notices that he is sad and doesn't look normal. This is Nehemiah's big moment, but he admits that he is VERY nervous! What will he do?

Q: What would be the easy thing for Nehemiah to do? \* Do you think he will have the guts to do what God has laid on his heart?

Before we see what happens next, let's review why Nehemiah was so sad and broken over his city and homeland being in ruins. Years ago, God made a promise through the prophet Jeremiah that after 70 years, the Jewish people will return to their land and live under God's blessing. Read **Jeremiah 29:10-14**. That 70 years was up and the people were resettling in their land. But they were not experiencing the peace and the hope that God promised in v. 11! The people also were not seeking the Lord anymore.

Nehemiah knew that God keeps His promises though and he was determined to be part of God's plan to return His people to their city and homeland!

**Nehemiah 2:3:** Notice Nehemiah shows respect to the king, but he also has the "guts" to open up with the king about what is on his heart.

Q: What does he tell the king he is sad about?

A: His city lies in ruins. And Nehemiah knows that the king can help fix the problem!

**Nehemiah 2:4:** The door is open! The king even asks Nehemiah what he needs! But again, Nehemiah still needs to have the “guts” to put his requests before the king.

Q: What was the first thing that Nehemiah did before he answered the King?

A: He prayed! We saw last week that he was a man of prayer. Nehemiah knew he needed God’s help for this task!

Boys and Girls: Praying takes “guts” too! When we pray, we are placing our trust and confidence in God, where it belongs, and NOT on ourselves. Nehemiah’s courage and boldness was a result of his faith in God expressed through constant prayer.

**Nehemiah 2:5:** Nehemiah goes for it! Notice he is very respectful and careful with his words, but he very clearly tells the king that he wants to leave the king’s court so he can join the rebuilding efforts in his homeland.

Imagine yourself there! \* Remember this is the most powerful king in the ancient world and Nehemiah, a mere servant, is asking for a personal favor from him. Nehemiah is risking his job and even his life by being so bold (remember he said he was VERY afraid in v. 2). What’s the king going to do?

**Nehemiah 2:6:** The king (and the queen) was pleased to send him! Wow! \* He just wanted to make sure he would return. I get the feeling the king liked Nehemiah!

**Nehemiah 2:7-8a:** You would think Nehemiah would stop there, but then he goes and asks for even BIGGER favors. \*

First, he asks for letters signed by the king that give him the authority to travel back to the land. This was about a 1000-mile journey through enemy territory!  
Second, he asks for a letter that gives him unlimited access to building materials.

Again, imagine yourself there! At this point I would expect the king to say something like, “C’mon, Nehemiah, let’s not get carried away now”. But let’s finish the verse.

**Nehemiah 2:8b:** The king granted EVERYTHING he requested!

Q: But did you catch why? A: Because God’s hand was upon him! You see, Nehemiah didn’t just have guts, he had “godly guts”. He was a true believer in God and what he wanted was aligned with what God wanted. Therefore, God was with him.

**Nehemiah 2:9:** Even notice that the king sent army captains and horsemen to accompany and protect him! Wow! So thus begins Nehemiah’s journey back to his homeland to rebuild. We will stop here for today and pickup the story again next week. But before we do...

Q: Can you think of anyone else in the Bible who showed “godly guts”?

A: While there are lots of them, let’s talk about Jesus. How did He show He had guts?

**Teachers:** There are so many answers to the above Q. Below are a few, but feel free to use your own. Be sure to finish with the last one below.

- 1) How about when He chose His disciples. He chose nobodies who made all sorts of mistakes!
- 2) How about when He washed the disciples' feet? He was the King and yet He lowered Himself and showed them true greatness was in serving one another.
- 3) But NOTHING compares to the "godly guts" Jesus demonstrated in willingly going to the cross for your sins and my sins. \* (**Romans 5:8**)

**Key Point:** Jesus's death on the cross and resurrection is what makes it possible for us to have the same kind of "godly guts" that Nehemiah had. We must believe and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ that paid for all of our sins. At that point we become God's children. Then as the Bible says, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" (**Romans 8:31**)

Go and do great and "gutsy" things for God this week!

**Small Group Time Afterwards:** At this point we will end the main teaching but immediately after the lesson consider unpacking the memory verse that we closed on. If kids have believed and received Jesus Christ, then that verse applies to them! This is the same attitude that Nehemiah had when he boldly came before the king. Like Nehemiah, they can also overcome their fears and do great and "gutsy" things for God.

Consider writing these verses below on the white board and having the kids look them up:

- 1) **Joshua 1:9**
- 2) **Isaiah 41:10**
- 3) **Matthew 10:31**
- 4) **Hebrews 13:6**

Afterwards read them and have the kids explain how these verses can help them have courage.

Consider asking kids to share with the class things they are afraid of and wish they had more guts over. Write them all on the white board and then pray over them as a group. If kids are afraid to share publicly, have them all write them down secretly and then have them give them to you to put on the white board.

Invite kids to give you prayer requests of things that they need "guts" to overcome this week and commit to praying for them this week.

We all need courage at different time in our lives and God wants us to bring our concerns to Him in prayer!

# Bring It Home

**Download at:** <https://rmcalvary.org/volunteering/childrens-ministry/family-resources/>

**Lesson Theme:** “A Man with Godly Guts”

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 2:1-9, Jeremiah 29:10-14

**Memory Verse:** Romans 8:31b *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

**Teachers/Parents:** We began our study by talking about things that take “guts” to do. Go around and each state something that you think takes “guts” to do. Then share a time when you had to do something that was “gutsy” and why you did it.

## Discussion Questions:

- 1) People will do “gutsy” things for all sorts of silly reasons. But to have “godly guts”, like Nehemiah, is to do great and “gutsy” things for God. What are some examples of doing “gutsy” things for the wrong reasons? How about some examples for the right reasons?
- 2) **Read Nehemiah 1:11.** This sets the stage for our text. In class we pointed out that Nehemiah not only prayed to God, but then he took bold action. Can you think of a time when you prayed for someone or something and you ended up being the one God used to answer that prayer?
- 3) **Read Nehemiah 2:1-3.** How did Nehemiah show “godly guts” or courage in this text?
- 4) **Read Nehemiah 2:4.** This was the critical moment for Nehemiah to make his move in the conversation with the king. What was the first thing he did before speaking?
- 5) In v. 5-8, you see Nehemiah getting more than he bargained for from the King. Read **Nehemiah 2:8.** Who is the one who gets the credit for this?
- 6) In class we also talked about how Jesus showed “godly guts”. Can you think of any examples of this? Read **Mark 15:29-32** for one amazing example. What is “gutsy” about what Jesus did NOT do here?
- 7) When we believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ, we become children of God. Read **Romans 8:31**, our memory verse. This applies to all believers. With this in mind, what is one “gutsy” thing you can do for God this week?