

The Prayer God Loves to Answer (Part 1)

Nehemiah 1:5-11

Pastor Joshua Brooks

Ice Breaker: What's the silliest thing you (or your children) have ever prayed for?

BIG IDEA: There's no magic formula in prayer – but there are certain prayers that God loves to answer. In Nehemiah 1:5-11, we see an example of the kind of prayer that paves the way for God to transform the broken people and places of our world. This week, we're focusing on the first three characteristics of a prayer God loves to answer:

- Prayer that is offered *continually*
- Prayer that is offered with *confidence* in God's character
- Prayer that includes the *confession* of sin

Digging Deeper:

- 1) Read Nehemiah 1:1-2:1. The calendar references (in Neh 1:1 & 2:1) imply that Nehemiah fasted and prayed for how long before God opened a door with King Artaxerxes? Describe a situation for which you prayed and prayed, but didn't get an answer right away? Looking back, what was God doing in you during that time of praying and waiting?
- 2) Nehemiah leads off his prayer (in v5) by proclaiming the greatness and the love of God. Why do you think it's so important to enter into prayer with confidence in God's character? If you were always absolutely rock-solid in your confidence in God's character, how would it inform the way you prayed about things?
- 3) Re-read Nehemiah 1:6-7. What do you make of the way Nehemiah confesses both individual and corporate sin? Why do you think it was so important for Nehemiah to confess the sins of the Jewish people – when it wasn't his fault that they went into exile? How might Nehemiah's confession be an example for us in how we pray for our families, our church, and our world?
- 4) What might it look like for you to follow in Nehemiah's footsteps with regard to confession? Said another way: Are there specific ways you could build the 'confession of sin' into your prayer life – not just so that *you* stay in right relationship with God – but in order to help pave the way for God's transforming grace to affect the lives of *others*?