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## Under Construction: How Vision is Born (Nehemiah 1)

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### *Nehemiah 1 (NIV)*

<sup>1</sup>The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:  
In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was  
in the citadel of Susa, <sup>2</sup>Hanani, one of my brothers,  
came from Judah with some other men, and I  
questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had  
survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and  
are back in the province are in great trouble and  
disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its  
gates have been burned with fire."

<sup>4</sup> When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For  
some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the  
God of heaven.

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***Nehemiah 1 (NIV)***

<sup>5</sup>Then I said: "Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, <sup>6</sup>let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. <sup>7</sup>We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

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***Nehemiah 1 (NIV)***

<sup>8</sup>"Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, <sup>9</sup>but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.

<sup>10</sup>"They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand.

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***Nehemiah 1 (NIV)***

<sup>11</sup>Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."  
I was cupbearer to the king.

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## Introduction

Nehemiah, whose name means “Yahweh has comforted”, had to experience significant discomfort in order to bring comfort. In his story we see truth about:

1. Concern and calling
2. Prayer and planning
3. Comfort and Christ

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## 1. Concern and Calling

- His concern was an active concern.
- His concern was a divine concern.
- His concern was a wise concern.
- His concern was a deep concern.
- His concern was a lasting concern.
- His concern gave birth to his calling.

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## CS Lewis (*The Four Loves*)

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.”

- Deep care always leads to deep concern, e.g. Jesus
- “A mother is only as happy as her least happy child.”

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**Andy Stanley (Visioneering)**

"A vision is a clear mental picture of what could be, fueled by the conviction that it should be."

- A vision is a preferred corporate future.
- A vision is always born out of a concern that there is a gap between what is and what could/should be.
- Concern is not comfortable, but if you avoid concern you avoid vision and calling!
- "Everyone ends up somewhere in life; you can end up somewhere on purpose."

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**2. Prayer and Planning**

- Initially his deep concern for God's people and God's city drove him to do... nothing!
- For more than 4 months he did nothing except pray and plan, which allowed God to:
  1. Prepare the vision in him.
  2. Prepare him for the vision.
  3. Prepare circumstances for the vision.

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**3. Comfort and Christ**

- Nehemiah's name means "Yahweh has comforted", but in order for God to comfort His people through Nehemiah, he had to experience significant discomfort.
- Before we can be comforters we must experience comfort.
- Christ experienced even more discomfort to comfort us.
- He has more concern, prays more persistently, and planned more meticulously.

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## Conclusion

- As a comforter who had to experience discomfort Nehemiah is a picture of Christ.
- Our calling/vision is also born out of concern, prayer, and planning.
- If we avoid concern we avoid our calling.

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