

For Group Discussion

<<Also in appendix, and PDF on website: FavorWithKings.com/Group>>

1. Session One: Purpose

Chapters: 1-5 (*Favor With Kings*)

Overview: The story of Nehemiah begins with *bad news*. It's no coincidence that bad news sparks purpose and passion for the rest of us, too.

Objective: The goal of this group session is to get to know each other, build some trust by sharing honestly, then look for common ground.

Leader tip: Create an environment of safety and authentic sharing so that your group will feel more comfortable getting honest sooner than later. The best way to do that is by,

- A. Sharing honestly and openly *first*
- B. Not coaching or fixing others, just validating and affirming
- C. Praying for God to intervene and guide

There are more leadership resources at FavorWithKings.com.

Questions:

1. Who are you and why are you here? What are hoping to get out of this book and six-part series?
2. Who is someone that inspires you and why?

Group Reading: Nehemiah 1:1-4a

¹ The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa,² 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.

³ 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."

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept.

Questions:

3. What stands out to you in the passage above?
4. Why do you think Nehemiah begins his Memoirs this way?
5. When have you seen “bad news” move someone to take bold action and do something positive?
6. In chapter 3, Caleb Anderson says, “God doesn’t waste your pain.” What does that mean, or what *could* that mean to you?
7. In chapter 4, Caleb writes, “Your past is telling you something about your future.” What event, circumstance, or experience from your past is coming to mind? Or, what parts of your journey have most shaped you into who you are?

If there are any other key points, notes, or actions from the first five chapters of *Favor With Kings*, share them now.

8. What common threads do you see in people’s stories in your group? Where do experiences or inspirations overlap?

As you prepare for the next session, catch up on any readings from chapter 1-5, and read as much of chapters 6-10 as possible.

Encourage each other to do the actions steps at the end of each chapter. As part of the group experience, you’ll also be invited to participate together in one simple action step each week.

Group action: Create a rotation plan for someone to provide food (a meal or snacks) each time your group meets.

Close your time together with a short prayer.

Note for next session: If possible, carve out two hours for your next group meeting.

2. Session Two: Passion

Chapters: 6-10 (*Favor With Kings*)

Overview: Before Nehemiah takes drastic action, he pauses, prays, and fasts. In other words, he puts his trust in God and cultivates his own conviction.

Objective: The goal of this group session is to help each other tap into personal conviction and passion. Half of this session will be spent in personal reflection and prayer. Save 30 minutes to pray—individually—and then another 15 to come back together and share.

Leader tip: Push people beyond surface answers to dig deeper into who they are, what breaks their heart, and what they can do about it. Then, move the group toward commonality and a shared service project.

Questions:

1. Has anything interesting or unusual happened since last time?
2. Does anyone yet have the sense that God is trying to get your attention?

Group Reading: Nehemiah 1:4-11

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ 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, ⁶ 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. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ 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.'

¹⁰ "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹ 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.

Questions:

3. What stands out to you in the passage above?
4. Why do you think Nehemiah offers so much detail of his prayer?
5. When have you been desperate in your life? What did you do in your desperation?

Prayer Experience (30-45 minutes): Don't panic. You can do this.

It doesn't matter if you've prayed your whole life or only when driving with your tiny, blind grandma. Prayer is nothing to be afraid of, and it's good for your soul.

We're going to practice a short, simple time of prayer. This page will guide you through it.

Get alone, by yourself. (That means *not* with someone else.)

Keep this page open. If you're reading this digitally, use a journal also, or grab a notecard—Evernote works, too.

Ask God to speak to you. Say something like, "Here I am God... I'm open to whatever you might say to me."

You'll likely find that your mind will wonder. That doesn't mean you're a bad person or that God hates you. It happens to all of us. Notice it. Draw your mind back. If you thought of something critically important, jot it down, save it for later, and focus back on the prayer time at hand. (Stay off of social media, email, and anything distracting.)

Read the above passage from Nehemiah 1 again.

Ask God to speak to you.

Thank God for everything good thing you have that comes to your mind.

Reflect on the chapters of *Favor With Kings* you've read so far. What has been resonating with you? Are you feeling passion starting to burn? Ask God to fan the flame. Tell him you want to focus on the things he wants for you. Ask for clarity.

Consider your history...your hurts...your passion or conviction that is growing... Who do you feel drawn toward? Who will you serve?

There are a couple segments of people to consider: A) The poor and marginalized; people that most others in our culture ignore or avoid. B) The sphere of influence that we already have; people that you regularly see, interact with, and relate to.

Serve both. But your passion level might be higher for one or the other.

Write down things you sense...things you that become more clear...questions you still have...

Ask yourself what it would look like to go "all in." (See *Favor With Kings* chapter 8.)

All in: A) Identifying with and serving others. B) Total commitment, surrender, and faith.

Ask God for courage, clarity, guidance...and *favor*.

To do whatever you think you need to do, whose blessing do you need? Yes, God's, but assuming you have that, who else?

In Chapter 9, Caleb writes, "God gives favor—but he gives it through authorities."

Who's blessing, backing, belief, support, energy, enthusiasm, or endorsement do you need?

Pray for favor... for blessing.

Come back together as a group.

Questions:

6. How was the Prayer Experience? Share about your time.
7. What are your next steps?

As you prepare for the next session, catch up on any readings from chapter 6-10, and read as much of chapters 11-15 as possible.

Encourage each other to do the actions steps at the end of each chapter. As part of the group experience, you'll also be invited to participate together in one simple action step each week.

Group action: The Pray Experience was your action for this week. Well done. Consider setting aside at least 10 minutes a day this week to continue the habit of prayer. (For more resources on Prayer and Meditation go to FavorWithKings.com/Prayer)

Close your time together by reading an inspirational quote from *Favor With Kings*.

Note for next session: Next time you'll be committing to a service project you'll do as a group. It can be a one-time thing or a vision with ongoing implications. Begin to think about ideas this week.

3. Session Three: Plans

Chapters: 11-15 (*Favor With Kings*)

Overview: Nehemiah prays but doesn't stop at prayer. After praying for God's blessing, he *plans* for God's blessing.

Objective: The goal of this session is to put plans in place. This is the time when things get real. We go beyond ambiguous dreams and passions and start putting plans into action that will serve real people—including people that your group will serve together within the next few weeks.

Leader tip: Set the example for the group by having thought through your own plans, personally, so each person can do the same. Then, toward the end of the meeting, shift personal plans and help the group find the common ground or an obvious need in the community where they can practice a serve project, together.

Questions:

1. What's your favorite business or non-profit organization and why?

Every great business or organization exists because it's leader(s) saw a need in society and believed that they could uniquely meet that need. They became an organization when they got organized and proved the concept.

You don't need to start a company, but you do need to get organized and make plans if anything good is to happen on purpose.

2. Are you confident or unclear about your *purpose* and *passion* and the *people* you might serve? What else do you think you need to be more confident?

Group Reading: Nehemiah 2:1-18

2 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, 2 so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."

I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."

⁶ Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

⁷ I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah?"⁸ And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. ⁹ So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

¹⁰ When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

¹¹ I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days ¹² I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

¹³ By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. ¹⁴ Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; ¹⁵ so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. ¹⁶ The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

¹⁷ Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." ¹⁸ I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

Questions:

3. What stands out to you in the passage above?
4. What do you notice about the relationship between Nehemiah and the king of Persia? Why is that personal and working relationship important to the story?
5. If God gave you *favor* with an authority figure that could help you pursue your vision, what might it look like? How could you be preparing for that day now?
6. Considering Nehemiah's example above (verses 11-16), what other preparations and plans might help you move toward your vision?
7. As a group, what can you do to serve someone in your community—a person, type of people, or place that needs support?

8. When will you start? Put it on the calendar. (Aim for 100% participation, but it might not be possible.)

Examples of serve projects:

- Beautification efforts
- Mentoring youth
- Coaching a team
- Caring for children
- Engaging with elderly
- Adapting a neighborhood
- Serving together at church
- Partnering with local non-profits
- Pooling resources (financial and otherwise) to meet a specific need

Our group's serving schedule:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

As you prepare for the next session, catch up on any readings from chapter 11-15, and read as much of chapters 16-20 as possible.

Encourage each other to do the actions steps at the end of each chapter. As part of the group experience, you'll also be invited to participate together in one simple action step each week.

Group action: Serve together.

Close your time together with a prayer of alignment—that your plans would be God's plans, and that he would bless them.

Note for next session: Come prepared next week to talk about your plans. Your vision and plans can (and should) be different than others. Don't compare or worry about whether your plans are good enough, big enough, or defined enough. That's what this whole process is all about. You shouldn't have everything figured out yet. And if you do, you can help others!

4. Session Four: Progress

Chapters: 16-20 (*Favor With Kings*)

Overview: Nehemiah prays and he plans, but plans are worthless without follow-through. Follow-through means taking action, and action leads to *progress*.

Objective: The goal of this session is to move to action.

Leader tip: Some in your group have projects that are well underway—organized as a business, ministry, or hobby. Others have a vision and plan but have yet to make any progress. Focus each of your members on their *next right step*.

Questions:

1. Talk about a time when you committed to a process that seemed long and difficult. How do you view that time now? What were the results?

Group Reading: Nehemiah 2:17 – 3:15

17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." 18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?"

20 I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

3 Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel.² The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zakkur son of Imri built next to them.

3 The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. ⁴ Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. ⁵ The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.

6 The Jeshanah Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid its beams and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. ⁷ Next to them, repairs were made by men from Gibeon and Mizpah—Melatiah of Gibeon and Jadon of Meronoth—places under the authority of the governor of Trans-Euphrates. ⁸ Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfume-makers, made

repairs next to that. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. ⁹ Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section.¹⁰ Adjoining this, Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house, and Hattush son of Hashabneiah made repairs next to him. ¹¹ Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. ¹² Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section with the help of his daughters.

¹³ The Valley Gate was repaired by Hanun and the residents of Zanoah. They rebuilt it and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. They also repaired a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Dung Gate.

¹⁴ The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Rekab, ruler of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He rebuilt it and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place.

¹⁵ The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallun son of Kol-Hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah. He rebuilt it, roofing it over and putting its doors and bolts and bars in place. He also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam, by the King's Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David.

Questions:

2. What stands out to you in the passage above? Beyond all the crazy names, what do you see?
3. What does Nehemiah do to “spark” the change?
4. What do you notice about the “system” Nehemiah puts in place for the construction of the gates?
5. What systems, habits, or routines do you currently use to get things done? What new ones might you need to accomplish the vision?
6. Are there any small wins or breakthroughs that can be celebrated?
7. If you've already done your group serve project, what did you learn? (If not, refer back to your serve schedule.)

As you prepare for the next session, catch up on any readings from chapter 16-20, and read as much of chapters 21-25 as possible.

Encourage each other to do the actions steps at the end of each chapter. As part of the group experience, you'll also be invited to participate together in one simple action step each week.

Group action: Follow up from your group serve outing. Either do the serve project (if you haven't yet), or brainstorm how your group can continue to serve together on some kind of rhythm—monthly, quarterly, etc.

Close your time together with a prayer for courage and clarity on your next right step.

Note for next session: Come prepared next week to talk about your progress. Any step—small or large—will be celebrated and built upon.

5. Session Five: People

{Bonus session—not in *Favor With Kings* Appendix}

Chapters: 21-22 (*Favor with Kings*)

Overview: Progress means remembering that the project is always about the *people*.

Objective: Reflect on the who—who you're serving, who you're serving with—and practical ways to keep people the priority.

Leader tip: For Mariners Church we added this extra group session. Don't worry if the people are ahead or behind in readings from *Favor with Kings*. This extra group meeting is an easy opportunity for group members to catch up.

Don't just do... think about who.

Questions:

1. Who in your life really understands you and speaks your language?

Group Reading: Nehemiah 3:28-32

²⁸ Above the Horse Gate, the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house.²⁹ Next to them, Zadok son of Immer made repairs opposite his house. Next to him, Shemaiah son of Shekaniah, the guard at the East Gate, made repairs.³⁰ Next to him, Hananiah son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. Next to them, Meshullam son of Berekiah made repairs opposite his living quarters. ³¹ Next to him, Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Inspection Gate, and as far as the room above the corner; ³² and between the room above the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and merchants made repairs.

Questions:

1. What is Nehemiah's genius delegation strategy? Why do you think he assigns the work the way he does?

"...made repairs opposite his house."

Anderson says, "People work the best when they care they care the most."

2. How are you continuing to cultivate conviction about the project(s) you're moving toward?

3. What do you know about the people you're serving and the people you're working with? For what do they care most? What hits closest to "home" for them?
4. Consider peers at work...neighbors in your community...members of your church... How are you inviting them to participate? How are you speaking to their hearts and their deepest concerns?

Most people don't consider themselves leaders. But if you have a mission from God, you'll need other people to accomplish that mission.

Humility is about inviting other to participate and play roles that are meaningful to them.

5. Do you think of yourself as a leader? Why or why not?
6. In what ways would you like to grow as an influencer of others? How might you take a next step in that direction?

As you prepare for the next session, catch up on any readings through chapter 25.

Encourage each other to do the actions steps at the end of each chapter. As part of the group experience, you'll also be invited to participate together in one simple action step each week.

Group action: Encourage each other do a personality profile exercise this week. Profile exercises help you understand not only how you're wired, but how you come across to others. Someone in the group likely has a favorite profile tool, but here are a few to consider:

- Strengths Finder
- Myers Briggs
- DISC assessment
- John Maxwell Leadership Assessment

Close your time together with a prayer about how we can humbly influence others for good.

Note for next session: If you haven't served together, do so soon. Notice how others in your group influence people around them.

6. Session Six: Persistence

Chapters: 23-25 (*Favor With Kings*)

Overview: Progress requires persisting in the face of opposition.

Objective: Encourage one another to work together with people, and endure through pain to see their vision become a reality.

Leader tip: It's not likely that many in your group will yet be to the point of conflict or heavy opposition. But those days are coming. Refer back to past experiences and familiar stories, encouraging one another for the days ahead.

Questions:

1. Talk about your favorite story of a hero enduring through great difficulty.

Group Reading: Nehemiah 4:1-9

4 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews,² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"

³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!"

⁴ Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. ⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

⁷ But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. ⁸ They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. ⁹ But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

Questions:

2. What stands out to you in the passage above?

3. What kind of opposition have you experienced, or do you expect to encounter on your journey?
4. What does Nehemiah do in the face of serious threats? What can you learn?
5. How can you support one another knowing that opposition is inevitable when you're on a mission from God?
6. What does Os Guinness' question, "Is the revolution still on?" (*Favor With Kings*, chapter 25) mean to you? What can others do to encourage you to persevere?

As you prepare for the next session, read the remainder of *Favor with Kings*, if possible.

Encourage each other to do the actions steps at the end of each chapter. As part of the group experience, you'll also be invited to participate together in one simple action step each week.

Group action: Call one person in your group this week and encourage them. Ask your own form of the question, "Is the revolution still on?"

Close your time together with a prayer acknowledging that while opposition is inevitable, good will triumph over evil in the end.

Note for next session: Next session is the final (official) discussion in the *Favor with Kings* study. Obviously, your group is encouraged to continue meeting, but now is a great time to plan a "fun" night. After your final meeting, gather together at least once more just to celebrate what God did in your weeks together. Put the date on the calendar now. Don't do anything too serious. Eat, play, laugh, and enjoy the time.

7. Session Seven: Power

Chapters: 26-30 (*Favor with Kings*)

Overview: This has always been a mission from God. It's not for you. It's bigger than you.

Objective: Begin with the end in mind. Consider what it will look like to lead others with integrity and leave a legacy.

Leader tip: It's not likely that many in your group will yet be to the point of handing off their project, ministry, or business. However, the goal is to begin with the end in mind. Take opportunities to gently remind one another that this is God's work happening through us, but it is not exclusively *for* us. We're doing what we're doing for others. And that is what produces fulfillment in us.

Questions:

1. Discuss a time when you received benefits because of the efforts, position, or resources of someone else.

Group Reading: Nehemiah 5

⁵ Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their fellow Jews.² Some were saying, "We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain."

³ Others were saying, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine."

⁴ Still others were saying, "We have had to borrow money to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. ⁵ Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our fellow Jews and though our children are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others."

⁶ When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. ⁷ I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are charging your own people interest!" So I called together a large meeting to deal with them ⁸ and said: "As far as possible, we have bought back our fellow Jews who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your own people, only for them to be sold back to us!" They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.

⁹ So I continued, "What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies? ¹⁰ I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let us stop charging interest! ¹¹ Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the interest you are charging them—one percent of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil."

12 “We will give it back,” they said. “And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say.”

Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. ¹³ I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, “In this way may God shake out of their house and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a person be shaken out and emptied!”

At this the whole assembly said, “Amen,” and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

¹⁴ Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. ¹⁵ But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. ¹⁶ Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land.

¹⁷ Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations. ¹⁸ Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people.

¹⁹ Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.

Questions:

2. What stands out to you in the passage above?
3. How are some people exploiting others? What is Nehemiah’s response?
4. As Anderson says, “The project has always been about the people.” When have you seen people taken advantage of or exploited?
5. Nehemiah communicates that it’s a new day—there is a *new normal*—and the behavior in question is no longer acceptable. What kind of “new normal” are you hoping to see?
6. What do you think of Nehemiah’s example of sacrifice and integrity in this passage? What present-day parallels can you draw?

Part of calling the priests, nobles, and officials to a high standard was about entrusting leadership to them. Nehemiah knew that he couldn’t be the only one to lead the people. He needed others to lead with him, and beyond him. He gave his influence away.

7. How can you begin to give your influence away, now, and not later? Who can you prepare to carry the torch into the future?

Now is a good time to note any additional highlights, quotes, or questions you have from your reading of *Favor with Kings*.

Encourage each other to continue to do the actions steps at the end of each chapter, and to persevere on your mission from God.

Read the rest of Nehemiah's memoirs on your own time. Reflect on the inspiration and insights you gained from *Favor with Kings*. Follow through on decisions you made through this process. You might find it helpful to choose one person to intentionally follow up with for mutual encouragement over the next few months.

Group action: Answer the following questions together:

- Will our group continue to meet together?
- If so, on what rhythm (weekly, every-other week...)? Why day and time?
- How will we continue to serve together?
- How will we commit to encouraging each other's projects?

Close your time together with a prayer asking for God's ongoing blessing and favor in your lives.

Note for next steps: Who else needs the inspiration of *Favor With Kings*? Send them a book. (Reviews on Amazon.com are also helpful.)

Refer to your book regularly on your journey to help you stay the course.

Visit FavorWithKings.com for additional resources.

May God bless you, and may he bless others through you.

MarinersChurch.org
FavorWithKings.com

For Pastors

Being a pastor myself, I have created additional resources for you to use as you interact with this book. You'll find them at FavorWithKings.com.

Consider doing a six-week church-wide campaign using *Favor With Kings* as a catalytic tool in your church. By "campaign" I mean: sermon, small groups, and daily readings all aligned and leveraged for mass participation and maximum impact in your congregation.

At Mariners Church, we did a 6-week series based on the story of Nehemiah and the content of *Favor With Kings* in the fall of 2016. Everything you need to do something similar is at:

FavorWithKings.com/Pastors