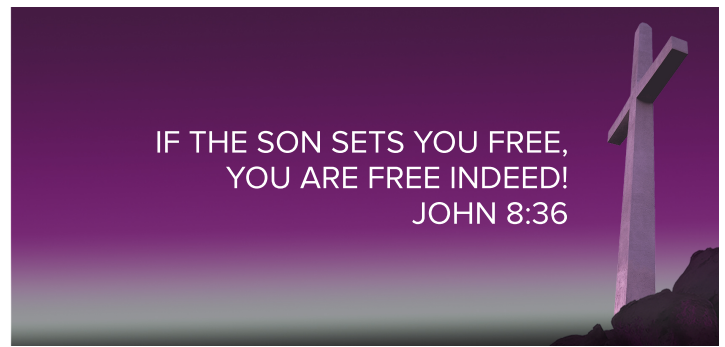


Jesus IOI

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

This story takes place during the Persian rule of the ancient world. Nehemiah was the personal cupbearer of King Artaxerxes and led expeditions to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city previously destroyed by the Babylonian armies. Read the full story in Nehemiah 1-6.

Nehemiah was a great leader. He kept praying and working. He is a model of active trust or trust in action: he knew that God's favor was upon him, he prayed constantly, and he also did what was in his power do. He prayed and then set guards over the wall. "Then I stationed men in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears and bows" (verse 13). Yet by now, his men were not only discouraged but fearful. Nehemiah stepped up to the occasion: he trusted God, prayed, took action, and also led, motivating his people with two core reminders. First, he reminded them how great their God was; second, he told them to focus on the reason they were doing this—their families. "When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses" (verse 14; emphasis added).

Perhaps you need to be reminded of the same today: you have an awesome, caring, and powerful God, and you have a purpose in life. Pray, and then go change another diaper. Pray, and then go feed your aging parent. Pray, and then go preach another gospel sermon. Pray, and go do what you must do. You are not on your own. You have an awesome God who has given you an awesome purpose, and He will give you the means and the strength to accomplish the task before you.

Nehemiah explained: "From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows and the breastplates. . . Those who carried burdens took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon" (verses 16, 17; emphasis added). I don't know about you, but I am pretty impressed with their multitasking. I am impressed with your multitasking, too: as a single parent, as a caregiver, as a parent of a child with special needs, as the person in charge, whatever your challenge is. I know what it's like to wear many hats. Yet, we are never alone. We have a great and awesome God.

The most important part of Nehemiah's motivational speech were the words "our God will fight for us" (verse 20). No matter how prepared and skilled they were, the bottom line was that the battle wasn't theirs to win but the Lord's. They were His agents. You are His agent. And He will guide you for His name's sake...

Whenever you start feeling discouraged, pray to your awesome God, who fights on your behalf. Let me share with you a secret: when the battle is too great, then it's not yours to fight. It's the Lord's. And remember:

When circumstances are overwhelming, let God fight your battles. He will surely rescue you from distress and discouragement. Woo-hoo!