



BREAKING THE ICE

Were you a middle school or high school athlete? If so, what was your sport of choice?

What is the best team you have ever been a part of? It could be a sports team, a team you have worked with, a serving team at church or a project team.

Do you have a story about a coach that has really inspired you?

MAIN CONTENT

This week, Pastor Drew Powell took us to a high school locker room to talk about Coach Nehemiah.

You can find Nehemiah's story in the Old Testament. He was known for rebuilding Jerusalem. But before he could rebuild, he had to own the problem.

1. When you are faced with a problem, what is your first course of action?

Read Nehemiah 1:1-4

Nehemiah owned the problem when he took time to **"Feel the Feelings."** He took time to weep, mourn and fast. Now, weeping, mourning and fasting may not be something you do on a normal day. We don't respond to every situation with one of these actions. But when something difficult happens in our lives, we do need to be aware of the situation and take time to feel the feelings.

2. What is your normal reaction when something difficult happens in your life? Is the reaction helpful to the situation?

When we go through a difficult situation, it's important to take time to process through it and feel the feelings. If we shortcut the process of healing and grieving, we may not experience all the benefits of peace and freedom.

The second way we own the problem is to **"Process in Prayer."** When we pray, it's taking action. We realize we can't do this on our own and we need God to help us with it. It's not weak, it's realizing we

need God's strength to help us.

3. How often do you pray when you are faced with a difficult situation? Is it your first course of action? What keeps you from praying first?

When we go to God first with our difficulties, He can take away the stress and pain and help guide us in our healing.

4. Describe a time in your life where God answered your prayer through a difficult situation.

Pastor Kevin says that when he prays, coincidences happen. But when he doesn't pray, there are no coincidences. God wants you to come to Him and tell Him how you feel; He wants to comfort you and He wants to help you.

The byproducts of taking time to feel the feelings and process in prayer are that we can **identify with the pain of others** and we can **experience soul level comfort**.

When you take time to feel the feelings, it allows you to feel for others when they are going through a pain like your own. We need to spend less time trying to make our point and more time listening to others and caring for them in their pain.

5. Who in your life takes time to identify with your pain and listen when you are having a difficult time? How do you rate yourself when it comes to identifying with the pain of others?

When we weep with one another, share in each others' pain and disagree well, we can represent Jesus well.

6. Is there a friend you can disagree well with? Talk about that relationship and how it has been a part of your life.

When we process in prayer, it allows us to experience soul level comfort. We try to mask our pain by engaging in short term satisfaction, but only Jesus can give us the soul level comfort we need. When we come to Him in our mourning, He comforts us at the deepest level. It may take time, but His peace is everlasting; all we have to do is ask Him for it.

Give it all to Jesus. Yes, it's hard because we feel like we have control, but we don't. He wants all of it. The messy parts, the good parts. EVERYTHING.

7. When have you experienced soul level comfort in your life?

8. What do you need to give to Jesus today?

CLOSING PRAYER

God, we are grateful we can process our difficulties with You in prayer. We can feel all the feelings and bring them to You. Will You show us where we have excused others' pain instead of identifying with it? When we try to comfort ourselves with things other than You, will You reveal that to us? Help us draw near to You for soul level comfort. In Jesus' name, Amen.

ACTION STEP

Take some time to think about anything you have left unprocessed this week. + Where are you stuffing down your feelings?

+ Take those feelings to God and ask the Holy Spirit to come comfort you.

+ Ask God to show you where you can help identify with others' pain and show them love.