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**Key Texts:** Nehemiah 6:3

**Message Structure:**

1. Introduction

2. Grab the Audience Quote

3. Rhetorical Question(s)

4. Personal Story

5. Real Talk Statement

6. Teaching Content

7. Heart Appeal

8. Application Steps

9. Prayer

**1. Introduction:**

Today. we are in week three of our teaching series called God-Sized Confidence. God calls us to a life of confidence in Him. We are not called to self-confidence, we are called to God-confidence believing, by faith, that God is who He says He is and will do what He has promised to do. Today, we will be talking about having a plan to help us walk in the confidence of God every day.

[Leader Note: This is good time to pray with your audience as you start today’s teaching.]

As we start, let us take a moment and pray together, asking God to challenge us and grow us through this series while thanking Him in advance for what He will do.

**2: Grab the Audience Quote:**

“Everything now will prepare you for the next step. Don’t run from adversity; lean into it with all your heart and God will make you a leader worth following” —Andy Stanley (Lead Pastor at North Point Church)

**3. Rhetorical Questions(s):**

Why do think a large majority of people never see their New Year’s resolutions actually happen? How important is it to have a “plan” behind each resolution?

**4. Real Talk Statement:** Living with confidence requires us to have an intentional plan leaning into confidence builders and away from confidence stealers.

**5. Personal Story: “**Your story here”

[Leader Note: Tell a personal story about a time when you realized having a plan was super important. This could also be a funny story about a time when having no plan got you into a really tough humorous situation. As with all the teachings in this series, try to connect stories to your own young adult journey whenever possible.]

**6. Message Content:**

Open Bible: Nehemiah 6:3

As we jump into today’s teaching, let’s look at the context for our main text. This may be a newer book of study for you, but it speaks powerfully of God’s call to intentional daily living. Nehemiah was the cupbearer to king Artaxerxes of Persia. He guarded against poison reaching the king by eating and drinking before the king did. This was a position with a small title, but huge influence, as the cupbearer was often the closest person to the king every day. Even though we are focusing on a passage in chapter 6 of Nehemiah, I would encourage you to read chapters of this awesome story next week.

Nehemiah received word that the city of Jerusalem was in ruins. The walls surrounding the city were broken, representing the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. His heart was broken for his people and the city, so he went to God in prayer confessing the sins of his people and any sin that he might have been hanging onto in his own heart. Then he asked for God’s favor upon his life and influence knowing that he was just a cupbearer with a growing passion to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. What breaks our hearts the most might be what God is calling us into to create changes. Creating great change isn’t about titles, it’s about relying on God’s power and provision, stepping forward with courage when the door of opportunity opens.

The king noticed the brokenness on Nehemiah’s face, and asked what was wrong. Nehemiah laid out the current situation with Jerusalem before the king. The king then asked Nehemiah what he wanted (God’s favor in action). Nehemiah prayed to God, and then asked the king for his blessing to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. An important lesson here is that many of us would do well to pray before we speak. How many of us have opened our mouths, without asking for God’s blessing and guidance first?

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, with the king’s blessing, and assessed the condition of the wall. He then assembled a team, organized everyone with tasks and responsibilities, and the rebuilding process began. The first thing to be rebuilt was the “sheep gate” where lambs would be brought in for sacrifices, representing Jesus who would come as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. The rebuilding process started with Jesus.

The wall was rebuilt in record time, which made the surrounding enemies of the Israelites really nervous. They tried to pull Nehemiah off the rebuilding project by an invitation to come and dine with them, aka, “We are going to try and kill you.” Here was the response of Nehemiah:

Nehemiah 6:3 (ESV) reads:

*3And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”*

This response is so significant as we talk about having a plan to live in the confidence of God every day. Nehemiah knew that saying “yes" to dining with his enemies meant saying no to his calling from God to rebuild the wall. His enemies kept coming back with the same request, and Nehemiah gave the same response.

When we say “yes” to certain distractions, we are inevitably saying “no” to the things that really matter to God for our lives. Nehemiah had to learn to say “no” to distractions, and “yes” to God’s direction for his life. Nehemiah stayed focused, worked hard, filtered out the junk, and the wall on Jerusalem was rebuilt in an unbelievable 52 days.

God wants you to walk in His confidence every day which requires a plan to say “yes” to confidence builders and “no” to confidence stealers. Walking in God’s confidence means being very intentional about where we put our focus, time, and energy. Nehemiah knew that distractions and attacks would come, and he was ready with a plan.

Every day, we need to recognize the things that undermine our confidence in God, say “no” to them in advance, and steer clear, choosing to lean into the things that grow us into who God is calling us to be. Remember that not all seemingly good invitations are from God. Let us take a look at some specific confidence stealers and builders, reflecting on what we should intentionally be saying “yes” and “no” to everyday.

[Leader Note: As you dive into the following “confidence stealers and builders” you might want to add an example from your own life that can draw the audience in and build the point. Just remember not to spend too much time on each example.]

**Confidence STEALERS:**

**A. A loss of our identity in God.**

If we allow our identity to be placed in anyone or anything other than God, we are setting ourselves up for disappointment. **Say “no” to unstable identity anchors.**

*Psalms 139: 13-18*

*13 For you created my inmost being;*
*you knit me together in my mother’s womb.*
*14I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;*
*your works are wonderful,*
*I know that full well.*
*15My frame was not hidden from you*
*when I was made in the secret place,*
*when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*
*16Your eyes saw my unformed body;*
*all the days ordained for me were written in your book*
*before one of them came to be.*
*17How precious to me are your thoughts,[*[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+139%253A+13-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-16257a)*] God!*
*How vast is the sum of them!*
*18Were I to count them,*
*they would outnumber the grains of sand—*
*when I awake, I am still with you.*

**B. Falling into the comparison trap.**

When we constantly compare ourselves to others (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) we always lose as we either walk away feeling arrogant or insecure. God calls all of us to be the best versions of ourselves for His glory. **Say “no” to constantly comparing yourself to others.**

*2 Corinthians 10:12*

*12We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*

**C. Having a “been there, done that” attitude.**

If we allow ourselves to become complacent or think that we have everything together, we stop growing and stop relying on our identity in God to help us through life. Always be leaning into an attitude of learning. **Say “no” to complacency and arrogance.**

*1 Peter 5:5 (NIV)*

*5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”*

Confidence **BUILDERS**:

**A. Remember that it’s not about winning, but serving.**

*Phil. 2:3,4*

*2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

Serve with the gifts, abilities, and talents God has given you. We are most like Jesus when we meet the needs of others with love. Build your confidence by getting your attention off of yourself and onto other people through service. We are usually the most fulfilled when we are helping others. **Say “yes” to serving.**

**B. Show an interest in others.**

*Mark 10:45*

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Jesus’ life showed genuine love and focus on the lives of others. When you are having a conversation with someone, focus on being more “interested” than “interesting.” Listen to others with the intent to really understand, not simply to reply. **Say “yes” to other people’s stories.**

**C. Be patient, you are a work in progress.**

*Phil 1:6 (NIV)*

*Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Remember every day that you are not the final product yet. Commit to the process of letting God mold, shape, and grow you every day. The growing process is just that, a process. Over time you will look back and be able to see significant positive changes that have happened in your life over time. **Say “yes” to the process.**

**D. Courageously step out in faith, time and time again.**

*Joshua 1:9*

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Don’t let your past stand in the way of open doors for the future. Know that God is with you, for you, and He will be faithful to His promises over your life. When doors of opportunity swing open for you to use the gifts and abilities God has given you, step through the doorway with courage knowing when He is with you. **Say “yes” to open doors of opportunity.**

Just like with Nehemiah, God has called you to a great and mighty work. You are wired to make an impact with the gifts, abilities, and passions He has given you. Walk with a plan every day leaning into confidence builders an away from confidence stealers. Honestly assess how certain relationships, habits, and social media interactions affect your confidence. Own the impact these things have on your life, remembering Nehemiah’s words:

 *“I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”*

**7. Heart Appeal**

All of us in this room want to be more confident people in our relationships, careers, and communities. Just like with New Year’s resolutions, most people never see resolutions come to fruition because there is no plan backing up the hope for change. If you want to be more confident, decide today that you will live each day with a plan, intentionally leaning into confidence builders and away from confidence stealers. Most of us know the stealers, those habits that leave us feeling undervalued and insecure. Don’t go there, create a plan and live that out every day. Nehemiah knew God for himself, and lived and led with intentionality. The result was confident leadership with great accomplishment for God’s glory. God desires for you to live with God-Sized Confidence for His glory.

**8. Daily Action Plan:**

**A**. **Surrender.** As you start each day, give your life back to God in prayer. Remember that life is a gift, and this gift comes from God. Do this at the start of everyday.

**B**. **Ask for favor.** Ask God for His leading and blessings over your life every day. God is good and has incredible plans for your life every day. Request His favor to be upon your life, giving Him credit for every success.

**C**. **Assess Honestly.** Look how different things affect your confidence as you go throughout each day. Make notes of those things which undermine your confidence and which things build your confidence.

**D**. **Walk intentionally.** Choose to lean into confidence builders and away from confidence stealers.Include a trusted friend in this journey to bring you support and accountability as you are choosing to walk intentionally in God’s confidence.

**Pray:** “Your prayer here”

[Leader Note: Pray here for your group of young adults to step into an authentic relationship with Jesus. Ask God to give them the courage and strength to own the fake areas in their life and have an authentic conversation with Him. This can be a major turning point for your audience.]