

NEH 07 – **Dealing with Discouragement - Neh 4:10-23**

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There's an old story about the devil deciding to **sell** some of his tools.
& a buyer came in & asked about a tool labeled "**Not for sale.**"

The devil answered; *"I can spare some of my other tools,
but I cannot spare this one. It may be the most useful tool I have.*

*it's **called Discouragement**, and with it I can work my way into hearts
that are otherwise inaccessible.*

*When I **get this tool** into a Person's heart (even a Christian person),
the way is open for me **to plant just about anything** I want in there"*

Out **Text in NEH** today is about **Dealing with Discouragement**

& - as always – Our **O.T. Text** - perfectly illustrates a **N.T. Truth**

But **because** I **don't** have **time**
to do **BOTH** – Please **write this down** In your margin

Phil 3:12-14 – that's the **NT truth** that is perfectly **illustrated**
in **today's text** in Neh – So, **study** that on your own

Let's Pray

In our **Last Msg** in **NEH** – We **left** God's People learning how
to Deal with **Criticism & Opposition** from the **OUTSIDE**

But **today** – **Nehemiah** & the people of God
face something **far more dangerous**

Today – Nehemiah must deal with **DISCOURAGEMENT**

coming from the **INSIDE**

We **ended** the **last Msg** – w/ Nehemiah's **Response**
to the **Opposition** from the **OUTSIDE** – in **Neh 4:9**

Neh 4:9 – NLT

9 But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

But now – **Suddenly** – Nehemiah **faces** something
far more Detrimental to the **Work of God** – in the very next Vs;

Neh 4:10 – NLT

10 Then the people of Judah began to complain, “The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves.”

THIS – is **discouragement** from **WITHIN** the ranks of God's people

& we're going to see that **Nehemiah deals** *very differently*
w/ **this** problem – *than* he does w/ **Opposition** from the **OUTSIDE**

But first - **Notice** carefully – **Which tribe** it is
that **BEGAN** the complaining – **JUDAH** – **Underline that**

Sadly – **Judah** – was the **Leadership Tribe** -
the Tribe that **the Messiah would come from**

& it's **very sad** to see
the **tribe** that's been **called to Lead** God's people

Actually **become** the ones
Sowing Discouragement INTO the lives of God's people
& there's **another reason** I point out that name
& we'll **get to that** in a minute

But **let me ask** you – - **WHEN** is it
that we are **most likely** to get **Discouraged** in a Great Task?

Isn't it about **HALF WAY ?**

If you **ever hike** with our "*slightly obsessed*"
Extreme Hiking Club here – you might **experience** this

You **look up** the mountain - & you **see** a Peak -
& you **THINK** that is **THE** Peak

& so you **climb with Enthusiasm** to get to that point
only to find out once you **get there** - that you're only **half way up**

It's **normal** to start out **ANY TASK** with Great Enthusiasm

I've only started **2 churches** – but I will tell you
the absolute **easiest year** – is the **FIRST YEAR**

Because **everyone** is **ENTHUSIASTICALLY** Building
the **Wall of Testimony** around that new work of God

Well – Look back up at NEH 4:6 – NLT
6 At last the wall was completed to half its height around the
entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

The **things of God** never really **change** do they?

The **first half** of the wall - went **GREAT**
because the people had **worked with enthusiasm**
But . . . not so much – **anymore**

Again - Neh 4:10 says

10 Then the people of Judah began to complain, "The workers are getting tired, . . .

The workers **WERE** getting tired – they **had been** working **enthusiastically** - & they were getting **worn out**

It **reminds me** of what I see so often in the **children's ministry**
Man, **those servants** just get **WORN-OUT**, They get **TIRED**

It takes **such enthusiasm** to minister to the children
& sometimes – they just **get tired**

In fact – **Mother's of babies** get this **same** discouragement

I have **two young mother's** in my own family
& sometimes – they just get **TIRED**

& that's when **Grampy & Grammy** step in
to try to **help out**

Guys – we get **TIRED**, & **when** we get **TIRED** – we start **complaining**

Next Neh 4:10 says

the people are tired, . . . ***and there is so much rubble to be moved.***

DO you **Ever feel** like you're **running up hill** in the sand ?

Man, we've been at this forever
& this mountain seems just as big as it ever was

This applies often – to the **beginning** of our **Christian Lives**

just after we begin Building a Wall of Testimony for God

At first we “Dive In” with enthusiasm
removing rubble from our lives like crazy

but then, reality sets in - & we realize,
Man . . . *there is A LOT of Rubble to be removed here*

God is PATIENT – He works on us to remove
just ONE piece of Rubble at a time

Because God Sees the End from the Beginning
& He knows the Work of Art He’s creating us to be

But we (on the other hand)
can very easily LOSE SIGHT of the Finished Wall in our lives

& sometimes – not only do we get TIRED . . .

but sometimes we get so focused on the RUBBLE in our lives
that we LOSE the VISION of the finished Wall of Testimony

& we just get DISCOURAGED

& then – what comes next is - we begin to LOSE the CONFIDENCE
that we’ll EVER accomplish what God has called us to do

again Neh 4:10 says

“(1) The workers are getting tired, and (2) there is so much rubble to be moved. (3) We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves.”

Just FOUR VS’S Earlier – in Neh 4:6

the wall was completed to HALF its height
because the people had worked with ENTHUSIASM

But now – Just 4 Vs’s later – the people were saying

We’re TIRED

There’s too much RUBBLE

We’ll NEVER be able to build this wall ourselves

If you’ve Lost your Energy to work for God

If you’ve Lost your Vision of what God has called you to

If you’ve Lost your Confidence that THRU CHRIST
you can accomplish this task

If that’s you today – **LOOK OUT** – Be Very Careful
because you become an **Easy Mark** for the Enemy

& **that** is **exactly where** the people of God in Nehemiah **are**

& **then** . . . it ALL gets **WORSE**

Neh 4:11 – NLT

11 Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, “Before they know what’s happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work.”

It’s like **the enemy** smells **blood** in the **water**

& they **begin** to throw out “**idle threats**”

to capitalize on the **Discouragement** of the people of God

Seldom does the enemy ‘**make good**’ on these threats –

But **still** – the threats are **very effective**

These threats – tho **most often** unrealistic

do **substantial damage** to the people of God

It's a type of **Propaganda War**

Which is a **very real part** of **EVERY** war

In fact – If you'll **study Gen Ch 3**

you'll **see** that **the Devil**

used Propaganda to sway **Adam & Eve** against God

But - here is the **real lesson**;

HOW does the enemy **get these threats** into the people of God ?

HOW is the **real damage** done, by these threats ?

Look carefully, at Neh 4:12 – NLT

12 The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again (most versions = 10 TIMES), “They will come from all directions and attack us!”

God's people, who lived **NEAR the enemy**

we're actually **being used BY** the enemy

to **spread Psychological Warfare**

INTO the ranks of God's People

Guys – **PLEASE** – If you are **Living NEAR** the enemy -

& **the enemy** is filling your head with **Propaganda**

You **are also** in a very, **very dangerous** place

& altho you **may never realize** it - -

you may actually be **being used** by the enemy

to Spread Discouragement into God's People

Our Spiritual Enemy is Smarter than us
& much More Experienced than us - - Be Careful !

So – the people were DISCOURAGED

- 1) They were Tired
- 2) They had lost their Vision of a finished wall
- 3) They had lost their Confidence
- 4) They were believing the enemy's Propaganda

Suddenly – things were in really bad shape, weren't they ??

& so now – the question is
WHAT do we do ABOUT IT ??

HOW do we DEAL with the Discouragement
that will inevitably be part of each of our Christian Lives ??

THAT – is a Great Question -
Let's see how Nehemiah Deals with Discouragement

FIRST: He sets guards at the exposed areas
& then - he REINFORCES the Family

Neh 4:13 – NLT

13 So I placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed the people to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows

Nehemiah CLOSES UP the 'Exposed Areas'

& then he immediately addresses the problem
at THE FAMILY Level

Isn't that SO COOL
that exactly what we say our nation needs today

is the exact same thing Nehemiah knew
the Nation of Israel needed - 2,500 years ago

Close the Exposed Areas - & Stand Guard BY FAMILIES

What is the EXPOSED area in your Family?

Will you CLOSE UP that area ?
& will you REINFORCE YOUR FAMILY

Nehemiah begins where it's MOST Important -
by getting the Families to Stand Guard – Together

& I Pray – Each of us would DO THAT – in OUR Families

Close up the Exposed Areas in your Family
& Stand Guard WITH your Family

FIRST – Nehemiah REINFORCES the Family

NEXT – He REFOCUSES the people
on WHO their GOD IS,

Neh 4:14 – NLT

14 Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!"

The people were OVERWHELMED BY:

their **Fatigue**
the **Rubble** in their lives
their **lack of Confidence**
the enemy's **Threats**

They were **OVERWHELMED** by everything **EXCEPT** – The **LORD**
Who is **GREAT & GLORIOUS** !!!

Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious . . .

When we get Discouraged;

We've got to **REINFORCE** the **FAMILY**
& We've got to **REFOCUS** on the **LORD**, **Who is Great & Glorious**

How do you do this?

How do we - ***Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious ??***

We've GOT TO **Hide** the Word of God in our Heart

We've GOT TO **Meditate** on His Great Promises

We've GOT TO **Immerse** ourselves in the confidence in the Scriptures

Rehearse the **promises** of God – **write** them on cards

Mediate on them, **Chew** on them, **Pray** them for your life,

Write them in your own words, **Talk** about them with your family

Rehearse the **greatness** of God – get your eyes **ON the Lord**,

& get your eyes **OFF your SELF**

I **promise** you – if you are **Discouraged** today

You've got a healthy dose of ***ME - ITIS***

You know the song . . . ***it's ALL about ME***

& how God should do things MY WAY . . .

The **Only Cure** for **ME - ITIS** – is a total **REFOCUS**
on how **Great & Glorious** God is . . . **Amen?**

& then – look at the last half of Neh 4:14

. . . Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!

Have you ever **FOUGHT the Good FIGHT**
to **BUILD the wall** of Testimony in your life ?

Have you ever Fought against SIN,
and against **the WORLD,**
and against the **schemes of the ENEMY**

in order to **SAVE your MARRIAGE,**
SAVE your **FAMILY,**
SAVE your **MINISTRY ??**

I'm **not talking** about fighting **WITH** other Christians
We do that **naturally**

I'm talking about **FIGHTING against** the **spiritual enemy**
to **stay at the task** – to **continue** the good work

We are **IN** a **Spiritual Battle** - & we **MUST Fight the Good Fight**

Nehemiah . . .

- 1) **REINFORCED** the **FAMILY**
- 2) **REFOCUSED** the people on the **LORD**

& 3) **RETURNED** to the **Work**

It's **critical** during times of **discouragement**
that we **first DEAL** with the **discouragement** in a positive way

and **then** . . . it's **critical** that we **get back to work**

Neh 4:15 - NLT

15 When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall.

Praise the Lord !!

The **enemy** has been **thwarted**
& the **work** has **begun** again

but from now on – there would be some
serious **safe-guards** put in place

to **guard the people** from similar future attacks

Neh 4:16(A) – NLT → →

Neh 4:16(A) - NLT

16 But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail . . .

[stop here].

Half the people **Built** - **Half** the people **Protected**

That is exactly how the Christian Life is

& that's also how a **Christian family** should be

& how a **Christian church** should be – ½ **Building** ½ **Protecting**

We must **BOTH** – **Build** up the Wall of Testimony

while at the same time **Protect** ourselves from the . . .

constant attacks of the enemy - who is **PROWLING** around
like a **Roaring Lion**, seeking whom he may **Devour** (**1Pet 5:8**)

Each one of us is in a Great **Spiritual War**

& we must **simultaneously BUILD** God's Testimony in our lives
AND Protect our Spiritual Lives from the enemy

who is constantly **looking to stumble us**, and devour us

This is true in your PERSONAL Life

In your **FAMILY** Life

In your **MINISTRY** Life

We must Simultaneously be

both **Building AND Protecting** from the attacks of the enemy

Now - there is **one other** very interesting point here

Look closely at the end of V.16 & beginning of V.17

16 . . . The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah **17 who were building the wall . . .** [repeat]

Remember - **back in V.10** – **What name** did I ask you to **Underline** ?

Because it was **JUDAH** who **started the discouragement**
BY their Complaining

& now – as **Nehemiah Deals** with the **Discouragement**

He immediately **stations leaders behind the people of Judah**

The phrase means **LIT** - **“To Support”**

Nehemiah told his leaders
get in **real close** to the *house of Judah*, & **SUPPORT** them

They're **struggling**, they're **stumbling**,
stay close to them, **support** them . . . do you see it?

This is a **huge lesson**
I wish I could say we were better at doing this

most often we focus on the **people** who are
BEING discouraged

but here **Nehemiah** wisely **places leaders**
closest to those who **DOING** the discouragement

to **strengthen** **them**, & thereby,
to **save those** who they **would be** discouraging

That's a **HUGE Lesson**

cont'g in V.17 . . .

We're still in the **RETURN to the Work** – Stage
& again, **seeing** that we must BOTH **Build** & **Protect**

Neh 4:17(B)-18(A) - NLT

17(B)-18(A) . . . The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. 18 All the builders had a sword belted to their side . . .

That's a **tuff way** to build
One hand **building** and One hand **protecting**

but (again) that's exactly what it looks like in a fruitful

Christian Life, or Christian Home, or Christian Church

We **Build**, & We do **Battle** with the enemy
& **BOTH** are necessary to construct a **Wall of testimony**

Now - there's **One More Thing** Nehemiah did
to **DEAL** with **DISCOURAGEMENT**

He has already

- 1) **REINFORCED** the **FAMILY**
- 2) **REFOCUSED** the people on the **LORD**
- 3) **RETURNED** to the **Work** – of **BOTH Building & Protecting**

& **now** – he's going to do **one more CRITICAL thing** - He's going to

- 4) Form a **RALLYING POINT**

Neh 4:18(B)-20 - NLT

18(B) . . . The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.

19 Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, "The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.

20 When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!"

When we're **building** the Wall,
& we **begin** to get discouraged

We **Need** a **RALLYING** point !

We need **someone**, or **someplace**, we can **RUN to**
when the **enemy** shows up, or when the **discouragement** sets in

And we need a **PRIOR PLAN** to **meet** at that **Rallying Point**

One thing we have **always tried** to do here
(& we're **restructuring** now to improve this) . . .

one thing we've **always tried** to do with our **small groups**

is to **make them** a **RALLYING POINT** -
a place where **people** can run when **trouble** shows up

If you're in a **Discipleship group** today Please,
begin to **build relationships** in that group

that can be a **Rallying Point** for each person in the group

Because we **need a place** to run for **strength & encouragement**

when the **chips are down**, the **enemy's at the door**,
& the **discouragement** is creeping in

There are **NO SOLO MISSIONS** in the Christian Life

We've got to **HAVE** a **rallying point** when things get tuff,
& we need to **BE** a **rallying point** for those around us

Make sure you have a **rallying point**
a **place to go** when things get tuff

And – as Nehemiah says
when you rush to that **Rallying Point**
THEN our **God** will **fight** for us

we **NEED each other** – to stand together
& to **see the Victory** of the Lord in our lives

Now – as we WRAP UP today
Nehemiah throws in **3 closing encouragements**

to HELP US Deal with Discouragement

To successfully Deal with Discouragement we need:

- 1) HARD WORK
- 2) to CIRCLE the WAGONS
- 3) 24/7 DETERMINATION

Let's look at these last three truths one at a time in the last 3 vs's

#1) Overcoming Discouragement takes HARD WORK

Neh 4:21 - NLT

21 We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. And half the men were always on guard.

You CAN'T build a Testimony for God

by coming to church 90 minutes a week

You can't follow Jesus in just 90 minutes a week

When God calls you to build a Wall of Testimony in your life

it's going to require starting EARLY, and finishing LATE

Sunrise to Sunset - & you'll have to be always on your Guard

No significant testimony is built for God in a MicroWave

It takes consistent building, over time

#2) Overcoming Discouragement requires CIRCLING the WAGONS

Neh 4:22 - NLT

22 I also told everyone living outside the walls to stay in Jerusalem. That way they and their servants could help with guard duty at night and work during the day.

Nehemiah says to the people of God;

Hey, if your **part** of what **God's** doing here
then *throw your hat* **ALL IN**

Don't live out there **on the edge** of the work of God

If you **want to be part** of **the Wall** God's building
then man, **MOVE IN** ! – **Come into Jerusalem** & stay awhile

that way you can help **PROTECT** God's people at night
& help them **BUILD** during the day

& Remember - Wall building is not a spectator sport

Every person has a job of BUILDING AND PROTECTING
the Wall of Testimony being built

#1) Hard Work - - #2) Circle the Wagons

#3) Overcoming Discouragement takes 24/7 Determination

Neh 4:23 - NLT

23 During this time, none of us—not I, nor my relatives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me—ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us at all times, even when we went for water.

During this entire time NO ONE around Nehemiah
EVER took off their clothes or laid down their weapon
EVEN when they went for water

One of the things they REALLY taught my son
in Marine Training was

NEVER let your Guard Down
& NEVER NEVER, NEVER leave your weapon – NEVER

If a Marine's weapon ever gets further than arm's reach away -
that Marine gets very, very sorry

WHY? Because they want that Marine to STAY ALIVE

& So they condition them to ALWAYS be “At the READY”
ALWAYS Alert for the Enemy
& ALWAYS within arm's reach of their weapon

& I promise you – **That** is the **same way** a **testimony** is built in the **life of a Christian**

We must be: **ALWAYS** at the **Ready**

ALWAYS **Alert** for the Enemy

ALWAYS close to our **Weapon** (Sword of the Spirit)

So - In *Dealing with Discouragement*

We've seen **FOUR RESPONSES** - & **THREE ENCOURAGEMENTS**

Nehemiah: 1) **REINFORCED** the **FAMILY**

2) **REFOCUSED** the people on the **LORD**

3) **RETURNED** to the **Work** – *Building & Protecting*

4) Formed a **RALLYING POINT**

In addition we see THREE Encouragements;

HARD WORK

CIRCLING the WAGONS

24/7 DETERMINATION

THAT – is how Nehemiah **Dealt with Discouragement**

& **I pray** that **helps you** deal with yours

I Wonder - **WHAT** is the **Wall of Testimony**

God is calling you to **build in your life?**

Is it your Personal Testimony,

Marriage/Family Testimony,

Ministry Testimony . . . ?

AND . . . **Are you actively working,** at **building** that Testimony?

Do you have your mind set on the **Greatness** of God
& on the **Importance** of what He's called you to?

Or . . . has the enemy **Successfully Sown Discouragement**
so much into your life

that you're **just staring** at a **half built** wall,
thinking you can't go on

thinking **there's no way** you'll ever be **able to finish**
the work God has called you to?

Please guys – Let's Learn from Nehemiah – LET'S:

- 1) **REINFORCE** the **FAMILY** - & *plug the holes in the wall*
- 2) **REFOCUS** on the *Greatness of our God*
- 3) **RETURN** to the **Work – of Building & Protecting**
- 4) Form a **RALLYING POINT** to be *strengthened & encouraged*

Let's **conquer the enemy's schemes** to get us **discouraged**
& let's **Build a Testimony** for God in our lives – *Amen ?*

Let's Pray