

# REBUILD

## NEHEMIAH

### NEHEMIAH, PART 5: OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

Anytime we start to follow God and His purpose, you will be met by criticism and discouragement. When that happens, the best thing for us to do is to pray, remember, and revise the plan—knowing that God planted this purpose in us.

BIG IDEA: Prayer prepares and positions me to respond appropriately to my critics.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*\* Remember the goal is to use the questions to generate discussion, not to complete every one.*

1. Think of a time you felt like giving up on a project. What motivated you to stick with it?
2. When your ideas is criticized, what is your normal response? Where do you channel your emotion?
3. People will always criticize when we try to follow God's plan and will. *With your Bible or Bible App, read [Nehemiah 4:1-3](#).*

*<sup>1</sup> Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews. <sup>2</sup> He ridiculed the Jews and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria. He said, what are these feeble Jews doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?" <sup>3</sup> Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, "That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!"*

[Nehemiah 4:1-3 \(NLT\)](#)

4. According to verse 1, why were the Jews' enemies upset?
5. How did Sanballat and Tobiah initially try to discourage the people's rebuilding efforts?
6. *With your Bible or Bible App, read [Nehemiah 4:4-9](#).*

*<sup>4</sup> Then I prayed, "Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads." "May they themselves become captives in a foreign land! <sup>5</sup> Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders." <sup>6</sup> At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm. <sup>7</sup> But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious. <sup>8</sup> They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion. <sup>9</sup> But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.*

[Nehemiah 4:4-9 \(NLT\)](#)

7. How did Nehemiah respond to their ridicule (see verses 4-5)?
8. How did the people work according to verse 6? What was the current status of the wall?
9. After the Jews' enemies saw their verbal threats didn't discourage them, what new measures did they decide?
10. How did Nehemiah respond when their enemies banded together to fight them (see verse 9)? What was his two-fold response? What did he post day and night?
11. When it comes to opposition, it appears that a good defense is often the best offense. We are to be on guard, and the Bible has a lot to say about being on guard and what things we should guard. Read the

verses below and write what we are to guard.

1 Timothy 6:20

Proverbs 4:23

Proverbs 4:13

Luke 12:1

12. When confronted with criticism, Nehemiah first **prayed**. The next response was that He **remembered** God. With your Bible or Bible App, read [Nehemiah 4:10-14](#).

*<sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, "Before they know what's happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work." <sup>12</sup> The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, "They will come from all directions and attack us!" <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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!"*

[Nehemiah 4:10-14 \(NLT\)](#)

13. What internal problems did Nehemiah face in building the wall (see verse 10)?  
14. Put Nehemiah's quote found in verse 14 in your own words. What stands out to you?  
15. Nehemiah **revised his original plan**. With your Bible or Bible App, read [Nehemiah 4:16-18](#).

*<sup>16</sup> But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah <sup>17</sup> who were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. <sup>18</sup> All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.*

[Nehemiah 4:16-18 \(NLT\)](#)

16. How did Nehemiah revise the original plan?  
17. Chris said, "Don't confuse your plans with God's purpose." Do you need to revise your plans in light of these criticisms? If so, how?

## MOVING FORWARD

Discouragement is one of Satan's most common methods for hindering God's work. When our morale is low, we're vulnerable and God's work will inevitably be hindered. For years, this was a problem in Jerusalem. The people of God were depressed, discouraged, and demoralized. But once they regained a proper spiritual perspective, they rose above their negative circumstances and accomplished a task that seemed impossible. We need to respond to criticism just like Nehemiah responded: with prayer, remembrance, and if necessary, a revision of the plan.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*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!"*

*Nehemiah 4:14 (NLT)*