

“Dealing With Distractions (Nehemiah, Part 6)”

Text: Nehemiah 6:1-19

One thing that clearly emerges from our study in the Book of Nehemiah is that life is a battle from beginning to end. Satan uses many tactics, including fear and flattery, assuring us that what he proposes will cost us nothing. His aim is to distract and destroy us. We must be on guard against whatever approach the enemy takes. Nehemiah’s enemies changed tactics and pretended to be his friends. But Nehemiah sensed danger and never gave in to their repeated pressure. Sometimes distractions come disguised as harmless options or even good things. One of the most helpful things that we can do to resist temptation is to remember that God has called each of us to a great task. If we don’t practice some *planned neglect* of other things, even good things, we’ll be distracted from God’s best. When Nehemiah’s enemies could not accomplish their purposes by deceit and trickery they switched back to their original scheme of sinister threats. They spread lies and made false accusations against Nehemiah. Nehemiah responded by denying the rumor, praying to God for strength, and then he went back to work (6:8-9).

Nehemiah’s enemies changed tactics, yet again—a *secret informer* claimed to have hidden knowledge. But Nehemiah sensed that something was wrong; he realized that a prophet from the Lord would never say something that was contrary to God’s commands. Having the right priorities gave Nehemiah the courage to do what was right. It’s not just a matter of saying *no* to distractions – we have to first say *yes* to the right things so that our priorities match up with God’s plan. Don’t let anyone or anything distract or sidetrack you from God’s priorities. Nehemiah met the enemy’s attacks by going to prayer (see 6:14). When God is at work even His enemies will have to admit that this is the Lord’s doing!

Know this: the devil never quits. He is never going to give up while we are still alive. God has wonderful blessings and much encouragement and joy for us along the way, but we must never cease battling against the world, the flesh and the devil until we get to heaven. If the enemy can’t get you one way he’ll try another, and another. So don’t be unaware of his devices, and never quit, because in the end we win!

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Heed the warnings of the Holy Spirit.
2. Never allow the enemy to weaken your defenses or wear you down.
3. Often lift this great prayer to the Lord: *Oh God strengthen my hands!*
4. Practice saying *yes* to God’s priorities. The best way to not be distracted is to be attracted to those things that are near to the heart of God.
5. Say *no* to the devil’s distractions. With the Holy Spirit’s help decide how you can begin to say *no* to those things that are derailing you.