Harvester Christian Church

Life Groups | **PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**

NEHEMIAH | RETURN, RESTORE, REVIVE

**WEEK 3 – Chapter 4**

Last week we got the first clues that Nehemiah’s efforts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem were going to face some opposition. A group of men, including Sanballat and Tobiah, ridiculed the workers and questioned their motives (2:19). We are going to see this week in chapter four and later in chapter six that ridicule was only the beginning and Nehemiah’s workforce would face serious and dangerous threats as they carried out the Lord’s work in Jerusalem. There are some things we can learn from how Nehemiah and his builders handled the escalating opposition to their project.

**Read Nehemiah 4**

**Nehemiah Faces Opposition**

When Nehemiah determined to rebuild the walls of the city, he might have thought the physical labor would be the most difficult part. He quickly learned that there were those who would fight him every step of the way. Answer the following questions about this opposition.

The Taunting (4:1-3)

* What word did Sanballat use to describe the Jews? (vs 2)
* How was the quality of their work described by Tobiah? (vs 3)
* Nehemiah’s crew would later accomplish exactly what the mockers implied they could not.
  + What was accomplished in 6:15?
  + What about in 12:43?

How does the opposition intensify in 4:7-8?

Summarize the further intensification in 4:11.

**Nehemiah’s Response**

It is interesting, and in some ways instructive, to see how Nehemiah responded to the opposition.

What was his first response in 4:4-5 and again in 4:9?

Next, Nehemiah and his crew kept working. How is their work ethic described in 4:6?

Nehemiah encouraged his men. Summarize these encouragements from 4:14 and 4:20.

Lastly, he prepared his men to defend themselves. Summarize the actions they took in 4:13-23.

**Prayer in Nehemiah**

Prayer is a major focus in the book of Nehemiah. Try going to BibleGateway.com and do a quick search of the word “pray” and zero in on how it appears in Nehemiah. In the passages below, how would describe the type of prayers that are being offered?

1:4

1:5-7

4:4-5

6:9-10

9:5-6

**Weekly Challenge**

Pray first. Nehemiah sets an excellent example for us in his habit of turning to God first before making a move or a big decision. Have you prayed about the project you are tackling this week? Have you prayed for God’s guidance and wisdom? What about in regard to any difficult situation or opposition you are facing? Pray before you react or respond. Pray before you make your next move.

**Group Discussion**

Was there anything from the teaching time or homework that you’d like to talk more about?

Opposition from enemies made Nehemiah’s work more difficult. Describe a time when a project you undertook turned out to be more than you bargained for (more difficult, more costly, more time consuming).

Nehemiah, with God’s help, seemed to brush off the trash talk of his enemies. Why do you think mockery and ridicule can be so hurtful to most of us?

Nehemiah’s first response when verbally attacked was to pray. Please share about a situation in your life where you would benefit from praying before responding.

In Nehemiah, the attacks on God’s people seemed to bring them closer together as a community of people who depended on one another. How have you seen hardship affect groups you’ve been part of?