

Catalyst Home Group

Discussion Questions :: 02/07-11,2010

Nehemiah 4

The Sword & The Trowel

Critics, opposition, spiritual warfare, and ridicule: the unavoidable obstacles in leadership. In chapter 4, Nehemiah's opposition has grown from verbal attacks to physical attacks as the people literally defend their work on the wall. With a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, the people under Nehemiah's leadership teaches us how to build and defend. How to deal with critics and continue the mission God has laid before us. How to push and pray through spiritual warfare.

As you examine the work God has called you to, it's important to be ready for attack. For opposition will always accompany work for the Kingdom of God. This week, we look at how Nehemiah teaches us the importance of working, ministering, and leading through opposition.

Discussion Questions:

[1] What questions do you have from Sunday's sermon? What stood out to you? What confused you?

[2] What was a mean name you were called as a kid? How did it make you feel? How did you respond?

[3] As an adult, describe a time when you dealt with significant criticism or opposition to something you felt God was leading you in.

[4] **Read Nehemiah chapter 4.** Why do you think Sanballat was so opposed to Nehemiah's efforts?

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Discussion Questions Continued...

[5] To whom does Nehemiah turn in face of opposition? (v. 4) Why is this so important?

[6] Why do you think that whenever someone wants to do something great for God and His Kingdom, the opposition seems the greatest? What does this tell us about how we should respond?

[7] Physical or verbal opposition is one thing. Spiritual warfare is another...although sometimes they are very connected. Have you ever experienced spiritual warfare? How did you know it was spiritual? What did you do to combat it?

Note: In his preface to "The Screwtape Letters", CS Lewis writes that the mistake that many make in regards to spiritual warfare is that we either give too much credit to The Enemy, and therefore focus and attribute too much to him or we ignore the spiritual realm and can't see what's really going on. There has to be a healthy balance.

[8] **Now Read Ephesians 6:10-18.** How do you put on the armor of God in your life? What role does the sword (the Bible) play in this?

[9] The next threat comes from within (v. 14) How does Nehemiah encourage the people to carry on? Why do you think the people were losing heart and afraid?

[10] Is there something set before you right now that seems too big, there are too many obstacles, or there is too much opposition that you feel you can't handle? What is it? What can be your sword and trowel through this?