

Life Group Homework

For the week of February 11, 2018

MY STORY

- 1) What was your takeaway from last week's study?
- 2) This past week did you have an opportunity to pause and pray before you gave a response, how did it go?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, what caught your attention?

DIGGING DEEPER

Let's take a quick look back at the story. Nehemiah has gotten the Kings blessing and received supplies and put a team together. He surveyed the problem then made a plan to rebuild, and the work was under way. This is where we pick up the story in Chapter 4. Nehemiah and the people are now facing opposition.

Nehemiah 4:1-6

¹Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, ²saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers, "What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they're 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?"

³Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, "That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!"

⁴Then I prayed, "Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land!" ⁵Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders."

⁶At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

- 4) What was Sanballat's response to the Jews rebuilding the wall?
- 5) Have you ever had an experience when you were stepping into something God was calling you to do and faced ridicule, or you were made fun of?
- 6) Who were Sanballat and Tobiah really mocking?
- 7) What was Nehemiah's response?

Here is a note from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*

How should a Christian interpret this kind of praying, especially in view of what Jesus Christ said about praying for one's enemies? (Matt. 5:44; cf. Rom.

12:14, 20) Several facts need to be noted. First, in opposing the Jews, Sanballat "and company" were actually opposing God. Second, God had already pronounced judgment on Israel's enemies. Nehemiah was praying according to God's will—that God would deliver Jerusalem from her enemies (Josh. 1:5). Third, Nehemiah was praying that God would bring about what He had promised Abraham regarding those who curse His people (Gen. 12:3). Fourth, vengeance belongs to God, not to Nehemiah or other believers (cf. Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19).

- 8) Once Nehemiah prayed what happened next?
- 9) Nehemiah prays and they go back to work, what do we learn from his example?

TAKING IT HOME

Nehemiah 6:1-9

Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates. ²So Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at one of the villages in the plain of Ono.

But I realized they were plotting to harm me, ³so I replied by sending this message to them: "I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?"

⁴Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the same reply. ⁵The fifth time, Sanballat's servant came with an open letter in his hand, ⁶and this is what it said:

"There is a rumor among the surrounding nations, and Geshem tells me it is true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that is why you are building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king. ⁷He also reports that you have appointed prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim about you, 'Look! There is a king in Judah!' "You can be very sure that this report will get back to the king, so I suggest that you come and talk it over with me."

⁸I replied, "There is no truth in any part of your story. You are making up the whole thing⁹

⁹They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could discourage us and stop the work. So, I continued the work with even greater determination.

- 10) They have finished building the wall and Sanballat and crew send Nehemiah a message, how does Nehemiah respond?
- 11) What can we learn and apply from his example?
- 12) Opposition from Sanballat did not stop just because the work of building the wall was completed. What was the second tactic that Sanballat tried?
- 13) What is Nehemiah's response to the Lies, and what does he do next?
- 14) What is determination? How would you define it?
- 15) How can you and I find determination in our lives to fulfill the call of God?

In Celebrate Recovery they use a phrase "One Day at a Time." This is more than just some cliché. It helps people remember that today is the day they need to focus on. Tomorrow isn't promised and no one owns a time machine to go back and correct yesterday's mistakes. The truth is we only have today and we need to stay present with our faith. When we are not fixated on worry about the future and not dwelling on failures we have surrendered from the past, we find freedom and encouragement in the presence of Christ. Personally, no other thought has helped me more than to be fully engaged with Jesus in the moment because I only have to walk today with him. When tomorrow comes, it becomes today and I start afresh.

CHAIR TIME TOOL

Read Nehemiah chapters 3-6 and think about the following questions:

- 16) How did Nehemiah stay encouraged?
- 17) How can you learn from his example?
- 18) Who can you encourage this week to stay the course?

FAMILY RESOURCES

- 19) When you begin a great work in your parenting, you will likely come up against opposition from your kids, family members who do not share your values and even your friends. Share about a time when you received opposition for making a decision in the best interests of your children. What did you learn?
- 20) What steps did you take to stay encouraged?
- 21) After reading the passage from Nehemiah, what would you do differently?
- 22) It's tough to be a kid these days and your children may experience opposition from their peers, secular teachers and the world when they make decisions that honor Christ. What are some ways that you can come along side your kids and encourage them to make wise choices?

Read Nehemiah 6:1-9 with your kids and then discuss the following questions as a family:

- 23) Why did Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem ask to meet with Nehemiah?
- 24) Why did he accuse Nehemiah of wanting to be a king?
- 25) What do you notice about Nehemiah's response?
- 26) When you feel intimidated, what steps can you take to stay the course?



TO THE POSSIBILITIES

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WK 1 - Vision creates HUNGER. Vision is God's heart for me.

WK 2 - Positioning myself to live God's vision.

Read: Nehemiah 2:11-12, 16-18

Proverbs 16:3 "Commit (surrender) your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed."

Proverbs 16:9 "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps."

Theme: How **GREAT** is God's vision/heart for me?

Key Verse: Nehemiah 6:3

"I replied by sending this message to them: "I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?"

Make a plan... but only as far as you can see it.

Write it down.

- After sitting with God over a period of days and maybe a couple weeks.
- Make **PLANS** not BLUEPRINTS!

Share it with others.

Make room in your schedule.

- What am I giving up? (*Something is filling all this space already*).
- What/who will I say "YES" to?
- What/who will I say "NO" to?

Make room in your heart, mind, soul and strength.

- **Engaging** the power of the Holy Spirit.

CHALLENGE:

Make your plan. Share it with 1-3 people.

"What are you saying YES/NO to?" Find Pastor Craig on Instagram @SweeneyCraig. He might share your response with first name only.