

Life Group Homework

For the week of March 4, 2018

MY STORY

- 1) What was your takeaway from last week's study?
- 2) What did you learn about guarding the work?

QUICK REVIEW

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

DIGGING DEEPER

Nehemiah 4:1-11 (NLT)

¹ Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, ² saying 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?"

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

⁴ Then 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!" ⁵ Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders."

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

⁷ 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. ⁸ They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion. ⁹ But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, "Before they know what's happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work."

- 4) How many times could the Israelites have experienced discouragement from the above passage?
- 5) What are the things in your life that discourage you the most?
- 6) What do you do to overcome discouragement?

Below are some ways I battle discouragement:

- I put on some worship music and I worship.
- I pray, surrender my worries and do what's next—maybe that's laundry or paying bills.

- Many times, I feel discouraged and it's because I have neglected my Chair Time, so I do my Chair Time.
- I check my self-talk. Am I being overly negative or hard on myself and not trusting God's forgiveness?
- I open up to a friend, talk about it and ask for prayer.
- I check my schedule and ask myself if I am too busy.
- I do things that I know recharge my batteries.

TAKING IT HOME

One of the goals of this study is to help us recognize how we can build up others around us. The book of James teaches us some great principles on how to do this.

James 3:1-12 (NLT)

Controlling the Tongue

Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. ² Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

³ *We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth.*

⁴ *And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. ⁵ In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.*

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. ⁶ And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.

⁷ *People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, ⁸ but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. ¹⁰ And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! ¹¹ Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? ¹² Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.*

- 7) What comparisons does James make about our tongues (our words)?
- 8) Why are our words so powerful? What does the passage say about this thought?
- 9) James teaches us how evil our words can be, but the opposite is true as well. In what ways can our word be a blessing to others? Share some practical examples.
- 10) In what ways does our internal self-talk impact our level of encouragement or discouragement?

11) Share an experience you have had when someone has encouraged you and it has made a significant difference.

12) What do guarding the work and guarding our words have in common?

CHAIR TIME TOOL

Read James Chapter 3 and meditate on the following thoughts.

13) In what ways do you need to have Jesus tame your tongue?

14) Who can you be intentional about encouraging this week?

15) Is there some discouraging lie you have believed that you need to let go of for God to help you move forward?

16) Where do you need to guard the work with your words?

FAMILY RESOURCES

Read James 3:1-12 with your kids and then answer the following questions as a family:

17) What does James compare our tongue to?

18) What do those comparisons say about the power of our words? (If your children seem scared or concerned that they will not be able to control their tongue, remind them of Matthew 19:26. Encourage them to look up Scriptures on self-control and to ask God in prayer to help them use their words to build others up, not tear them down.)

19) We have all been hurt by the careless words of others. Share about a time when you have been. What did the person say? How did you feel?

20) When have you been careless with your words?

21) How can you use your words this week to encourage others?

Share prayer requests and end your time in prayer. Commit to praying for each other this week.



TO THE POSSIBILITIES
March 4, 2018 | PASTOR Craig Sweeney

Challenge: Find encouragement everyday!

Read: Nehemiah 4:1-14

Gathering strength/momentum to overcome discouragement:

What does God want? (*Nehemiah 4:4, 9*)

Who else matters?

Remind yourself of the VALUE of the GREAT WORK!

- God determines the value.
- We value what we HONOR!
 "They hung the doors and dedicated them..." (Nehemiah 3)
 They built small portions of the wall and "*dedicated the work to God.*"
- Others often won't recognize the value God places on your VISION...you better know!

ANCHOR tighter to CHRIST.

Encouragement is a GIFT

- We receive
 From God
 From Others
- We give

CHALLENGE:

WHO encourages you? Tell them thank you!

WHO can you intentionally reach out to encourage?

"HOW do you remind yourself of the GREAT WORK?" **Find Pastor Craig Sweeney on Instagram @SweeneyCraig.** He might share your response first name only.