



DISCUSSION GUIDE

NEHEMIAH 4 – Fighting Opposition

GETTING STARTED

Has there been a time where either you, or someone else got upset when they saw others succeed? Describe what happened... How or why can success, change or even potential success play on our fears?

QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?
What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

“Anytime God calls you to change, fix or re-build something that needs repair, you will face opposition.”

Take time to discuss and/or reflect on how you have seen this be true in your life, in a church, in your work, spiritual life or family?

If you could speak to your younger self, what would you tell him or her about facing opposition when you needed to change or fix something in your life that God was calling you to change?
How have you learned to do this well in your life, or is it still a struggle?

In Nehemiah 4, Dave said there were three things we are to expect when trying to change, fix, or re-build when things that are in disrepair. (Expect criticism, anger, and that God will ask you to become part of the solution).

1. Which of these are most difficult for you to face?
2. How does unfounded criticism (as opposed to constructive criticism) undermine your confidence and challenge your insecurities when it comes to fixing what needs fixing?
3. How is change, fixing what needs fixing in a church family difficult? What ought good leaders do for us?
4. Why are both prayer and planning essential for us when God calls us to repair what is broken?
5. What is surprising about Nehemiah's prayer?
6. What do Nehemiah's opponents hope to accomplish with their criticism, threats and anger?
7. What does Nehemiah do to call the people to focus on what is most important? What can we learn from this?
8. How do complaints, anger from others throw you off track on God's mission and purposes? What can you do to stay focused on what God is calling you and His church to do?
9. In what way is confusion the enemy of doing what God calls all of us to?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Nehemiah 1:1-11]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however, good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.) Work through this quickly, the answers are fairly obvious.

Why did Sanballat become angry with the Jews? (4:1)

How did Sanballat treat the Jews? (4:1-2)

What did Sanballat and Tobiah do to discourage the Jews from rebuilding the city walls? (4:1-3)

What role did Nehemiah play in these events? (4:1-23)

How did Nehemiah respond to the taunts of his enemies? (4:4-5)

According to Nehemiah, why were the Jews so successful in their work? (4:6)

In what specific ways did Nehemiah and the Israelites show commitment to this project? (4:6-23)

What did Israel's enemies do when they heard of Israel's success in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls? (4:7-8)

How did Nehemiah and the Jews respond to the evil plotting of their enemies? (4:9)

What did Nehemiah do to encourage the Israelites and protect them from their enemies? (4:10-14)

How did Nehemiah describe the people of Israel in his prayer? (1:10)

What specific request did Nehemiah ask God to grant him? (1:11)

How were the Jews able to return to their work of rebuilding the city walls? (4:15)

Who frustrated the plotting of Israel's enemies? (4:15)

What sacrifices did the people have to make because of the threats of their enemies? (4:16-18)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

What do you admire about the Israelites in this incident?

To what area of life today do Nehemiah's words speak?

What kinds of events, opposition, or setbacks most discourage you?

How does God want us to deal with discouragement?

How should we respond to negative events or criticism from others?

When have you ever felt opposition from other people when you have done what you thought was right?

What practical steps could you take the next time you feel opposition from others for doing what is right?

To what do you need to renew, rebuild, change your commitment and priorities?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

What do you need to stop, start or do differently as a result of reading this passage?

How can we pray for each other?