Leadership Lessons from Nehemiah

Lesson 6: Overcome the Sanballatsin Life
Nehemiah Chapter 6, the Value of Focus

Prepare for Chapter 6: In Nehemiah 6, we see the value of focus and completion. Nehemiah 6:15 says, “The wall was finished in the 25th day of the month in 52 days.” Values keep us on track during the process of fulfilling His purpose. It takes time. It doesn't happen overnight. But when you keep walking with God, good things happen.

I. Don’t get distracted.

Nehemiah 6:1–4 *Now it came to pass when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) [2] That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. [3] And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? [4] Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.*

A. Nehemiah had lots of enemies who tried to distract him.

B. He did not stop to meet with his enemies.

    1. Don’t be pulled away from the work.

C. Nehemiah understood the value of the work he was doing and refused to stop.

D. The enemies tried four times to distract him and stop the work.

II. Don’t listen to the enemies’ lies.

Nehemiah 6:5–9 *Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; [6] Wherein was written,*

> *It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. [7] And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.*

[8] Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. [9] For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands

shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

A. The enemies spread false accusations against Nehemiah.

   1. False accusations have nothing to do with the truth, but are a sign of the times we live in.

      2 Timothy 3:1–5 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. [2] For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, [4] Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; [5] Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

   2. The devil is called the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10).

   3. Don’t let the devil use your imagination to think of things that are not true.

      Proverbs 6:16–18 These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: [17] A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, [18] An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief.

B. Do not have a meeting with your enemy! Call it what it is—false imaginations.

C. The enemy’s tactic is to get you into fear to paralyze and keep you out of what God has for you.

III. Don’t hide in a hole. Keep moving forward in the plan and purpose of God.

Nehemiah 6:10–14 *Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.*

[11] And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. [12] And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. [13] Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

[14] My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

A. The enemies called a meeting in a spiritual place, but it was a tactic to get Nehemiah to retreat.

1. Don't retreat—advance!

1 Peter 5:8–10 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: [9] Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. [10] But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

2. God delivers us from affliction. God delivers us from the lies of the enemy.

2 Timothy 3:10–17 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,
[11] Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.
[12] Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
[13] But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.
[14] But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;
[15] And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
[16] All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
[17] That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

B. Nehemiah kept doing what God told him to do and lived by faith.

C. Nehemiah discerned that the enemies' true objective was to instill fear and misdirection that would lead to sin.

1. Make faith-based decisions, not fear-based decisions.

Romans 14:23 *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

2. Keep living by faith and make faith your lifestyle.

IV. Finish the job and don't quit until you are done.

Nehemiah 6:15–19 *So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. [16] And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard*

thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

[17] Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. [18] For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. [19] Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

A. There is the value of completion. The wall was finished in 52 days.

    1. Many people get close, but don't finish. Do something positive!

B. When he completed the work, Nehemiah's enemies were ashamed.

C. There was a false influence through Tobiah, a family member gone bad. The devil doesn't care how he stops the work or who he uses. He uses whatever or whoever he can to stop God's work.

D. Nehemiah knew the value of completion. He did not quit!

John 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.*

2 Timothy 4:7–8 *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Conclusion: Do not quit, and you will win!

Go Deeper

The enemy's tactic is to get you into fear to paralyze and keep you out of what God has for you. In 2 Timothy 1:7, we are given the antidote to fear: *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."*

- What is trying to get you into fear?
- What does the Holy Spirit show you about the source of the fear?
- What does God say that builds faith in you?

Nehemiah knew the evil around him, but focused on his faith in God and his purpose. Victory is not found by understanding the evil of the world. Victory is found by knowing the truth of God's Word and what God says about you.

- What scriptures show you what God says about you? Make a list and declare them over yourself when you are tempted to fear, get distracted, or quit.

Declaration: I will not quit. I will not get distracted. I will complete the purpose God has for my life.