

#7 "The Critic's Corner"

Ready, Pray....Action!

A Study of the book of Nehemiah

Eastside Christian Fellowship: September 29, 2007

Text: Nehemiah 4:1-23

What are reasons that some people rise up against, oppose and criticize others?

Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, Tobias and the others are back. Sanballat was not a believer. Historically, there is good evidence that Tobias believed in God however he seemed to profess God at his convenience.

- ✍ What do you know about Samaria and the Samaritans? How was this conflict seen in Jesus' time?

Sanballat and his buddies really got the discouragement going when they did 3 things. These 3 things can kill momentum in its tracks.

1. Ridicule (4:1-4)
2. Resistance (4:7-8)
3. Rumor (4:11,12)

- ✍ Read through these verses in your group and discuss how these 3 things were used to discourage the builders.

- ✍ Have you faced a time when one or all of these were used in opposition to something you were doing? How did you handle it?

- ✍ What did Paul say in 2 Tim 3:10-15 about being a Christian and the consequences of such?

Remember that criticism typically comes when there is movement, action or change taking place. Being complacent and doing nothing are your safest bets if you don't want to encounter any opposition. The problem comes when we realize we have not been called by Jesus to be complacent and inactive.

- ✍ Relate this to the growth of the Kingdom of God.

- ✍ When did Sanballat and his crew really start bringing on the opposition?
- ✍ What was the mental and physical condition of the wall builders in 4:10? How does this go hand in hand with discouragement?

If we follow the advice of Nehemiah, what do you do when someone is plotting to or is attacking you? Discuss these and their applicable verses in your group.

1. Pray. (vs. 4, 9) First thing Nehemiah did was pray and then he put a plan in place.

2. Prepare. (vs. 9, 13) Stand guard. You don't cower and pretend like nothing is happening. Organize yourself and others so that you are ready for any opposition.

3. _____ the Lord and what you are standing for. (vs. 14)

Nehemiah is drawing a line in the sand. Recognize God's awesome power to help us. *"Don't be afraid of them."* Focusing on God's purpose for our lives helps us overcome fatigue and discouragement.

4. Watch for God's _____ (vs. 15)

- ✍ Recall a time when you have clearly seen God's direct intervention in your life when you were being opposed or criticized wrongly.

5. _____ alongside of and for each other. (vs. 16-18)

- ✍ Talk about in your group how Nehemiah organized the people?
- ✍ What are the nuggets of wisdom found in the way he did so?
- ✍ How does Ephesians 6:10-16 confirm how we should view opposition and how does that affirm what Nehemiah is saying?
- ✍ What does Eph 6:12 say about our battle?

6. Make a _____ in case you're attacked. (vs. 20)

7. Always be on the ready. (vs. 22-23) Don't let your guard down.

8. _____ doesn't come without _____.

Realize early on that there will be a price to pay

- ✍ Has there been pain in the progress of... (*explain*)
 - ...Your relationship with Jesus?
 - ...Leading your family in a Godly manner?
 - ...Building a stronger marriage?
 - ...Getting your finances in order?

Who are the distracters in your life that you need to let go of and focus your energy elsewhere?