

CHIEF MINISTRIES

February 2023

Greetings in the name of the Lord,

This month I want to continue with Nehemiah and the hinderances he experienced when building the wall. Last month we spoke about ridicule, that hinderance comes from others, this month, I want to look at a hinderance that comes from within, discouragement. It is important to understand even this is an effective tactic of the enemy in thwarting the plan of God in our lives. If he (satan) cannot use others to stop us, he will, yes, try to use ourselves. According to Webster, discouragement means; a loss of confidence or enthusiasm; dispiritedness. Psalm 25:16 says; *“Come, Lord, and show me your mercy, for I am helpless, overwhelmed, in deep distress.”* (TLB).

Even mighty men of the Bible became discouraged, so the enemy will continue to use the same tactics in our lives. Again, that too becomes a choice. So, why do we get discouraged?

Discouragement usually sets in at the midpoint of almost anything you do? It’s true in parenting, marriage, school, in your career, even your prison term. But God has called you to finish the race he has prepared for you—and to finish it well.

When God put it on Nehemiah’s heart to rebuild Jerusalem after the Israelites’ returned from captivity, they began the work of rebuilding the city’s walls. But when *“the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city”* (Nehemiah 4:6 NLT), the people became discouraged.

The story of Nehemiah describes four common reasons people get discouraged.

The first cause of discouragement is fatigue. Nehemiah 4:10 says, *“Then the people of Judah began to complain, ‘The workers are getting tired’”* (NLT). Rebuilding anything, of course, is exhausting. They had worked hard on the first half of the project, but they soon grew weary and worn down. They were more vulnerable to attacks from their enemies, physically and spiritually.

Nehemiah’s workers offer an important lesson for you today: Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is go to bed. Why? Because discouragement is often the result of being tired. Circumstances always look better after you’ve had a good night’s sleep. When you’ve had plenty of rest, you’re less vulnerable to self-pity, temptation, and attack from others.

The second cause of discouragement is frustration. Not only were the Israelites fatigued; they were frustrated: *“There is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves”* (Nehemiah 4:10 NLT). The project was more complex than they thought it was going to be. The ruin and rubble of their destroyed city was almost too much to handle.

Do you have rubble in your life? It’s whatever you keep tripping over. It’s not just physical rubble. It could be emotional, relational, or financial rubble. Or maybe it’s rubble from making bad decisions. The thing about rubble is you will always have it in your life. You live on a broken planet, so there’s no way avoid it. But you can learn how to manage rubble to minimize frustration. How do you do that? By

continually cleaning it out of your life. You can start by praying Psalm 25:16: *“Come, Lord, and show me your mercy, for I am helpless, overwhelmed, in deep distress”* (TLB).

God doesn't want you to get discouraged and quit at the halfway point of life. He wants you to make it to the finish line. He's called you to look up, not give up.

Psalm 142:3 says, *“When I am ready to give up, he knows what I should do”* (GNT). As we continue reading through Nehemiah 4, we find two more.

The third cause of discouragement is failure. When the Israelites got to the halfway point in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, they wondered if they were going to succeed: *“Will we ever finish this wall?”* (Nehemiah 4:10 CEV). It was taking longer than expected, and they felt defeated and discouraged.

The truth is nobody succeeds at first. The only way you succeed in life is by failing and learning what doesn't work. Failure is the steppingstone to success. The difference between successful and unsuccessful people is this: Successful people see failure as a temporary setback. Unsuccessful people see it as a mark on their character. Proverbs 24:16 says, *“The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again”* (NLT).

The fourth cause of discouragement is fear. Not only did Israel's enemies ridicule the rebuilding efforts, but they also made threats: *“Before they know what's happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work”* (Nehemiah 4:11 NLT). Hearing your enemies talk like that is legitimate reason to be discouraged!

The next verse says, *“The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, ‘They will come from all directions and attack us!’”* (Nehemiah 4:12 NLT) Those who lived closest to the enemy were most fearful. Why? Because they were constantly surrounded by extreme negativity.

If fear is discouraging you right now, surround yourself with good things and positive voices. Don't pay attention to negative media. Turn it off, or you'll only become a more frightened, paranoid, and worried person.

What is discouraging you today? Fatigue, frustrations, failure, or fear? Whatever it is, give it to God and *“run with endurance the race God has set before [you]”* (Hebrews 12:1 NLT).

So now that we know what the cause of discouragement is, what do we do about it to build the character God is trying to establish and fulfill the plan He has for us? Let's look again at Nehemiah's example. In Nehemiah 4, you'll find three things you can do to resist discouragement.

Reinforce weak areas. Make an honest assessment of where you are most spiritually vulnerable. Are you most vulnerable to anger, lust, pride, or something else? What are your weak areas? This is a “BE HONEST” area. Take responsibility for who and what you are struggling with, I guarantee you are not the only one that struggles in that/those areas.

When Nehemiah heard that his enemies wanted to attack the Jews who were helping to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem, he *“stationed people behind the lowest sections of the wall, at the vulnerable areas. [He] stationed them by families with their swords, spears, and bows”* (Nehemiah 4:13 CSB). Nehemiah did his homework. He knew where the city's most vulnerable spots were, and he developed a plan.

Maybe an area in your life needs some reinforcement. To resist discouragement, you'll need to reorganize and reorder a few things. Are you in debt? Reorganize your budget. Are you out of shape? Reorder your

lifestyle. Maybe it is your priorities, are they in line with kingdom priorities or are they personal/me priorities? Are your relationships according to God's priorities? Is He your number one priority? If not, you are out of kingdom order. Don't give up in your weak areas. Instead, reinforce them.

Refocus on God. You can overcome discouragement when you stop focusing on what you don't want to happen and start focusing on God's promises. Sometimes you are as discouraged as you want to be or as happy as you want to be. Nobody is forcing you to be discouraged.

When Nehemiah became aware of the people's anxiety, he stood up and said, *"Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious"* (Nehemiah 4:14 NLT). He reminded them of God's goodness and power.

Don't replay discouraging images in your mind. Instead, choose to think about God. Jonah 2:7 says, *"When I had lost all hope, I turned my thoughts once more to the Lord"* (TLB).

Fight back. Did you know you are engaged in a spiritual battle? The Bible says, *"The devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him"* (1 Peter 5:8-9 ESV). You can't resist the enemy with passivity. You must fight for what you know God wants you to do with your life. Putting on the full armor of God (read Ephesians 6:10-18 or review past newsletters where it was discussed), taking back the ground the enemy has taken and receiving the promises given to you by God.

Nehemiah 4:14 continues, *"Fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!"* (NLT) And do you know what happened next? *"When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall"* (Nehemiah 4:15 NLT). God strengthened them to continue the work.

When you reinforce weak areas, refocus on God, and learn to fight back, you'll be better equipped to resist discouragement and bring God's plan in your life to fruition.

I want to leave you with this thought. "The brighter the light, the bigger the bugs!" What I mean by that is; The more you do for God the brighter your light will be and the more resistance, hinderances, and attention the enemy will give you. Why, because you are a greater threat to him and his kingdom. When you were serving satan, in the world, you didn't have these problems, why?, because satan already had you, once your accepted Jesus as your savior, He became your Master, and there are only two types of people in this world... Saved (those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their savior) and unsaved, those whose master is satan. So, whose Kingdom are you going to serve? For me and my household we will serve the Lord, regardless of what the enemy tries to do to stop it.

Don't give up, look up, and stay prayed up! WE WIN!!

Ms. Chief (aka Ms.G)

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Christ's Heart In Every Felon