

Slaying The Giant of Discouragement in Your Life

Enemies Try to Stop the Work:

The text describes a moment of discouragement among the people rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, where they start to doubt their ability to complete the project due to the overwhelming amount of debris and the perceived weakness of the laborers, but Nehemiah responds by encouraging them to remain focused on God's promise and not be deterred by the opposition or the seemingly insurmountable challenges they face; essentially emphasizing the importance of perseverance despite obstacles.

Nehemiah 4:10-14 - NIV

¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall."

¹¹ Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work."

¹² Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us."

¹³ Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. ¹⁴ After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "***Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.***"

- **Discouragement** – The people of Judah themselves express concern about the work, stating they were weary and too much to do.
- **Nehemiah** – Reminds them to trust in God and not be afraid of their enemies.
- ***Build with vigilance and prayer.***
- **Focus on the Goal** – Nehemiah emphasizes the importance of keeping their eyes on the goal of rebuilding the wall.
- **Not** getting sidetracked by ***the negativity around them.***

God expects his people to do whatever they can on their part as they fully look and rely on Him for protection.

It is by so doing that **God fights for them and overcomes their enemies.**

What exactly are the limits to human tolerance???

What are the units of measurement for pain and discouragement???

And how does your discouragement threshold differ from mine???

The dictionary defines discourage as “to deprive of courage, to deter, to dishearten, to hinder.”

All these D words and you can throw in doom, depression, defeat, and despair.

- The mind dwells on these **when life has us pinned down.**

The New Testament uses three Greek words to carry the ideal of being disheartened, dispirited, or discouraged.

We always translate them as “to faint” or “to grow weary.”

2 Cor. 4:1 -Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, ***we faint not;***

- **“This ministry”**: Refers to the task of preaching the Gospel.
- **“Do Not lose heart”**: Means don’t give up or become discouraged despite challenges.
- **We persevere** in our calling due to God’s grace upon us.

2 Cor. 4:16 For which cause ***we faint not;*** but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

- Our inner spiritual being is being renewed daily.
- Do not lose heart or become discouraged because –
- Our identity lies in our spiritual renewal not our physical appearance.
- It’s a message of HOPE amidst trials and suffering.
- Remain steadfast because our inner being is being renewed.

Ephes. 3:13 - Wherefore I desire that ***ye faint not*** at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

- Paul is asking the readers not to be discouraged by the hardships.
- He is facing these while imprisoned for preaching the Gospel.
- Paul’s hardships are seen as a badge of honor for the Ephesians,
- Demonstrating the truth and power of the gospel they are receiving.

It happened during the darkest days of Israel & Judah when the invaders rolled in.

The Babylonians destroyed the holy city of Jerusalem, ***looting its glories*** and ***carrying away its people*** to enslavement in a distant land.

It seemed that God's people had lost it all- their land, their pride, their very identity as a nation set apart for special destiny,

- ***for now, God's people were dispersed across the nations.***

These were ***the darkest times***, days of lamentation and weeping and silence.

But then a ruler named ***Cyrus the Persian came to power***, and he gave permission for the Jewish exiles to begin to go back home.

In the time of the first return and the rebuilding of the Temple, we think of **two biblical heroes: a priest named Ezra, and an administrator named Nehemiah**.

- ***Ezra*** was the priest to broken hearts
- ***Nehemiah*** was the rebuilder of broken dreams.

From the book of Nehemiah, we can learn a lesson:

The renovation of hope from the rubble of discouragement.

The walls lying in ruins, ***the people of Israel hadn't had a peaceful night of sleep***.

Raiders from the outlying provinces had been able to attack by night and ***keep the Israelite settlers discouraged***.

They were under attack from every side, and the greatest weapons in the arsenal of their enemies were fear and discouragement.

In this forth chapter of Nehemiah they were halfway through their project of rebuilding the walls.

At this halfway point ***a fresh wave of discouragement breaks out*** and ***Nehemiah has to deal with this discouragement***, and the way he done it will still work today.

1. Recognizing Discouragement

A. Factor #1: Fatigue

Vince Lombardi observed that *“fatigue makes cowards of us all”*

Vs.10 *“The strength of the labors is failing”, said Judah.*

- 52 days of backbreaking labor, *fatigue was catching up with them,*
- And when energy runs short, so does courage.

The devil’s business is to wear the saints of the most high out!!!!

B. Factor #2: Frustration - *They were not only weary, discouraged, but they were frustrated.*

Vs 10 *“There is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall”.*

They **no longer** saw the proud, gleaming walls of their dreams.

- Visions of glory seemed like a mirage in the desert.
- There was nothing but broken bricks, mud, and debris.
- **They were burned out!**

You can live out, you can wear out, or you can burn out.

- To burnout don’t mean you work too hard.
- The true nature of burnout is working too hard at the wrong things.
- It’s striving for a goal you can’t accomplish.
- It’s a feeling of despondency.

C. Factor #3: Failure -

Neh. 4:10 - ¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.”

- **Fatigue and Frustration** are a good recipe for failure.

We are tired, fed up, we can’t do this.

- **Negative talk** is infectious, spreads like a virus to infect a whole community.
- **Failure is universal**, what makes the difference is how we handle failure.

When things go wrong, we are more apt to give an ear to the enemy!!!

D. Factor #4: Fear

Neh. 4:11-12 - ¹¹ **Also our enemies said**, “Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.”

¹² Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, **“Wherever you turn, they will attack us.”**

Recognizing Discouragement – Factor’s: *Fatigue, Frustration, Failure, Fear!!!*

2. Responding to Discouragement

A. First Response: Cry out to God!

Neh. 4:4-5 - ⁴ *Hear us, our God*, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity.

⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

- **Nehemiah asking for divine intervention** against their enemies. For **mocking and distracting** the rebuilding of the Jerusalem walls.
- **We often cry out to God last instead of first!**

B. Second Response: Continue the Work God has given you to do!

Neh. 4:6 - ⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it **reached half its height**, for the people worked with all their heart.

- **Are immediate reaction is to quit!**
- **God raises his people up in the face of opposition!!!**

Nehemiah knew it was a distraction to **leave what he was called to do**, to try to soothe people **who would not ever be soothed....**

- **Don’t get distracted dealing with people who are against you.**
- **Discernment is being able to see motives when everything looks perfect.**

Neh. 6:3 - ³ so I sent messengers to them with this reply: **“I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down**. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?”

- ***I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down!!!!***

The times we most feel like quitting are the times we must do our best to keep holding on.

C. Third Response: Concentrate on the Big Picture.

Neh. 4:13 - ¹³ Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows.

- Nehemiah's people will not go looking for a fight, but the people of God will be ready to make a stand if need be!!!!
- It's important to remember who we serve!

D. Fourth Response: Claim the Encouragement of God's Promises.

Neh. 4:14 - After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ***"Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."***

- Nehemiah to his people Trust in God, Work hard for each other.

CLOSE:

David encouraged himself in the Lord!

Psalm 46:1-3 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

²Therefore **we will not fear**, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

- God is a refuge and strength, and that **people should not fear in the face of trouble.**
- **Trust in God and His power**, seek refuge in Him in times of trouble.

Galatians 6:9 - ⁹Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- Christians shouldn't become weary or discouraged from doing good deeds!

E. Fifth Response: Carry Someone Else's Burden!

If we read a bit farther into this fourth chapter, you will find a band of stragglers, the remnant of fallen Israel, had bonded together to become a team.

Some were carrying, some were guarding, some were building, and all were wearing swords.

United We Stand! Discouragement tends to cut us off from the ones we need!

The best way for you to be encouraged is to find someone else and encourage them!