

Questions for further study Feb 21st '10
God's restoration work Continuing with discernment Neh 6

1. Sanballat and Geshem tried to get Nehemiah to meet in the name of peace (but they planned to harm him). Have you ever fallen into a trap like the one set for Nehemiah?

2. What happens when someone puts pressure on you (they sent a message to Nehemiah four times)? What do you do? Do you cave in? Compromise? Or do you stand firm?

Nehemiah had his priorities straight. His work for the Lord was #1. What are your priorities? What is #1 in your life?

memorize

"Why should the work cease while I leave it?" (Nehemiah 6:3)

V5-9

What is slander and why is it so devastating? How is it countered?

4. Why is it so difficult to keep from defending yourself when you are slandered?

5. What did Nehemiah do when he was slandered?

6. Why does fear make people do strange things?

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Have you ever been discouraged by the magnitude of a job facing you? What did you do about it? How do you overcome this kind of discouragement?

<http://www.growingchristians.org/rfgc/nehemiah/nehemiahsg.html>

questions

1. What was the proposed site of the conference? What was wrong with a peace conference on neutral ground?
2. How did the enemies try to get Nehemiah to attend?
3. When is a suggestion to compromise not a problem?
4. What is it that we must learn to prioritize?
5. When you hear several voices suggesting different directions to take, how should you sort them out?
6. Refer to Matthew 10.16. What does it say? What does it mean?

answers

1. At one of the villages in the Plain of Ono (near Tel Aviv, where Ben Gurion airport is located today). It was not neutral ground--it was on the border of enemy territory, near Ashdod, a day's journey from Jerusalem.
2. They said that it was important, a peace treaty. They pushed for what they called peaceful co-existence, saying that the wall could be finished later.
3. When priorities are in order.
4. Things of eternal value must be our top priority.
5. Wait, pray, and check the information with the teaching of the word of God.
6. "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Beware of enemy traps; give gentle but truthful answers. Unbelievers will try to trap you with your own words.

discuss/consider

1. Sanballat and Geshem tried to get Nehemiah to meet in the name of peace (but they planned to harm him). Have you ever fallen into a trap like the one set for Nehemiah?

2. What happens when someone puts pressure on you (they sent a message to Nehemiah four times)? What do you do? Do you cave in? Compromise? Or do you stand firm?

challenge

Nehemiah had his priorities straight. His work for the Lord was #1. What are your priorities? What is #1 in your life?

memorize

"Why should the work cease while I leave it?" (Nehemiah 6:3)

Lesson 18

Leave it with the Lord

Nehemiah 6:5-9

background notes

1.

2.

3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. Slander is one of Satan's most devastating attacks.

2. Strength against slander is found in God, not in self-defense.

practical application

1. Don't give the enemy a chance for more than slander.

2. Don't do something foolish because of fear.

questions

1. This was the fifth enemy attack attempting to hinder the rebuilding of the wall. What was the strategy this time?

2. Who was behind this strategy?

3. What is slander and why is it so devastating? How is it countered?

4. Why is it so difficult to keep from defending yourself when you are slandered?

5. What did Nehemiah do when he was slandered?

6. Why does fear make people do strange things?

answers

1. The enemy made a personal attack on Nehemiah.

2. Satan. He prompted Sanballat to pretend to be friends with Nehemiah, while attacking him.

3. It is character assassination, and it is very difficult to counter. It is countered by finding refuge and strength in God, and not in self-defense.

4. We want to set the record straight, no matter how much time and energy it takes! It seems unfair to be attacked and not do everything we can to defend ourselves.

5. Nehemiah found strength in God. He denied the charge and committed the matter to God.

6. Fear makes people irrational so they cannot think clearly. They may overreact and say or do the wrong thing.

discuss/consider

1. Have you ever been slandered? If so, what did you do about it? Be sure that you don't give the enemy a chance for more than slander.

2. Have you ever become irrational because of fear? How did you control it?

challenge

Have you ever joined in when you heard something against someone? Have you ever repeated something against someone, whether it was true or false? Will you determine to make changes, if this has occurred in your life?

memorize

"Never take your own revenge." (Romans 12:19)

Lesson 19

Perceiving Deception

Nehemiah 6:10-14

background notes

1.

2.

3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. A thorough working knowledge of God's Word is necessary for spiritual warfare.

2. The world will find fault with a disobedient Christian.

practical application

1. Watch out for "The-Lord-told-me-so" friends.
2. Watch out for the enemy in the most unlikely places.

questions

1. List some of the tactics Satan used against Nehemiah.
2. Were these tactics successful in stopping "Operation Wall?" Why or why not?
3. Who was Shemaiah? What did Sanballat and Tobiah hire him to do?
4. What was Nehemiah's perception of Shemaiah? How could Nehemiah distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet? (Compare 6.12 with Numbers 18.7)
5. What does Nehemiah's discernment show about him?
6. What is a believer's primary defense against spiritual deception?

answers

1. Scorn, ridicule, threat, conspiracy, internal strife, slander.
2. They were not successful because Nehemiah kept his eyes on the Lord, and he had his priorities in order. His example gave confidence to the people to trust in God.
3. He was a false prophet, hired to inform Nehemiah that there was a threat on his life.
4. He perceived that Shemaiah was a false prophet. How? God's Word forbade those who were not priests from entering the sanctuary, and Nehemiah was not a priest. A true prophet of God would never suggest something that is contrary to the Word of God--not in Nehemiah's day and not in our day!
5. Nehemiah knew the book of Numbers, one of the books of the Law. Even though he was not a priest, Nehemiah had a good working knowledge of the Word of God!
6. A thorough knowledge of God's Word, and close communication with Him.

discuss/consider

1. Have you had the experience of being advised wrongly, even by close friends and devout Christians? If so, what does this tell you?

2. Read Hebrews 5:11-14. What are the implications of this passage?

challenge

Resolve to study God's Word daily in order to grow in spiritual discernment. Be sure that your behavior matches your beliefs.

memorize

"Wisdom from above is first of all pure" (James 3:17)

Lesson 20

It Can Be Done!

Nehemiah 6:15-19

background notes

1.

2.

3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. It is possible to build strong walls.

2. Strong spiritual walls do affect the enemy camp.

3. Mixed marriages will lead to compromise.

practical application

1. Never say, "It can't be done."
2. Expect to feel betrayed in the work of the Lord.

questions

1. How long did it take to complete the rebuilding of the wall?
2. How was it possible for a wall which had been in ruins for 140 years to be rebuilt so quickly? What did this communicate to the surrounding peoples?
3. Who was Tobiah, and how had he gained influence in Israel?
4. How do strong walls affect the enemy?
5. What were Tobiah's next disruptive tactics?
6. Why do "mixed marriages" lead to compromise?

answers

1. Fifty-two days
2. The answer to both questions: The work had been done with the help of God.
3. He was one of the enemy leaders. He made inroads into Israel through marriage.
4. The enemy loses confidence and becomes disheartened.
5. People who were loyal to Tobiah told Nehemiah about Tobiah's "good deeds," and reported Nehemiah's reaction. Tobiah also sent intimidating letters to Nehemiah.
6. Because each spouse desires to please the other. The Christian partner's loyalty to Christ will be tested when concessions regarding Christian lifestyle and commitment are made, in

the interests of "family peace." The Bible is clear that a believer is not to be "yoked" to an unbeliever. See 2 Corinthians 6.14.

discuss/consider

1. Recall a situation in which you were involved when the hand of God was seen. Was God praised and given the glory for His mighty intervention?

2. Have you ever been discouraged by the magnitude of a job facing you? What did you do about it? How do you overcome this kind of discouragement?

3. "Expect to feel betrayed in the work of the Lord." Explain this statement and identify with it, if possible.

challenge

We have a choice to build strong walls or sand castles of our lives. Review the lessons on what it takes to build strong spiritual walls.

memorize

"All the nations...realized that this work was done by God" (Nehemiah 6:16)