

**Life Group Topic #10**  
**Following Rabbit Trails**  
Nehemiah 6

**WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

On a scale of 1-10 how easy are you side-tracked down rabbit trails from the things you set out to do in life? Explain your answer!

**WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

**WORD APPLICATION:** (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

**NEHEMIAH 6: 1-19:** We are mistaken when we assume that stress is an evil that must be avoided at all costs. The very fact of Nehemiah and the people's success in building the wall was the reason for the enemy's opposition and anger. This was a critical stage...only the gates needed to be hung...so the opposition was intense

**OPPOSITION BY DECEPTION Nehemiah 6:1-4** Only the gates needed to be hung so the strategy was to separate him from his colleagues or protectors and get him on enemy territory, a full day's journey away from his work. It sounded so plausible—a chance to finally get peace. However, Nehemiah was discerning, he was a man of prayer and he was surrounded by those who had his back. God still prompts people...He still clearly speaks and warns...evil can lurk under the cover of good.

Nehemiah's goal was to build the wall and if he quits then it won't get done. The call for dialogue was a cover for an assassination plot.

**I AM CARRYING ON A GREAT PROJECT** is a powerful declaration. God wants to affirm your call to building the wall in your home, your neighborhood, your church, your work place, your school and your personal relationship with God. It is a great project! **He had discernment...he knew what the important things were.** It comes from exposure to the Word of God...

**OPPOSITION BY SLANDER Nehemiah 6:5-9** The enemy purposely writes an unsealed letter—the true agenda for the meeting at Ono in order to enlist the gossip mill and the rumor mongers. We all have an inner compulsion to protect our reputations and we dread that people would turn away from us, send nasty letters or give us a cold shoulder. The enemy knew Nehemiah was a man of honor and it would hurt him deeply to be falsely accused...

As humans, we are ready to believe the worst about people and all this is happening while the gates still need to be hung. Nehemiah would have been tempted to go to Susa to defend himself. Our Christian world is not free from slanderous gossip. He clearly and openly repudiates the charges but does not respond to the blackmail. He had great personal security and it was based in his relationship with God.

## **OPPOSITION BY PROPHECY Nehemiah 6:10-14**

## **OPPOSITION BY SUBVERSION Nehemiah 6:15-19**

In 52 days their situation had been transformed from a disheartened settlement to a walled fortress. Can you imagine Nehemiah walking along the top of the wall? But it is clear that the determined enemy has totally infiltrated the region's nobility so that you can't tell who is friend or foe. **The two themes are clear...the enemy is incredibly subtle and the Lord is able.** Opposition to the will of God never ends and will not until Satan is bound and destroyed.

**Be clear on the principles...**

- Success provokes opposition. If the success is related to God's kingdom, opposition will be Satanic in origin and the ferocity of the opposition will reflect the importance of and nearness to a specific goal
- Attacks will focus on your leadership...stress will accumulate. Don't lose sight of two things—the source of the opposition...Satan and—the aim of the opposition...to stop the work God has called you to.
- Never take your eyes off your God-given objective.
- Discernment is based in the Word of God and prayer
- God is able

### **Word Application Questions:**

**Please keep in mind that these questions are meant as catalysts designed to get the group talking about life application.**

1. After reading the passage together, which of the four types of opposition seem the most common today in Satan's attempt to weaken the church?
2. What was it about Nehemiah's life that gave him such insight and discernment in the uncovering the motives of the enemy? How do we become discerning people?
3. Nehemiah would not be sidetracked and declared, "I am carrying on a great project!" What are the projects that you have passion to carry out against all odds?
4. Where are you most susceptible to being side-tracked from the things that matter most to God?
5. What are the things right now that you need discernment for personally; as a Life Group; and corporately as a church?
6. Consider talking together about placing the wood blocks in the symbolic church wall. Has everyone placed a block in "the great project?" If not, could the Life Group seek the Lord's guidance on what that part could be?

### **WITNESS: (15 minutes)**

**This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolded those we reach into the Life Group.**