

BUILDING UNITY

BRICK BY BRICK



STUDY GUIDE

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult things is trying to accomplish a huge task while knowing there are people looking for you to fail. Even plotting out how they can make that happen! Nehemiah and the people building in Jerusalem were not just under the pressure of rebuilding the city, but also faced ridicule and threat from Sanballat, Tobiah, The Arabs, Ammonites and Ashdodians. These people were angry at the idea of this city coming back together, allowing the Jews hope of being restored to their former glory and power. These threats were not empty, and in Nehemiah 4 we can see how serious they were taken by the people.

READ: NEHEMIAH 4:1-12

Discussion 1

- 1. As we have seen in earlier places, the attacks that came on the people rebuilding Jerusalem started as ridicule but progressed quickly. How do you handle ridicule when you are working on something important?**
- 2. What were the actions the people took in response to the threats and ridicule?**

It's been said that the best defense is a good offense. In Nehemiah's case he didn't really have the option to go on the attack, though. They had no defensible position and needed both workers and guards to be on at all times. How could they do both? Through some wise and strategic thinking.

READ: NEHEMIAH 4:13-23

The threats were escalating, people were scared and the wall was only half done. Nehemiah truly could have called it quits, and headed back to the king's side to taste more wine and live in comfort, but God had called him to this. He was not willing to give up because of the taunting and threats of a few people who feared losing their political influence and power in the region.

Nehemiah's plan was simple enough, but required buy in from everyone. The work on the wall had to continue, but it could slow down a bit in order to allow for protection. All of this hard work as not being done by half the men, while the others stood guard. They slept, ate, worked and drank with swords strapped on just incase one of the naysayers outside got the boldness to attack. Workers were working with one hand and defending with the other! This was no doubt a tense and stressful time for the people.

How can we learn from Nehemiah here? When God calls you to something you see it through no matter what. Weather you face attacks against you character and heart, or threats on your very life, you must learn to trust in the One who called you to it to see you through it! As we read in verse 14, the people were remembering "The Lord who is great and awesome", and knowing that He was their true defender. In the same way we must grow in our trust of the Lord, and hold fast in times of weariness, worry and wickedness. He will fight for us as we work for His glory!

Discussion 2

1. **Share a time when you had to push through opposition in order to accomplish something.**
2. **How important is it for us to have growing faith in God? How is faith grown?**
3. **What has God been calling you to that you are avoiding because of the fear of ridicule and/or threat?**

TRUST EXERCISE:

Read through these verses about God's protection and pick one or two to memorize or hang up somewhere as a reminder.

Psalm 91:2-6, Psalm 23:4, Psalm 46:1, Psalm 41:10, Romans 8:31, Philippians 4:13, Psalm 3:3, Psalm 127:7-8