

Improving Our Responding

Improving Our Influence, part 6

Pastor Bob Johnson, February 17th, 2019

This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to week 6 of our small group session!

We are glad that you have taken this journey with us discussing God's Word together. We pray this is a time of growth, encouragement, and fun as you deepen friendships and make new friends along the way! After this week, we have five weeks left. We will wrap up this season of our small groups the week of March 24th.

Getting Started:

How are you? Let's take a minute and catch up with one another? Anything encouraging or not so encouraging happen recently?

In Nehemiah 4:1-12, we saw that those opposing Nehemiah and those helping him rebuild the wall around Jerusalem used ridicule (v1-3), resistance (v6-8) and spreading rumors (v11-12) to try and get them to slow down and ultimately stop the project. How were each of these responses used against those building the wall?

When have you experienced opposition from the use of one or more of these responses in your life?
What was your response?

Despite the initial efforts of the opposition, the wall was rebuilt to half the needed height. From Nehemiah 4:6, what caused this season of successful building? How can this attitude assist us when we face opposition?

In the face of ridicule, resistance and rumors, our natural tendencies are to: become fatigued, experience frustration, expect failure and respond with fear.

How do you see these happening to the Jews in v10-12?

When have you seen these tendencies in your life when you have been faced with ongoing opposition?

I. RESPONSES OF OPPOSITION

1st Response: **R** _____
(Nehemiah 4:1-3)

2nd Response: **R** _____
(Nehemiah 4:6-8)

3rd Response: **R** _____
(Nehemiah 4:11-12)

II. RESULTS OF OPPOSITION

(Nehemiah 4:10-11)

- **F**
- **F**
- **F**
- **F**

III. THE RIGHT RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION

1. **R** _____ (Neh. 4:4-5)
When ridiculed, don't ...
2. **R** _____ (Neh. 4:9)
Petition w/o Precaution is ...
3. **R** _____ (Neh. 4:13, 16-18)
B _____ **& B** _____ **at the same time.**
4. **R** _____ (Neh. 4:14)
Whatever gets your attention ...
5. **R** _____ (Neh. 4:15)
The ultimate test of influence is ...

Read Matthew 10:29-31 and Ephesians 1:3-4.

How can reflecting on God's view of you help during these times?

Last Sunday we unpacked five right responses when opposition shows up. The first response was to "Rely on God". In Neh. 4:4-5, how does Nehemiah respond to the ridicule from Sanballat and Tobiah? What is your natural response when faced with this kind of opposition? Was it appropriate for Nehemiah to be so hard on Sanballat and Tobiah in his prayer?

Read Matthew 5:43-48 and Romans 12:14-21

How can we have righteous indignation and remain committed to God's purposes and still love our enemies?

The second right response we see in Nehemiah's story is "Respect the Opposition". How does Nehemiah respond to the opposition's resistance in Neh. 4:6-9?

When have you underestimated the threats of opposition and been caught unprotected or ill-prepared to address the opposition effectively?

Read Ephesians 6:18 and Colossians 4:2

What would you say to someone who might think that combining prayer and precaution shows a lack of faith?

The third right response was to "Reinforce your weak points". Read Neh. 4:13-23. In v13 and v16-18, how did Nehemiah reinforce the weaker points of those building the wall? Based on the opposition you are experiencing, how will you reinforce some of the weak points in your life?

Read 1 Peter 5:8-9

Knowing that we are in a spiritual battle, how are you resisting the devil's schemes?

The fourth right response to opposition we looked at last Sunday was "Reassure Your Team".

Read Nehemiah 4:14, 20

Where does Nehemiah focus as he reassures those who were building the wall with him?

Where is your focus as you respond to the current opposition in your life?

Read Philippians 4:8-9.

How will this focus help you and those around you to be more reassured of God's presence and promises?

Read James 1:2-4

Why can we have joy in the midst of ongoing opposition?

The last of the responses we saw in last Sunday's message was "Refusing to Quit".

Read Nehemiah 4:15

After Nehemiah reinforced his weak points and reassured his team, how did the opposition respond?

How did the builders respond?

Read Galatians 6:7-9 and Hebrews 12:2-3

How can these perspectives help us to be persistent in the things God has asked us to do?

As we wrap up with some prayer time, let's each share something our group can pray about.