

Improving Our Finishing

Improving Our Influence, part 8
Pastor Bob Johnson, March 3rd, 2019

So the wall was finished ... in fifty-two days. Neh. 6:15 (ESV)

THREE CAUSES TO STOPPING TOO SOON:

1. **Keep working in spite of D** _____
(Nehemiah 6:1-4)

The main thing is to keep the main thing ...

2. **Keep working in spite of D** _____
(Nehemiah 6:5-7, Matthew 5:11-12)

When slandered publicly,

D ...	Neh. 6:8
D ...	Neh. 6:9
D ...	Neh. 6:9b

3. **Keep working in spite of D** _____
(Nehemiah 6:10-13)

Focus on the Facts, not ...

FOUR QUALITIES OF STRONG FINISHERS:

1. **A C** _____ **P** _____
(Nehemiah 6:3b)

2. **A C** _____ **P** _____
(Nehemiah 6:2, 9, 12; James 1:5)

3. **A C** _____ **P** _____
(Nehemiah 6:9)

4. **A C** _____ **P** _____
(Nehemiah 6:11, Galatians 6:9)

This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to week 8 of our 11 week 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? Nehemiah was a strong finisher. Who can you think of that is a strong finisher from history or that you know personally?

Nehemiah was able to lead the people to finish rebuilding the wall in 52 days. It wasn't easy and wasn't without opposition.

The first key to finishing strong we looked at was keep working in spite of distractions. (read Nehemiah 6:1-4)

What kept Nehemiah from responding to the pressure from Sanballat and Geshem and going to meet with them?

Nehemiah kept the main thing ... the main thing. What are the 'main things' that we must not be distracted from?

What distracts you (or comes close to it) from these 'main things'?

The second key to finishing strong is keep working in spite of defamation or slander. (read Nehemiah 6:5-9)

Is there anyone in our society that people listen to without questioning their motivation or credibility? When is it appropriate to question one's motivation or credibility?

How does Nehemiah deal with the defamation of his character?

Nehemiah rightly chose to address the public accusation that was directed at him. When have you had to face accusations and either take responsibility for your actions or deny them? What was the result?

What did Nehemiah's discernment tell him about the motives of his accusers? How has not trusting the intentions of some people in the past helped you to know how to respond?

Being falsely accused is emotionally draining and can be demoralizing. Nehemiah prayed for strength in the midst of this persecution so that he could complete the wall.

Read Paul's perspective in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

When have you seen God show His strength when you have been weak and could not continue in your own strength?

The third key to finishing strong is keep working in spite of danger. (read Nehemiah 6:10-13)

It is likely that Nehemiah's life was in danger, yet he was unwilling to run and hid from his enemies.

Why did Nehemiah stay so focused and determined?

How did you respond to a time of real or perceived danger in your life?

Read Acts 21:10-14

What would it take for you to have Paul's attitude if you were in a similar situation?

When the opposition can't intimidate or scare you into quitting, they will try to convince you to do something foolish to discredit you.

How did Nehemiah know that following Shemaiah's prompting would cause him to sin and be discredited with his people?

Read James 1:5 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17

How can prayer and God's word help us to recognize that someone's influence is not from God?

When have you seen prayer and Scripture help you to know how to respond to someone who was pushing you in a certain direction?

Last Sunday's message concluded with four summary characteristics of strong finishers.

1. A compelling purpose

Nehemiah was compelled to rebuild the wall.

What compelling life purpose(s) has God called you to?

2. A clear perspective

Nehemiah needed a clear perspective to stay focused and avoid the distractions of his accusers.

3. A continual prayer

Nehemiah continually asked God for what he needed to keep on keeping on.

4. A courageous persistence

Nehemiah would not allow anything to stop him from completing the wall.

How can each of us apply these characteristics in fulfilling a compelling purpose in our lives?

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