

## Nehemiah 6-7 Doing a Great Work

**Intro: Have you ever started a project that you didn't finish.**

A) You started – you were inspired – you were **excited and motivated**

B) But somewhere down the line – something happened – **You stopped** –

1) That project today – remains **UNDONE**

C) Now Chances are that somewhere along the way – you might have become **Discouraged**

1) It might have been that the task was bigger than you thought –

D) Once you got into it – you felt **Overwhelmed**

1) This thought popped into your mind – **I am never going to finish** – so why **Bother**.

**Now that is where we saw the People of Israel in Nehemiah Ch. 4 –**

A) **The Tribe of Judah** – **Leaders: the strong ones**

Well they were discouraged {**Too much Rubbish!**}

B) When Leaders get discouraged – it can have a way of affecting everyone else

1) **Answer:** Get our eyes off the rubbish – onto the Lord – off the greatness of the task .... **Great God!**

**C) Didn't remove the Rubbish/ they worked around it**

**So Discouragement is one of the things that can affect us from – Not finishing a project.**

A) Another Reason though **is Division:** You start something with a group of People: **Maybe Family**

**Become DIVIDED**

B) People can't get along – don't share vision or everyone wants to do their own thing.

C) Saw last week that **Division in Jerusalem** caused the work to cease in Ch. 5

D) This time **Rulers and Nobles** – the wealthy were taking when they should have been giving.

1) After a strong rebuke from Nehemiah – they repented and set things right

E) Focus last week – **If missed it** – listen online.

**So Discouragement & Division** are two things that can keep a Project from being finished!

A) **But I THINK** the biggest reason why Projects remained unfinished is **DISTRATCTION**

B) We get distracted in the work – we get pulled away **AND we never get back**

C) As we come to Chapter 6 – this is the issue facing Nehemiah – **DISTRACTION** is the enemy's choice of tactic here in Ch. 6

**D) It comes at Nehemiah in 3 different forms**

1) **Isolation** / Insinuation and **Intimidation**

E) In each case the enemy is trying to Distract Nehemiah from the work of finishing the wall

*Neh 6:1-4 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.*

**Now at this point the wall is done – All that is left is the hanging of doors in the gates**

A) Still a massive job – the gates were huge sturdy structures and there were 10 of them

B) Here we see the enemies first tactic in trying to get Nehemiah Distracted – *Let's meet together*

C) The enemy loves to **ISOLATE US!**

**Ono is located on the seacoast near the Gaza strip.**

A) It was a beautiful resort area.

B) When the enemy can't get through by discouragement, taunting and threats –

1) They try trickery –

**C) Nehemiah – working hard – take a break – cruise down to Ono with us – surf is up – weather is great.**

1) Lets have a conference

D) But Nehemiah senses the ulterior motive here - But they thought to do me harm.

1) So Nehemiah said, "Oh, no!" to Ono.

E) The enemy loves to ISOLATE US!

**He wants to Isolate you – to harm you !**

A) That is why the Lord in the book of Hebrews admonishes us

Hebrews 10:24-25 **And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

B) The Word of the Lord ? *Don't Isolate yourself from fellowship*

1) **Like Coals in a Fire**

**I love the reason He gives for not going – V.3**

A) Nehemiah realized that he was involved in a great work – **The work of God for Him**

There was a missionary in China whose abilities were **so outstanding that one** American company tried to hire him.

**They offered him an attractive job with a salary to match, but he turned it down.**

**He told them that God had sent him to China as a missionary.**

**He thought that would end the matter, but instead they came back with a better offer and an increase in salary.**

He turned that down too, but again they came back, doubling the financial package.

Finally he said to them, **"It's not your salary that's too little. It's the job that's too small!"**

**Nehemiah knew that he was involved in a great work – a monumental task for the Lord**

A) How do you view what you are doing?

B) **How do you view what you are called to?**

C) Mother raising your kids to love JESUS – **GREAT WORK!** – Godly Husband, father – **GREAT WORK**

D) Teaching Sunday school – **Great work –**

1) Bible study at work – **GREAT WORK**

E) Shinning for Jesus – in your company – work – that is A GREAT WORK

1) **NOT all called to full time** ...but to a great work

**In my world of the Church – impact is so often judged by numbers and converts.**

A) However the average size of a church in America is 80 people – average Calvary is 150 people

B) So when I speak to Pastors at conferences – many of them are in that place –

1) Easy to get discouraged – my Church is not growing

C) I love to encourage them with this passage – You are doing a great work – don't stop!

1) Don't quit.

**3 Guys Laying Bricks on same job site – Little Boy asked first guy what are you doing? -**

A) *What does it look like – Laying bricks*

2<sup>nd</sup> Guy – *I am building a building*

3<sup>rd</sup> Guy: *I am building a Cathedral where people will come to worship the living God*

B) Which Guy do you think was the most excited about what he was doing

1) **And Motivated to finish!**

C) **How do you see the Ministry you are involved in? Great work –**

1) Laying bricks/ **Building a wall** / Building or a Cathedral

2) Parking cars/ 1<sup>st</sup> impression/ helping people worship God

**D) Listen if it is FOR God – it is a Great work!**

E) Pastor Chuck – "This life will soon be past, only what is done for Jesus is sure to last." - Chuck Smith

Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." So Nehemiah sends them word – "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.

4 But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

The enemy was Persistent here – the invitation came 4 times –

A) Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:11 "We should not be ignorant of the devices of the Devil."

B) One of them is persistence – Keeps coming – doesn't stop.

C) NEHEMIAH – answered them in the same way EACH TIME!

D) The way to fight the persistence of the enemy is to be **CONSISTENT IN YOUR STAND/CALLING**.

1) Has anything changed from yesterday or last week?

**So Distraction #1 - Isolation**

**Distraction #2 - Insinuation v. 5-7**

5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. 6 In it was written:

It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.

7 And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, "There is a king in Judah!"

Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.

Here is what Happens – A messenger shows up to the Job site with an OPEN LETTER

A) That means that it was to be read in the hearing of everybody –

B) Two key phrases in v.6 *It is reported among the nations..... therefore, according to these rumors*

Characteristics of a rumor: Never has a source - *It is reported among the nations*

A) #2 A rumor is noted for its exaggerations and inaccuracy –

B) Rumors spread in exaggerated fashion - Someone telephones one person – Suzy is having surgery tomorrow.

C) Suzy is having brain surgery –

1) Suzy has cancer and the doctors are only giving her two months to live

D) Rumors and Gossip – full of Exaggerations

This was a pure insinuation:

A) The rumor being reported? Nehemiah wants to be King - **That is why he is so eager to get these walls built**

B) What is the Big deal about that? Well if that got back to King Artaxerxes – and he believed it 1) It would cost Nehemiah his head and the People of Israel would be squashed again

Now this is another Distraction of the enemy

A) They are attacking Nehemiah's Character – if you won't meet with us – we'll tell everyone what you're really up to

B) How does NEHEMIAH DEAL with this one.

1) Answer is he doesn't – He knows the accusations are not true – he is not trying to be king

C) Nehemiah is not drawn in by Self-Preservation

1) That can distract you from what you are supposed to be doing – spend all your time explaining yourself

D) Nehemiah responded in 3 ways: He denies the rumor/ He prayed to God/ he went back to work 8 Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart."

9 For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." **PRAYS AGAIN**

Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

A) Strengthen me to work all the harder."

B) They were on the last lap of the race and the finish line was in sight.

C) He took care of his character and trusted God to take care of his reputation.

D) So **Distraction #1 - Isolation / #2 - Insinuation**

### **Distraction #3 - Intimidation v.10**

10 Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."

**So Shemiah who was of the priestly line and probably a confidant of Nehemiah – takes a turn**

A) Trying to set Nehemiah up – run to the temple

Notice Nehemiah's response

11 And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"

**Nehemiah rejected Shemaiah's proposal because it was contrary to the Law of Moses.**

A) It was forbidden for a layman to go beyond the altar of burnt offering at the temple.

B) Nehemiah knows exactly who he is and what his place is – **AND HE KNEW THE WORD!**

C) Nehemiah realized that something was wrong – **Something wasn't right –**

1) Shemiah is contradicting God's word

**Anytime someone has a word for you that doesn't line up with scripture – Reject it**

A) God is not going to give a word that is going to contradict the written word

B) GOD holds His Word above his name !

C) **Courage isn't the absence of fear** but instead it's the tenacity to do what is right no matter how much we're afraid.

D) You see, it's not just a matter of saying 'no' to distractions.

1) We have to first say 'yes' to the right things, so that our priorities match up with God's priorities.

E) Avoid compromise – Yes to God's priorities in your life.

12 Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

13 For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might have cause for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

### **PRAYS AGAIN**

14 My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.

A) I LOVE THIS - This is such a guy way of saying this – **straight forward and to the point.**  
We finished – 52 days –

B) If this was a woman writing: It would be like the wall was finally finished – it was a sunny day – people were excited

1) AND she would have described how it looked sturdy and rugged

D) **Like Describing a baby:** Woman – so & so had a baby it was 9lbs 2oz – big fingers – lots of hair – name is grace means loved of God – Latin it means

E) **Guy: So & so had their baby?** Yep! boy or girl yep! Size? – pretty big/ Pretty? It was a baby

### **V.16**

16 And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

A) Now here we see the RESULT of what happens when we stay the course – not distracted.

B) The work gets done – the enemy gets disheartened and everyone knows – It's a **GOD THING**

1) That the work was done by God!!!!

C) Was this a Cause for CELEBRATION?

**Here the wall is finished – time to stop – relax – Kick Back – right? WRONG!**

A) Chapter ends this way I believe to remind us of the need to stay on Guard

B) Watch out – the enemy won't stop

C) New Tactic – Not Isolation or Insinuation or Intimidation – now - Infiltration

1) Tobiah is corresponding with the rulers

**17 Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them. 18 For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.**

**Here we are given this reminder that the Enemy never gives up.**

A) On the one hand – Tobiah is getting chummy with all the key people – the rulers.

B) The rulers are telling Nehemiah what a good guy Tobiah is – one of us – married in

C) But on the other hand – Tobiah is sending notes to frighten Nehemiah

1) Tobiah shows up in Ch.13 again - problems

**Brothers and sisters, here's one of the overriding truths from this book: the devil never quits.**

A) He is never going to give up while we are still alive.

B) God has wonderful blessings and much encouragement and joy for us along the way, 1) but we must never cease battling against the world, the flesh and the devil **until we get to heaven.**

C) The enemy of God will never quit

**Close this Chapter – remember 2 key things Avoid being distracted by saying yes to God's priorities**

A) A noted concert violinist who was asked the secret of her mastery of the instrument. This is what she said,

“There are many things that used to demand my time. When I went to my room after breakfast, I made my bed, dusted, straightened the room, and did whatever seemed necessary.

**When I finished my work, I turned to my violin practice.**

That system prevented me from accomplishing what I should on the violin.

So I reversed things. I deliberately planned to neglect everything else until my practice period was complete.

**And that program of planned neglect is the secret to my success.”**

**In a similar way, we've been called to a great work – one that we have to prioritize or we'll be distracted from it.**

A) If we don't practice some “planned neglect” of other things, even good things, we'll be distracted from God's best.

B) The best way to not be distracted is by being attracted to those things that are on the heart of God.

C) Once we're aware of what those are, and are attracted to them, we need to commit ourselves to a life of full devotion and complete commitment.

**I read a story about a Native American who left the reservation to join his cousin who lived in the city.**

A) One day, as they were walking down a busy street, the Native American said, **“I hear a cricket.”**

B) His city cousin was amazed because all he could hear was the traffic.

**C) After a short search, the man reached down and picked up the cricket.**

1) When he stood up, he pulled some change out of his pocket and dropped it on the sidewalk.



D)The noise was no louder than the cricket's, but immediately several pedestrians stopped and turned toward the sound.

E)The man then turned to his cousin and said, "See, people hear what's important to them."

**What are you hearing today? What is it that's important to you?**

A)Are you locked into God's kingdom purposes or are you focused on a bunch of other things?

B)Before we go tonight – I want us to notice a couple of quick things in Ch.7

C)And now as we come to Ch.7 – Nehemiah is on to the next thing – no kicking back – no time for celebration

D)There is still more to do! Things to set on place So he is getting busy!

**Chapter 7 serves as a pivot point in the Book of Nehemiah.**

A)Chapters 1-6 describe the restoration of the wall of Jerusalem. RECONSTRUCTION

B)Chapters 8-13 tell about the restoration of the people of Judah. REINSTRUCTION

D)Chapter 7 begins with three verses describing the precautions that Nehemiah took to guard the newly walled city from attack.

1) This wraps up the first half of the book.

**1 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, 2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many. {Key traits for a leader**

**3 And I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house."**

**A)Nehemiah is getting things ready for worship to take place – enlist three groups.**

1)Gatekeepers, Guard and Watch - Levites – Priest – Singers - Worship leaders

B)I see great application relating to our services

1)Ushers are Gate keepers – Watch - trying to keep out any potential distractions –

C)To not take the Focus off of the Lord and – His Word.

1)Sometimes they ask people – Baby or distractions/ move to the back

**D)Levites – Pastors – Facilitate**

1)Singers – worship leaders

**4 Now the city was large and spacious, but the people in it were few, and the houses were not rebuilt. 5 Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return, and found written in it:**

**A)V.6-73 is a list of names of those who came back to help build the temple and the city**

B)God lists them all - twice also in Ezra

C)These people were pioneers –

1)Willing to be in the early stages of the restoration of the city and the people of God!

**Special trait in being a Pioneer**

A)Marc Orosco - Oregon – Part of the train or help build the engine.

B)Pioneers help build the engine.

C)Nehemiah Divides them into three groups

1)Leaders – Workers – Givers

D)Those three are always needed in any work of God

**Notice what he says about the givers V.70-73**

**70 And some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and five hundred and thirty priestly garments.**

**71 Some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold**

drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas.

72 And that which **the rest of the people** gave was twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities.

When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

**Note everyone gave – to different degrees**

**A) Those who had means gave more { REASON  
GOD BLESSES SOME PEOPLE –**

**B) but they all gave – everyone pitched in.**

**B) God asks all of us to Tithe – Tithe = give a tenth**

**The Law – No before – Abram gave to Melchizedek**

**C) Paul in 1 Cor 16 - Give as God has prospered you**

**D) Privilege and a great reward!**