

WCKaiser note on Nehemiah chapter 6: Handling Personal Attacks

When engaged in a work for God, you can expect that there will come attacks. Especially after some success, you'll likely have an attack. God allows this to keep your focus on him.

WCK outlined chapter 6 around 3 main attacks.

- I. The Problem of INTRIGUE (vs. 1-4)
- II. The Problem of INNUENDO (vs.5-9)
- III. The Problem of INTIMIDATION (vs. 10-17)

Nehemiah responds with what is needed for each attack. We can learn from his example how to respond to the attacks that will come against us when we are engaged in a work for God.

I. The Problem of INTRIGUE (vs. 1-4)

Nehemiah's attackers call a secret meeting on the plain of ONO (vs. 2). WCK "Oh No! not ONO!" "When you've been given a clear task - keep on focus. Don't allow others to distract you with the intrigue of some unspecified problem."

To counter the intrigue - God gave Nehemiah DISCERNMENT.

Prov. 2:6 "For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

Ps. 119:104 "I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path."

Ps. 119: 98 "Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me."

Nehemiah knew that something was wrong from the invitation. Five times the same message came to him. The persistence of the appeal alerted him that something wasn't right - so he refused. Ultimately, it is God's word and a thorough understanding of it that gives us the DISCERNMENT we need.

APPLICATION: Are we able to feed ourselves on the whole counsel of God? Are we equipping others to feed themselves on the whole counsel of God. If people are to develop DISCERNMENT, they must gain it from a thorough knowledge of God's Word.

To counter the intrigue - God had gave Nehemiah clear DIRECTION (vs. 3)

Nehemiah responds, "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" WCK "Never trade a lesser call for that of doing the greater call (work of God).

Rom. 12:11 "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

Col. 3:23 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

Eccles. 9:10 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."

John 9:4 "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no man can work."

So WCK exhorted us with the words of the hymn, "Rise up O Man (and Woman) of God! Have done with lesser things; Give heart and soul and mind and strength To serve the King of kings." "Did God call you to some specific task? Then stay at it until the job is done! God has promised to be with you and grant you success (Josh. 1:8-9) "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. The you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be **with** you wherever you go." (God promises to be **with** his people or leader 114 times in the Old Testament - one of the great promises we have - The promise of his presence.

II. Scene 2. The Problem of INNUENDO (vs. 5-9)

WCK made a point about enemies exaggerating the claims of those who oppose you. “It is reported among the nations—and Geshem says it is true—that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt...” Enemies will make false claims on minimal evidence that is often not even true. Beware of believing the innuendo. Often it is just rumors.

Nehemiah counters the rumors with a DIRECT REFUTATION (vs. 8) “Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.” And then DETERMINATION (expressed in the prayer of vs. 9) “Now strengthen my hands.” Nehemiah realized that the enemies were trying to frighten him and the workers.

When we focus on continuing to provide faithful service, we will be able to counter innuendo.

I Cor. 4:2 “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” We are called to be stewards to God of the work that He has entrusted to us.

III. Scene 3. The Problem of INTIMIDATION (vs. 10-17)

Definition of INTIMIDATION = To compel or deter by a threat.

Nehemiah is invited to take refuge in the temple b/c men are coming to kill him by night. (vs. 10) But Nehemiah is neither a Levite or a priest. To go to the temple would be seen as an act of presumption. They intimidate Nehemiah with the threat of death, but then suggest taking refuge in a place that would discredit his reputation.

Nehemiah responds decisively (vs. 11) “Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!” He replies 1) I’m not going to run away and hide. 2) I won’t presume upon my position. How did Nehemiah know to make this response? Ans. He was grounded in God’s precepts. They were inviting Nehemiah to go against the clear precepts of God. (Even though Shemaiah put the label of “prophecy” on the request.) Shemaiah tries to get Nehemiah to put “self-preservation and human instinct over biblical teaching.” WCK “Never doubt in the darkness what God has taught you in the light.” Nehemiah was decisive in his response because he held firm on what God had made clear. When there is a clear contradiction with biblical principles refuse the temptation to compromise.

God demonstrates his approval of Nehemiah’s leadership. The wall is completed (vs. 15) in a mere 52 days. The enemies that had opposed Nehemiah fall away because through the completion of the wall, they realize that God has been behind the rebuilding project.

WCK “Out of communion with God and the understanding of God’s word comes the character for leadership. It results in the confidence to lead God’s people in freedom and motivate them to work wholeheartedly. Such leadership will become contagious. The people take on the characteristics of the leader and they are transformed.”

MEK. It gives me a vision for what can happen when we allow God to use us as leaders. The hope is not just that a project will be completed, but that people will be transformed and God’s name will be honored.