

“Thwart The Wart: How To Overcome Opposition To Life Change” * Nehemiah 4:1-15 * 2/7/10

I. Sanballat & Company: A symbol of the opposition that will arise whenever we attempt to better our lives

A. Why did they resist Nehemiah?

- 1. For _____ reasons.*
- 2. For _____ reasons.*
- 3. For _____ reasons.*

II. The story teaches that we usually run into 2 levels of opposition.

A. Level one is what we might call _____ - heat.

- 1. What did Sanballat do at first?*
- 2. What are ways we experience this type of resistance?*
- 3. In what one area of change will we probably experience the same ridicule Nehemiah faced?*
- 4. How did Nehemiah deal with level-one opposition?*

“In the last days, there will be scoffers... These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.” – Jude 18ff

B. Level two is what we might call _____ - heat.

- 1. What did Sanballat and his friends do next?*
- 2. What might be ways we experience this?*
- 3. Who brings high-heat against Christians today?*

III. So how do we fight off these warts of opposition?

A. Compound P which is _____.

- 1. Does this lead to the removal of Nehemiah’s enemies?*
- 2. What then does Nehemiah gain by his praying?*

B. Compound W which is _____.

- 1. Why did Nehemiah post a guard? Didn’t he trust God?*
- 2. How did the Jews do their work (see vss.17-18)?*
- 3. What’s the lesson for me here?*

C. Compound E which is _____.

- 1. What did Nehemiah begin to hear around the camp?*
- 2. How did he respond?*
- 3. What will take place before the Super Bowl kickoff that needs to happen more often in churches?*

D. Compound U which is _____.

- 1. What was Nehemiah’s concern in verse 19?*
- 2. How is this like church work?*
- 3. Christians should adopt the Stone Age Society’s motto, which is:*

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I. Sanballat & Company: A symbol of the opposition that will arise whenever we attempt to better our lives

A. Why did they resist Nehemiah?

- 1. For **political** reasons.*
- 2. For **economic** reasons.*
- 3. For **spiritual** reasons.*

II. The story teaches that we usually run into 2 levels of opposition.

*A. Level one is what we might call **low** - heat.*

1. What did Sanballat do at first?

Ridiculed and mocked the Jews.

2. What are ways we experience this type of resistance?

Anytime we try something new, it feels odd at first. A voice inside our heads says we look foolish. Even those who care about us may question our motives and poke fun at our efforts to change our lives.

3. In what one area of change will we probably experience the same ridicule Nehemiah faced?

Whenever we seek to get close to God or grow stronger in our faith, we can expect some sort of “push back”.

4. How did Nehemiah deal with level-one opposition?

He talked to God about it. He didn't let those mocking him know it was bothering him. He just poured out his heart to the Lord.

“In the last days, there will be scoffers... These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.” - Jude 18ff

*B. Level two is what we might call **high** - heat.*

1. What did Sanballat and his friends do next?

They came against the Jewish with actual plotting. They aimed to stop them with any means possible.

2. What might be ways we experience this?

You're two weeks into your new physical fitness training regimen, and you trip down the stairs and break an ankle. You're a month into your new attempt to keep a budget and the transmission blows on one of the cars. You've been sober for two months and the call comes from home: Your father has died. Just the thing that usually sends you running toward the bottle.

3. Who brings high-heat against Christians today?

Ultimately Satan “plots” against us and resists God's purposes in our lives.

III. So how do we fight off these warts of opposition?

*A. Compound P which is **Prayer**.*

1. Does this lead to the removal of Nehemiah's enemies?

No.

2. What then does Nehemiah gain by his praying?

He gets God. He gets inner wisdom. Inner peace. Inner strength that wasn't there before he prayed. The more I go on in my life, the more I realize that prayer is not usually about getting answers – prayer is about getting God.

*B. Compound W which is **Work***

1. Why did Nehemiah post a guard? Didn't he trust God?

Nehemiah held two attitudes simultaneously. An attitude of giving his commitment and effort to God. Combined with an attitude of seeking God for his

presence and power. It wasn't either/or. His effort or God's effort. It was both. We need to hold both attitudes. God I'm in this for keeps. I'm giving you my all and I'm not letting go. But God, if I'm going to be in this for keeps, I need your presence and power every step of the way.

2. *How did the Jews do their work (see vs. 17-18)?*
With one hand on their shovels and one hand on their swords.

3. *What's the lesson for me here?*
There are far too many weak and wimpy Christians in this world who live their lives with absolutely no passion whatsoever. Romans 12:11 says, "Never be lacking in zeal." We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Where is that spirit today, Church? Is it in you? Has the Lord Jesus been getting your very best of late?

C. *Compound E which is Encouragement.*

1. *What did Nehemiah begin to hear around the camp?*
Grumbling, "ten times over".

2. *How did he respond?*
By pleading with them to remember God and to keep working for their family, homes and faith.

3. *What will take place before the Super Bowl kickoff that needs to happen more often in churches?*
The teams will be gathered in a huddle over at their respective sidelines, and in the middle of that huddle will be one of the teams' leaders shouting their heads off. "Come on men, this is what we've worked all season for, this is what we've practiced for, this is what we've fought for, one more game, sixty more minutes, four more quarters, are you ready to give it everything you've got!"

D. *Compound U which is Unity.*

1. *What was Nehemiah's concern in verse 19?*
They were spread out too thinly along the wall.

2. *How is this like church work?*
We too get too spread out "along our church wall", serving in our respective ministries.

3. *Christians should adopt the Stone Age Society's motto, which is:*
"Too long have I hunted mammoth alone."