

“Wrestling With The World”
March 28, 2010 * Nehemiah 10:28-31, 37-39

I. One of the greatest threats you will face: the ‘world’

- A. 1 John 2:15 – loving the world steals my _____.
- B. Matt.13:35 – worries of this world choke _____.
- C. 2 Tim.4:10 – loving the world may cause me to _____.
- D. James 4:4 – friendship with the world is _____ God.

II. Nehemiah’s Battle Plan Against Worldliness (Neh.9:38-10:27)

- A. What sin did Israel keep on repeating in her past?
- B. So what’s the Bible warning us against?
- C. What does Nehemiah do? And who joins him in this?

III. The Preamble: Where We Learn Of 2 Disciplines With Which To Fight Worldliness (Nehemiah 10:28-29)

A. Discipline #1 – _____

1. What is this?

The discipline of learning how to keep worldly things _____.

*2. What does this **not** mean?*

It does not mean forsaking worldly things and having _____.

What is this called?

3. What does it mean then?

It means having an _____ from worldly things.

4. When might I need to be ascetic? (Matt.5:29)

B. Discipline #2 – _____

1. What do we mean by this?

- 2. Why is the ‘world’ so powerful? And what do we need to have to overcome it? (1 John 5:4-5)

IV. The Main Part Of The Covenant – 3 Areas To Protect

A. Our F _____ (vs.30)

1. What’s Nehemiah’s main concern here?

2. What does the New Testament teach about this?

3. One other idea for protecting the home:

Eat meals _____ and share in family _____.

B. Our F _____ (vss.31-36)

1. What simple thing does God ask of us to protect our fellowship?

Keep the _____.

2. What’s a second idea in this section?

Everyone must do his or her part to _____ Jesus’ church and _____ it.

C. Our F _____ (vss.37-39)

1. What “simple” thing does God asks of us here?

2. What did Jesus say about money?

3. How might doing this keep worldliness away?

V. When it comes to fighting the world, there’s one other piece of advice Nehemiah gives us (vs.39):

Never _____.

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I. One of the greatest threats you will face: the ‘world’

- A. 1 John 2:15 – loving the world steals my love for God.
- B. Matt.13:35 – worries of this world choke God’s Word in my life.
- C. 2 Tim.4:10 – loving the world may cause me to leave the faith.
- D. James 4:4 – friendship with the world is hatred toward God.

II. Nehemiah’s Battle Plan Against Worldliness (Neh.9:38-10:27)

A. What sin did Israel keep on repeating in her past?

Whenever things started going well in their lives, they forgot about God. (Neh.9:25-26,28)

B. So what’s the Bible warning us against?

Being so caught up with physical reality that we ignore or diminish spiritual reality, and stop making it first in our lives. We must seek first the kingdom of God.

C. What does Nehemiah do? And who joins him in this?

He takes this so seriously that he summons all the leaders together and draws up a written covenant, a sacred agreement in which the leaders promise to hold the line against worldliness taking them over.

III. The Preamble: Where We Learn Of 2 Disciplines With Which To Fight Worldliness (Nehemiah 10:28-29)

A. Discipline #1 – Separateness

1. What is this?

The discipline of learning how to keep worldly things in their place.

2. What does this not mean?

It does not mean forsaking worldly things and having nothing to do with them.

What is this called?

Asceticism.

3. What does it mean then?

It means having an inner detachment from worldly things.

4. When might I need to be ascetic? (Matt.5:29)

I may need to practice asceticism depending on how I’m doing in my wrestling match with the world. If alcohol is pinning me to the mat, getting the better of me, ruining my life and everything around me, then an actual separation from that worldly thing is essential. Jesus put it this way. “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.” (Matthew 5:29).

B. Discipline #2 – Togetherness.

1. What do we mean by this?

The togetherness we’re talking about means to surround yourself with a community of people who will be able to help you keep your faith strong.

2. Why is the ‘world’ so powerful? And what do we need to have to overcome it? (1 John 5:4-5)

It’s because physical reality is the one that we see, and hear, and taste and touch. In one sense, it’s hardly a fair fight. Who can compete with this? To live this life well, I need to learn how to live for a life, an existence, than I can’t see, hear, taste and touch. “We walk by faith, not by sight,” the Bible says. And that’s a tall order. That’s a lot to ask for. And yet the Bible is adamant in saying that without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6) and, what’s more, without faith, we cannot overcome the world. 1 John 5:4-5 – “This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

IV. The Main Part Of The Covenant – 3 Areas To Protect

A. Our Families (vs.30)

1. What's Nehemiah's main concern here?

It's intermarriage – the marriage between a worshipper of the true God and someone who is not – is the linchpin, the crack through which worldliness seeps in and contaminates.

2. What does the New Testament teach about this?

Even in the New Testament, we are told in the strongest terms to think carefully about the person we would marry. 2 Corinthians 6:14 – “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.” Marriage is a yoke. You tie yourself to another person. Don't do that with an unbeliever or you're signing up for trouble. The world will be licking its chops over you. And if you ever find yourself in a position of remarrying 1 Corinthians 7:39 says, “he/she must belong to the Lord.”

3. One other idea for protecting the home:

Eat meals together and share in family devotions.

B. Our Fellowship (vss.31-36)

1. What simple thing does God ask of us to protect our fellowship?

Keep the Sabbath.

2. What's a second idea in this section?

Everyone must do his or her part to serve Jesus' church and defend it.

C. Our Finances (vss.37-39)

1. What “simple” thing does God asks of us here?

To give a tithe, 10%.

2. What did Jesus say about money?

Jesus gave money a name, “Mammon”, meaning that money is pretty much a rival god we have to deal with, and so Jesus said, *You cannot love God and Mammon*. You have to pick one. But here's what's so tricky. It's not that you shouldn't think about it. And it's not that you shouldn't have it. Asceticism isn't the answer. You must think about it. And you must have it to live. And you have to be smart with it. Jesus told his followers, “Make friends with mammon.” How we handle money is a spiritual barometer that reveals much about what's going on inside your heart. Jesus said, Luke 16:11 – “So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”

3. How might doing this keep worldliness away?

To give 10% for most people pinches. It hurts. You go, “Ouch!” when you write that check. But the pain gets you thinking. Gets you talking to God. And out of that conversation, out of that thinking, money's power over us gets exposed, we begin to turn to God for his wisdom in how to use it, and over time, as we do things God's way, things change for us. We avoid debt. We stop coveting what other people have. We work harder. We learn contentment with simple things. Chances are good we'll find ourselves with more money for other things, money to give away, money to take that vacation we've always wanted. Or if we don't have more money, then we just learn to do without, because God will never leave us or forsake us. And worldliness is kept at bay.

V. When it comes to fighting the world, there's one other piece of advice Nehemiah gives us (vs.39):

Never give up. “We will not neglect the house of our God.”

