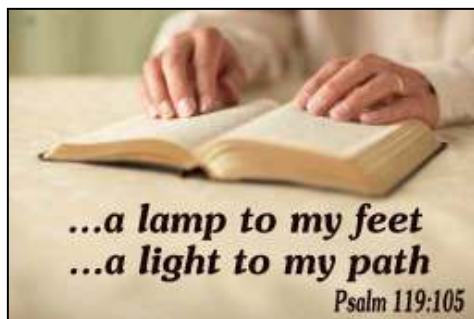


Restoring Holiness *Chapter 5***Opposition From Within**

Nehemiah faced opposition from the enemies of Israel in chapter four. Now he faces opposition from within—from the people doing the work on the walls.

**Introduction:** When God sent prophets to recall the people to righteousness, it was not the pagans who killed God’s messengers but the Jews themselves. Likewise, the most successful attacks against the Church have not been from unbelievers—but from believers.

**Chapter Five:** In chapter five Nehemiah leads the people to holiness: From greed to sacrificial giving so they can care for the people and finish the work on the wall. Here’s how to move from sin to holiness:

**A. Confront the real sin** issues 5:1-7

Background: The people cry out! *See 5:1-5*

1. Confront thoughtfully—in the Spirit :6-7  
**“I was angry...and consulted with myself...”**
  - a. This was ‘righteous indignation’ not against Sanballat and the enemy of Israel but people of God.
  - b. He did not let his anger turn to sin—he took time to review things and found he was ALSO guilty. **See note 1**
2. Confront those most responsible :7-11  
**“...contended with the nobles and the rulers...”**
  - a. He first confronted the nobles and the rulers privately. It appeared that the nobles did not respond to Nehemiah so he then went public with his rebuke. *See Matt 18:15-16*
3. Confront based on Biblical command :7  
**“You are exacting usury...”**  
*Deut 23:19-20; Lev 25:39-43; Deut 15:12-16*

**B. Change to holy standards** 5:8-9

1. Change because of who you are in the Messiah :8  
**“Redeemed our Jewish brothers...”**  
 This is a call to repentance. Nehemiah had stopped work on the wall to deal with this problem so they could repent of their disobedience to the law of God and placing personal prosperity before other people’s well-being.
2. Change because of who God is to you :9  
**“Walk in the fear of God...”**
3. Change because of your testimony to others :9  
**“Because of the reproach of the nations...”**

**C. Commit to a holy life for the future** 5:10-13

1. Commit sacrificially :11-12  
**“Give back to them this very day...”**
2. Commit publicly and with accountability :12-13  
**“Took an oath from them...all the assembly said, “Amen!””**

**Postscript:** Nehemiah’s commitment to God and the people! 5:14-19

## Matthew 18:15-17

**:15** "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

**:16** But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED.'

**:17** And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

## Note 1

According to verse :10 Nehemiah included himself in this sin. Someone has said, You cannot be successful unless you are willing to own your own failures.” Dealing honestly with failure builds integrity.

## How to Respond to Conflict and Complaint

**1. Listen:** Nehemiah listened to the people. We need to be ‘intentional listeners’ to be effective in conflict resolution

**2. Think it over:** Thinking it over helped Nehemiah focus on the real issues. Taking time to ‘reflect’ and ‘pray’ is essential to healing.

**3. Confront directly:** Rather than ‘stewing’ over something or spreading gossip—we need to go directly to who is involved.

**4. Openly admit mistakes:** Taking responsibility for our actions is essential for growth and maturity.