

NEHEMIAH: PATTERN FOR LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE IN HARD TIMES

Part IV: Godly Leadership's Wise Action To Offset Evil Conspiracy

(Nehemiah 4:7-23)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the toughest, most debilitating challenges to face while serving the Lord is the ominous, secret plans by opponents to attack and destroy the service effort or program. You never know fully all that is going to happen, where to turn to intercept conflict, or how to avoid conflict!
- B. Nehemiah faced evil conspiracy in Nehemiah 4:7-23 and offers an example on facing it well!

II. Godly Leadership's Wise Action To Offset Evil Conspiracy, Nehemiah 4:7-23.

- A. When Israel's enemies realized that the walls of Jerusalem were half constructed in spite of Israel's facing mockery, they conspired together to attack the workers by force and stop their work, Nehemiah 4:7-8.
- B. Nehemiah responded by prayer and great preparation that dissuaded those who planned to attack, 4:9-23:
 - 1. First of all, Nehemiah prayed to God about the conspiracy challenge, Neh. 4:9a. Numerous psalms by David can be used to exemplify what that prayer must have included!
 - 2. Next, Nehemiah set a watch to offset an attack against the work of rebuilding the wall, Neh. 4:9b-23:
 - a. Nehemiah set a continual watch, anticipating what he would do if **ever** the attack came, v. 9b.
 - b. In particular, he gathered the builders to sections on the wall where they were to work **along with** the temporary dwellings of their **wives and children**, v. 13. Thus, if an attack came at any point, those working on the wall would fight **fiercely** to defend their families behind them!
 - c. Also, Nehemiah encouraged the people to look to the Lord for strength to fight for Him and for their families right next to their assigned wall tasks, v. 14.
 - d. This assignment discouraged any attack, for the enemies knew that though they might win in an attack, they would have heavy losses to incur as the defenders would fight **fiercely**, v. 15.
 - 3. Next, Nehemiah did his best to maximize the preparedness of the defenders on the wall so they would have an advantage over the attackers if an attack ever came, Neh. 4:16-23:
 - a. Nehemiah split the work force up so that at every point along the wall, half of the workers held the fighting weapons and were on the lookout while the other half could work on the wall, v. 16. This also enabled the workers to work harder as they worked or watched in **shifts**!
 - b. Those that worked held weapons in one hand and worked with the other, enabling even them to feel confident that they were prepared in case of an attack, Neh. 4:17-18a.
 - c. Nehemiah minimized any chance of miscommunication during an attack by keeping the bugle player by his side. Every defender then knew that any sound from the bugler was a direct command from Nehemiah, and was to be obeyed **instantly**. This gave them confidence in defense, v. 18b!
 - d. Nehemiah also arranged for the movement of troops along the wall if any part was attacked by an overwhelming force, Neh. 4:19-20.
 - e. He also had the work going during daylight hours to hurry in erecting the wall and minimize the crisis available for an attack, Neh. 4:21.
 - f. Nehemiah arranged for all the people to sleep in the city at night so that a critical night attack would be offset by a maximum amount of manpower, Neh. 4:22.
 - g. He also arranged for a siege warfare mentality by avoiding normal amenities: Nehemiah had his defenders change clothes only for washing in order to remain in a constant state of readiness, v. 23!

Lesson: Nehemiah handled dangerous conspiracy by (1) praying for divine help and by (2) planning for the **WORST CASE SCENARIO**. He did everything **spiritually** possible to find help and everything **humanly** possible to avert disaster by preparing for the worst attack if it ever came. In so doing, the enemies were discouraged from attacking **BECAUSE OF HIS PREPARATIONS, 4:15**.

Application: Godly leaders handle rebellious conspiracy for what it is -- a threat by people who don't fear authority! As such, godly leaders pray and "prepare, prepare, prepare" for the **WORST** in case it comes! The preparation **itself** acts as a fearful deterrent to those who don't fear God or the law!