

A person is standing in a dark room, illuminated from behind by a bright light source, possibly a doorway or window. The person is wearing a dark jacket and pants. The light creates a strong silhouette effect, highlighting the person's outline against the dark background. The overall mood is dramatic and somewhat somber.

*Destroying Your
Discouragement*

Nehemiah 4:10-15

Destroying Your Discouragement

(*) Carolyn's Stroke

(*) Doretha's Son

Would you be able to talk about hope if this was your life?

- Some well-meaning person would talk to you about hope, even quote Bible verses to you, but sometimes it is hard to find or even believe it

Destroying Your Discouragement

What exactly are the limits to human tolerance?

- What are the units of measure for pain and discouragement and how does your discouragement threshold differ from mine?
- I'm not sure of the answers, but the human spirit can be an amazing thing in one instance and destroyed immediately afterwards

Destroying Your Discouragement

The dictionary defines discourage as – to deprive of courage, to deter, to dishearten, to hinder

- You can also throw in doom, depression, defeat, despair

Destroying Your Discouragement

The Bible refers to discouragement as – to be faint or to grow weary

- **Colossians 3:21 NLT** Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.
- **Luke 18:1 NIV** Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up (lose heart).

Destroying Your Discouragement

It takes tough faith to live above discouragement when its screaming in your head

- The nation of Israel was totally defeated by the Babylonians and taken into captivity

Destroying Your Discouragement

It takes diligent faith to live above discouragement

- **Psalms 127:1-5 NLT** 1 Beside the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept as we thought of Jerusalem. 2 We put away our harps, hanging them on the branches of poplar trees. 3 For our captors demanded a song from us. Our tormentors insisted on a joyful hymn: “Sing us one of those songs of Jerusalem!” 4 But how can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a pagan land?

Destroying Your Discouragement

Priest Ezra was a priest to the broken hearts

Nehemiah was the rebuildder of broken dreams and he has given us a lesson about revelation hope from the rubble of discouragement

Nehemiah chapter 4 puts us in the middle of exciting times for Israel

- About 30,000+ Jews returned with the purpose of rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem
- The King of Persia even paid for the trip, paid for supplies and provided protection for the journey
- No discouragement here when everything is going great

Nehemiah chapter 4 puts us in the middle of exciting times

- They discovered the walls were totally broken and burnt, the job was much bigger than they thought
- They were in constant attack from every side by those who did not want the walls rebuilt
- Raiders attacked by night keeping the Israelite settlers tired, discouraged and fearful

Nehemiah chapter 4 puts us in the middle of exciting times

Right in the middle a fresh wave of discouragement beaks out and Nehemiah must deal with it

Nehemiah 4:10-15

Nehemiah recognized that discouragement was silently spreading and threatening to overtake the ministry God had given them

- I think we can all agree God had given them this work
- The construction project would take 52 days of cleaning up the remains of the old way and laying the new wall

Slide 12

RH1

Randy Harwood, 8/24/2019

Nehemiah recognized that discouragement was silently spreading and threatening to overtake the ministry God had given them

They would work for days and days just clearing up and it did not look like they were accomplishing anything

- About a month into the project discouragement crept in
- Nehemiah saw the signs

Slide 13

RH1

Randy Harwood, 8/24/2019

Signs of Discouragement

Fatigue – **vs. 10a NIV** Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is giving out”

- Fatigue was catching up to them and when energy runs short, so does courage

Signs of Discouragement

Fatigue –

Every human body is governed by its own mathematical formula involving time, pressure and exertion

- If you exceed the limits, then cracks start to appear
- You begin to be tense, irritable and gloomy

Signs of Discouragement

Fatigue –

If you exceed the limits, then cracks start to appear

- You begin to be tense, irritable and gloomy
- You get diminishing returns on the investment of your time and talents then the deluge of discouragement comes

Signs of Discouragement

Frustration – **vs. 10b NIV** “and there is so much rubble”

- There is so much rubble we are not able to build the wall
- Have you ever worked days and/or weeks and wondered if your efforts had any significance?

Signs of Discouragement

Frustration –

- The Israelites no longer saw the glory of the finished wall but only broken bricks, mud and debris
- The Hebrew reads like it suddenly came upon them and appeared like nothing had been accomplished

Signs of Discouragement

Failure – **vs. 10b NIV** “we cannot rebuild the wall.”

- They threw up their hands and declared the project and themselves failures
- We're tired, We're fed up, We can't do this and we can't take this anymore, I am so done...

Signs of Discouragement

Failure –

- Negative talk is infectious spreading like a virus throughout the community
- **Proverbs 23:7 KJV** 7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he

Signs of Discouragement

Failure –

- They began to believe the lie, “I haven’t accomplished anything, I’m a failure”
- Erma Bombeck, “I’m not a failure. I failed at doing some things. There is a big difference.”

Signs of Discouragement

Fear – vs. 11-12 NIV 11 Also our enemies said, “Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.” 12 Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, “Wherever you turn, they will attack us.”

Signs of Discouragement

Fear –

- Oh great, now not only must I deal with the mess and building, now I've got to worry about dying
- Was this fear real? Yes, but it was heightened by their fatigue, frustration and feelings of failure
- Bitter words (criticism) will erode your spirit, work, home and your ministry

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

He Cried Out To God, **Nehemiah 4:4-5, 9 NLT** 4 Then I prayed, “Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land! 5 Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of[c] the builders.” 9 But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

He Cried Out To God –

- Cry out to God first instead after you've tried everything else on your own
- Most of us will wait until we are exhausted then call out

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

He Cried Out To God –

Ask God to help you sort out all the issues

- Write them down, it brings the things hidden into the light and imposes order to your random feelings
- Read it out loud, let your ears hear your voice
- Sometimes you just need to be a child and cry out to your heavenly father like David did

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Continue The Work God Has Given You To Do,

Nehemiah 4:6 NIV So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

- Our immediate reaction to discouragement is to quit

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RH2

Randy Harwood, 8/25/2019

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Continue The Work God Has Given You To Do –

- People leave churches, leave jobs, walk away from marriage all because they have encountered the season of discouragement
- Emotions are treacherous advisors
- We always come to regret our emotional walkouts

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Continue The Work God Has Given You To Do –

- Nehemiah felt all the discouragement of the people, but he never set down the trowel, never missed a beat on laying another brick
- Yes, there were problems to deal with, but he wasn't going to set aside the mandate God had given them

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Concentrate On The Big Picture, **Nehemiah 4:13-14 NIV**

13 Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. 14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Concentrate On The Big Picture –

- The people were so spread out that they could not see each other nor receive encouragement from one another
- They could only see their little hole in the wall, their pile of rubbish and it was difficult to maintain any perspective

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Concentrate On The Big Picture –

- Nehemiah positioned the people in rows along the walls so they could see what they were accomplishing making it easy to keep the big picture in mind
- **Matthew 16:18 NIV** And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Concentrate On The Big Picture –

- The world is filled with voices of discouragement, but you have a Father in heaven with the power and authority for you to see you through

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Claim The Encouragement Of God's Promises –

Nehemiah 4:14 NIV After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Claim The Encouragement Of God's Promises –

- When your heart is ailing it needs a transfusion of hope and power
- Learn to principle of force-feeding – don't wait for your emotions to feel like being in God's word

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Ask God for more than words on a page, more than ideas, and spiritual concepts

- I need you God, I need your voice in my heart and I'm asking you to meet me in your Word today, Lord
- **Galatians 6:9 NIV** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Carry Someone Else's Burdens –

- If you read on in chapter 4 you see a pattern of people helping each other
- Some carrying, some were guarding, some were building, others were wearing swords

There are 5 responses from Nehemiah to deal with their discouragement

Carry Someone Else's Burdens –

- They were unified in their commitment, watching out for each other
- Discouragement tends to send us inward
- God wants you entrenched a burden-bearing community of believers

Summary

Carolyn – The stroke devastated her, but God didn't want me to give up and she believed in Him and she knew He believed in her

- There were many dark days and nights, but now she plays piano one handed and is grateful just to be alive

Summary

Doretha – Many black months before she came to the end of her despair

- One night she fell to her knees before God and cried out and she found a newness in life
- “God mended my broken heart, saved my husband in jail, brought me and my husband closer, showed us how to love and be loved and not take life for granted

Summary

Psalms 37:25 NIV I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.



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Discouragement*

Nehemiah 4:10-15