**DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS**

**Nehemiah 6**

**THE BIG IDEA: No matter what schemes Satan uses to attempt to distract you, keep your focus on God’s mission and you will succeed.**

**NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WORK GOD HAS GIVEN YOU TO DO ON EARTH**

* *“’I am doing important work and cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?’ 4 Four times they sent me the same proposal, and I gave them the same reply.”* (Neh. 6:2-4)
* **There are many distractions in this world that try to lure us away from God’s work, but God’s true people make God’s work the priority.**

**THE RUMORS AND LIES THAT PEOPLE SPREAD ABOUT GOD’S FAITHFUL WILL BE EXPOSED AS SUCH**

* *“Then I replied to him, ‘There is nothing to these rumors you are spreading; you are inventing them in your own mind.’ 9 For they were all trying to intimidate us, saying, ‘They will drop their hands from the work, and it will never be finished.’ But now, my God, strengthen my hands.”* (Nehemiah 6:8-9)
* **Nehemiah didn’t spend his time defending himself against false rumors and accusations; he simply said they were false, he prayed for endurance, and he turned the rumor spreaders over to the Lord.**
* *“My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat for what they have done, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the other prophets who wanted to intimidate me.”* (Nehemiah 6:14)
* **God does not want you fighting battles that belong to Him.**

**BE WISE IN WHO YOU LISTEN TO BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY DECEIVERS MASQUERADING AS GOD’S SPOKESPERSON**

* *“I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was restricted to his house. He said: Let’s meet at the house of God, inside the temple. Let’s shut the temple doors because they’re coming to kill you. They’re coming to kill you tonight! 11 But I said, ‘Should a man like me run away? How can someone like me enter the temple and live? I will not go.’ 12 I realized that God had not sent him, because of the prophecy he spoke against me. Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13 He was hired, so that I would be intimidated, do as he suggested, sin, and get a bad reputation, in order that they could discredit me.”* (Nehemiah 6:10-13)
* **A Christian who does not study to show himself/herself approved has no defense against the false teachings that distract people from the true work of God.**
* *“The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures. 17 Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stable position.”* (2 Peter 3:16-17)
* **Truly knowing the will of God is rooted in knowing the Word of God (Bible).**

**STAYING FOCUSED ON AND COMMITTED TO THE LORD ENSURES OUR SUCCESS**

* *“The wall was completed in fifty-two days, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul. 16 When all our enemies heard this, all the surrounding nations were intimidated and lost their confidence, for they realized that this task had been accomplished by our God.”* (Nehemiah 6:15-16)
* **The beautiful thing about God’s promises and His faithfulness is that we can never fail if we stay in His will.**
* **God will complete His work and get His glory no matter what Satan, false teachers, rumor spreaders, or naysayers may try to do to stop it.**
* *“Remember what happened long ago, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and no one is like me. 10 I declare the end from the beginning, and from long ago what is not yet done, saying: my plan will take place, and I will do all my will.”* (Isaiah 46:9-10)

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Ice Breaker:** Share about a time in your journey as a Christian that something changed resulting in you hungering more for God?

**Start thinking:**

* What do we learn about God from Nehemiah 6?
* What stands out to you in Nehemiah 6 as you read it?
* How did Nehemiah know that Shemaiah was a false prophet?
* How did Nehemiah handle false rumors about him?

**Start sharing. Discuss in depth to create openness.**

* In honesty, what are some things in your life that potentially distract you from the Lord’s work?
* Have you had people spread false rumors about you? If so, how did you handle it? What, if anything, might you do different this time around?
* How does your knowledge of the Bible help you discern false teaching/false “words” from God? What can/should you do to deepen your knowledge of the Bible?
* What is your Big Takeaway from this message? What will you do as result of what you learned/heard?

**Pray**

* Share prayer requests and pray for each other.
* Pray for our community to be open to the Gospel.
* Pray for our church, and leadership.
* Pray for our government leaders, and local leaders.
* Pray about anything else the Holy Spirit leads you to pray