

The Causes Of Discouragement

There is nothing that takes the wind out of our sails as quickly as discouragement. It is difficult to cure. Continuing our series from last week, Nehemiah 4 demonstrates four causes of discouragement.

First, there was fatigue (vs. 10). The "newness" of the project had worn off. We are excited at first, but then the difficulties become real. A loss of strength and even sickness can take an emotional toll on us, as it did with Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-4). Second, there was frustration (vs. 10). There was much rubbish still left to the project. It is easy to lose sight of the end sometimes. The builders had lost the vision of the completed wall around Jerusalem. Sometimes we get frustrated when we do not progress quickly enough.

Third, there was failure (vs. 10.). When you lose confidence, discouragement is just around the corner. When you lose your confidence, you lose heart. That produces an overwhelming, discouraging sense that you are never going to catch up. How do you think Moses felt when he stood before Pharaoh and he rejected him (Exodus 5:1-2)? We think that failure will finish us -- it will not! Fourth, there was fear (vs. 14). Francis Bacon said, "It is a miserable state of mind to have few things to desire, and many things to fear." There were times when the saints were crippled by fear (Galatians 2:11-14; 2 Timothy 4:16). To combat fear, we hang on to "things" for tangible security. Job lost his family and his possessions, yet he kept his faith in God (Job 1:13-22), and one day you will leave all your possessions behind (1 Timothy 6:7). Next week, we will look at some positive steps to overcome discouragement.

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