



PART FOUR INTRODUCTION

Life is a series of obstacles. Once we accept this truth, our response to obstacles will determine whether we can progress. There are three responses to obstacles, to be a: Quitter, Camper, or Climber. When faced with an obstacle, a quitter gives up, a camper stays status quo and a climber overcomes the obstacle.

If we want to overcome an obstacle, we have to overcome Discouragement, Despair, Doubt and Distraction. When there is opposition, let prayer be your first response and not your last resort. At the same time, we are still responsible for carrying out God's work. When we are faced with obstacles, adopt Nehemiah's response to his naysayers:

"I am doing a great work and cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the last obstacle that you faced (however small or big)?
 - a. Did you face any Discouragement, Despair, Doubt and Distraction?
 - b. Do you yourself doubt that the obstacle can be overcome?
 - c. How about from God's view? Would this be an obstacle to God?
 - d. Have you prayed?
2. Read Nehemiah 2:11 – 18. When Nehemiah first went to Jerusalem he stayed there for 3 days, setting out in the night to examine the walls of the city before telling anyone what God had put in his heart to do for Jerusalem.

- a. What groundwork have you done to find out about the obstacle you are facing? Do you have a plan to overcome the obstacle?
- b. In your plan, are you honouring God without abdicating your responsibility?

When Nehemiah and his team were faced with enemies who wanted to fight against Jerusalem, they both “*prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.*” (Chapter 4:9)

- c. If you are facing opposition, have you considered submitting to the authority of those above you? The authorities placed over us may be our parents, spiritual parents, teachers, bosses, etc.
3. Read Nehemiah 6 on Nehemiah’s response to each of the challenges he faced by Jerusalem’s enemies.

Do an inductive bible study (observations, interpretation and application). You can use the following as a guide.

- i. Posture your heart. Spend some time in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher. Open your heart to the Lord to speak to you.
- ii. Read the passage aloud.
- iii. Ask some context questions of the passage:
 - What sort of writing is this? (a letter, a poem, a narrative etc?)
 - Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?
 - What has happened so far in this particular book of the Bible?
- iv. Some observation questions of the passage:
 - Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the passage?
 - What is the main point or points?
 - What surprises are there?
 - What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?
- v. Some leading questions of the text:
 - How does this passage relate to other parts of the book?
 - How does the passage relate to Jesus?
 - What does this teach us about God?
 - How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?
- vi. Some application questions of the passage:
 - How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
 - Is there some attitude I need to change?
 - How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

We are called to keep the faith and overcome obstacle after obstacle that comes our way. When we look at the long line of hurdles that seems to stretch into infinity, this may seem disheartening and impossible to overcome.

With each obstacle we face, it falls on us to negate the negative or no one else will. Just as the light fills the darkness, we can only cling to God's promises to negate the negative. To name just one:

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."
~ Isaiah 40:31

With each obstacle we overcome, we declare the hand of God in the work we are doing. With each decision to face the next obstacle, we exercise our faithfulness to God's commands.

CHANGE YOUR MIND

"... they were scheming to harm me; so I sent messengers to them with this reply: "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?"". ~ Nehemiah 6:2-3