



## ***Thwart The Wart: How To Deal With Problems In Life***

### ***Nehemiah 4***

#### ***Icebreaker:***

What's a problem you dealt with this week?

#### ***The Study:***

No sooner does work on repairing Jerusalem's walls begin, than problems and opposition arise that threatens to undo their efforts. You can count on it – the moment you try to move your life in a better direction, something will try to stop you dead in your tracks. How we face problems in our lives is a vital life-skill which the Lord wants to teach us. This study unpacks 4 lessons that come out of the story in Nehemiah 4.



#### ***Lesson #1: Ordinary Life Is Filled With Problems***

1. Read Nehemiah 2:9-10, and 4:1-3. Describe the problem that confronts Nehemiah and his people.

2. How does the Bible describe ordinary life?

*Psalms 90:10*

*Psalms 103:15-16*

*John 16:33*

3. M. Scott Peck wrote in "The Road Less Travelled":

*"Once we truly know that life is difficult—once we truly understand and accept it—then the fact that life is difficult no longer matters."*

What does he mean?

#### ***Lesson #2: Instead of grouching about problems, meet them head on.***

4. How do Nehemiah and the people respond to the threat posed by Sanballat and Tobiah? Read Nehemiah 4:4-6.

5. Notice Nehemiah's reflex is to talk to God right away about the problems that have appeared. Have you ever done this? How do you think it might help in dealing with our problems?

6. Nehemiah's prayer is something called an "imprecatory prayer" (where we ask for God's judgment to come down on the one who hurts us). The psalms contain quite a few of these prayers (e.g. Psalm 137:8-9, Psalm 139:19). How do these prayers mesh with Jesus' teaching that we love our enemies and bless them? What's good about them? What's not-so-good?

**Lesson #3: Instead of seeing problems as obstacles to stop you, see them as opportunities to grow you.**

7. Read Nehemiah 4:7-9. How did Nehemiah respond when Sanballat and Tobiah doubled-down on their opposition? Why was it important that Nehemiah not stop the work?

8. Before John F. Kennedy became president, he was a war hero. When someone asked him how he became a war hero, he replied, "Easy. Somebody sunk my boat." What does this tell us about JFK's attitude when facing a problem?

9. Nehemiah gives us three practical suggestions for how we can develop this mindset. The first is:

***Tamp down no-can-do thinking*** (vss.10-12).

Why are grumbling and complaining so contagious and so destructive?

10. The second suggestion is:

***Always believe there is a way forward. Always believe there are answers and solutions.*** (vs.13).

Why do so many struggle with this? Read the following quote from John Maxwell and share your thoughts.

*"Perhaps the most important problem-solving skill that I have learned and practiced over the years is mental agility. I am always looking for answers, I always believe I can find them, and I'm always convinced*

*that there is more than one solution to any problem...Any leader who can shift his or her thinking from **Is there an answer?** to **There is always an answer to There must be a good answer** has the potential to become not only a fantastic problem solver, but also a change agent for opportunity."*

11. The third suggestion is:

***Dedicate yourself to becoming a master of encouragement.*** (vs. 14)

If you're an 'encourager', how will you show it?

**Lesson #4: Rally toward unity in the face of problems.**

12. Read verses 18-20. Why is it important in church life that we face problems and solve problems together?

13. What are some things a healthy church can do to promote unity?

## Prayer Requests:

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