

City of God Part 21 - “Resist” (9-20-26)

Introduction: Nehemiah 6:1-14 - Plot against Nehemiah, when enemy attacks are tempting to succumb to

1) Distract - by drawing away

Nehemiah 6:1-2 (NKJV)

[1] Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), [2] that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

Note: The enemy’s plan to draw away, it could be tempting to make an alliance to bring “peace”

- **“among the villages”** - small town in the shadow of larger cities. Most literal translation is “young lions”
- **“Ono”** - 30 miles NW of Jerusalem
- **“harm”** - evil or mischief

Nehemiah 6:3-4 (ESV)

[3] And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?” [4] And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner.

Enemy’s goal: Draw away in order to harm

Nehemiah’s Response: Kept to the clear task at hand, but also kept close to the people of God.

1 Peter 5:8-9 (ESV)

[8] Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Resist: The Distractions of the enemy. Unnecessary distractions will destroy us; so stay firm in your call.

2) Discourage - with gossip and accusation

Nehemiah 6:5-7 (ESV)

[5] In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. [6] In it was written, “It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king. [7] And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, ‘There is a king in Judah.’ And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together.”

Note: The enemy’s plan is to discourage him through gossip and false accusations.

Nehemiah 6:8-9 (ESV)

[8] Then I sent to him, saying, “No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind.” [9] For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

Enemy’s goal: Frighten and discourage in order to weaken

Nehemiah’s Response: Doesn’t even engage with it. Doesn’t try to defend or explain himself.

Resist: The need to Defend yourself. How much time and energy do we spend trying to defend ourselves?

3) Discredit - temptation to compromise and self-protect

Nehemiah 6:10 (ESV)

Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night."

Note: This is coming from a trusted friend - advising Nehemiah to protect himself from a plot to kill him.

The advice: Come hide in the house of God, within the temple. This is understood to mean the Holy Place - but no common man was to go there, only those of the priestly order.

Nehemiah 6:11-13 (ESV)

[11] But I said, "Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in." [12] And I understood and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. [13] For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me.

Note: This required discernment - He had to spot false prophecy from a trusted friend. He was able to do that because this advice didn't align with the character and ways of God.

This is betrayal - not just attack from outside, but a trusted friend, working to do harm.

Enemy's goal: Tempt him through a trusted friend, in order to discredit him.

Nehemiah's Response: Discerns the intent and refuses, because He knows God's character and commands.

Resist: The Temptation to Compromise

Are we cultivating discernment? Key: knowing the Lord - His character, His ways, and His voice.

Ephesians 6:10-11 (ESV)

[10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Note: Knowing and relying on the Lord is key. This requires preparation, which enables us to stand against the schemes of the enemy.

Nehemiah 6:14 (ESV)

Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

Note: Nehemiah places his enemies in the Lord's hands, and continues in the work God has set before him.

Conclusion: Nehemiah understood the work he had been called to do, stayed connected to God's people, and relied on the Lord for discernment and protection. He refused to engage with the enemy's plots and plans, and instead He handed them over to the Lord.