



Follow Your Heart and Plan with Your Head

Part 3: “Plan for Trouble”

June 20, 2021
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Then Eliashib the high priest and the other priests started to rebuild at the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set up its doors, building the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and the Tower of Hananel.

Nehemiah 3:1 (NLT)

Next were the people from Tekoa, though their leaders refused to work with the construction supervisors.

Nehemiah 3:5 (NLT)

Next was Uzziel son of Harhaiah, a goldsmith by trade, who also worked on the wall. Beyond him was Hananiah, a manufacturer of perfumes. They left out a section of Jerusalem as they built the Broad Wall.

Nehemiah 3:8 (NLT)

Naming, Noticing and Defining: Nehemiah makes sure every family group and individual is recognized for their work.

They had specific assignments and clarity around where their work begins and ends.

Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers, “What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they’re doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?” Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, “That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!” Then I prayed, “Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land! Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders.”

Nehemiah 4:1-5 (NLT)

Praying in response to ridicule and

sarcasm: Counter-point defending is pointless with a mocker. Ignore it and pray.

At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious. They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion. But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

Nehemiah 4:6-9 (NLT)

Praying and preparing in response to threats: The most common omission made by people on a mission is to plan for the possibility of problems. People who are convinced that their heartbreak-motivated plans are from God can be especially vulnerable to idealism. Best advice: Remain convinced of your assignment and expect trouble.

Then the people of Judah began to complain, "The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves." Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, "Before they know what's happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work." The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, "They will come from all directions and attack us!" So I placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the exposed areas.

I stationed the people to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows. Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!"

When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall.

Nehemiah 4:10-15 (NLT)

Threats and confusion in three arenas: Outside, Among and Inward

- You can't (shouldn't) ignore outside threats. Work at the problem you are called to solve and guard what you are building. Planned responses to planned threats
(Ephesians 6:11)
- Most trouble among other builders is caused by fatigue, loss of hope, and feeling overwhelmed. Deal with the cause, not the symptoms.
- Defending the low places in the wall. Stand guard at the inward and relational places of your life that are most vulnerable.

