

<sup>1</sup>When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates—  
<sup>2</sup>Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: "Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono."

But they were scheming to harm me; <sup>3</sup>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?"  
<sup>4</sup>Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer... *Nehemiah 4:1-3*

Nehemiah was a man with a God-ordained vision.

Vision attracts \_\_\_\_\_.

## Two kinds of criticism

- ✓ Constructive Criticism: is offered for the person's benefit and personal or professional development. Constructive criticism is motivated by a desire to help a person \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ Criticism: is given with the intent of tearing a person down, belittling him/her. The result is that the recipient may become discouraged, lose confidence and give up.

Every leader must develop the ability to measure the value or worth of criticism. He has to determine the source and the motive, and he has to listen with discernment. Sometimes the best course of action is to respond to criticism and learn from it. Other times, it must be completely \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm convinced that Nehemiah's ability to handle adversity and make wise decisions grew out of the quiet moments of his life with God and God's Word. Nehemiah embraced \_\_\_\_\_ and in those moments of prayer and meditation upon the scriptures God put a vision in Nehemiah's heart and called him to rebuild God's city and revive God's people.

Conviction, character and courage grow  
out of our quiet moments with God.

# Facing Opposition

# March 7, 2010

## How to respond to toxic criticism:

- 1) **Do not \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. Nehemiah did not enter the mud-slinging arena.
    - i. Stay out of the ring! Resist the temptation to slander a critic. You will end up just as bitter and foolish as they are.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ **for strength and offer your critics to God!**
  - ✓ Nehemiah's prayer in 4:4-5 is not a prayer of hatred but rather a cry for justice in the land.
  - ✓ Nehemiah's prayer in 4:9 is a request for strength to go on building and not give way to fear and discouragement.
- 3) **Claim God's \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - ✓ "...if you return to me and obey my commands." Neh.1:9
  - ✓ "The God of Heaven will give us success..." Neh.2:20
  - ✓ "Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome" Neh.4:14b
  - ✓ "Our God will fight for us." Neh.4:20
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ **falsehood and injustice.**
  - ✓ Look people in the eye and speak the truth. Neh.2:20, 6:8
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ **for opposition as you carry out God's vision.**  
 Nehemiah 4:13-23
  - ✓ *Spiritual Work and spiritual warfare is the rhythm of the Christian life.*
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ **give up.**
  - ✓ *Nehemiah's response to his critic's attempt to kill his vision and stop the work... "Hand me another brick!"*

"So we rebuilt the wall..." Neh.4:6

<sup>15</sup>So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. <sup>16</sup>When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our \_\_\_\_\_. ~ *Nehemiah 6:15-16*