

DEALING WITH INTERNAL PROBLEMS
NEHEMIAH 5

INTRODUCTION

Up to this point Nehemiah's challenges as a spiritual leader focused primarily on those who were outside of Judah—Sanballat and Tobiah and their forces.

However, before the walls were finally rebuilt, he encountered the most difficult and intense kind of problem that almost every spiritual leader has to face sometime—problems from within!

1. **Moses Faced It.**
 - a. **Remember How The Children of Israel Constantly Murmured Against Moses And Aaron And The LORD?**
 - b. **Also, There Were Various Challenges To His Authority.**
(Aaron and Miriam; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram - 250)
2. **Joshua Faced It.**
 - a. **Achan Took Of The Accursed Thing.**
 - b. **Israel Went Whoring After Other Gods.**
3. **Jesus Faced It.**
 - a. **His Disciples Had Periods Of Unbelief.**
 - b. **His Disciples Rejected The Purpose That He Came.**
 - c. **Judas Betrayed Him.**
 - d. **Peter Denied Him.**
 - e. **Thomas Doubted Him.**
4. **Paul Faced It.**
 - a. **Corinthian Church.**
 - b. **Galatian Church—Peter's problem with the Judaizers, separating himself from Gentiles.**

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Every leader faces it at some point whether in the ministry or in secular life.

1. **Businesses face them—finances, personnel**
2. **Churches face them!**

I. NEHEMIAH'S PROBLEMS.

There Were Four Difficulties That Nehemiah Faced At This Time:

A. The People Faced A Food Shortage!

(Cf. Haggai 1:4-6, 9-11, 2:16-19)

1. **The Prophet Haggai Described The Condition Of The People Of Judah Before The Time Of Ezra And Nehemiah.**
 - a. **Their Materialism Separated Them From The Lord!**
 - b. **As A Result, God Began Frustrating Their Expectations!**
 - c. **They Sowed Much, But Reaped Little!**
 - d. **They Tried To Enjoy Life, But Never Seemed To Be Really Happy!**
 - e. **They Could Never Get Ahead And Plan For The Future.**

If the condition that Haggai describes continued for any length of time, the situation of those in Judah could easily fit the description given in Nehemiah 5:2-6.

2. **The Work On The Wall Hindered Their Tending Their Crops!**

B. Some Were Buying Food, But Had To Mortgage Their Lands, Vineyards, And Houses To Do So. (vs 3)

C. Some Were Borrowing Money To Pay Their Taxes And Were Paying Exorbitant Interest Rates To Their Own Jewish Brethren. (vs 4)

D. This Led To The Fourth Problem—To Repay Their

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**Creditors, They Had To Sell Their Children Into Slavery.
(Vs 5)**

Morale, which was already low (Neh 4:10-12) because of external pressures, physical exhaustion, and fear, now took another plunge because of these internal problems.

II. NEHEMIAH'S RESPONSE. (VS 6)

A. He Had A Right To Be Angry With The People!

- 1. They Were Looking To Self And Its Resources Instead Of Depending On The Lord!**
- 2. They Had Let The Problem Get Out Of Hand Before Saying Anything!**

B. His Anger Was Directed At The Jewish Nobles And Rulers!

- 1. Their Selfishness!**
- 2. Their Greed!**
"What Can I Do You For?" —in the name of the Lord.
- 3. Their Insensitivity!**
Some people were hurting and suffering, and those should have been the most compassionate were most guilty of exploitation.

C. Though He Was Right In Being Angry, He Did Not Take Immediate Action!

Spending time reflecting on the problem enabled him to cool down, to see the facts in proper perspective and to decide on a course of action.

III. NEHEMIAH'S REACTION.

A. He Rebuked Those Responsible. (vs 7)

They were violating God's command.

B. He Called A Meeting. (vs 8-9)

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- 1. He Pointed Out Their Inconsistencies. (Vs 8)**
- 2. He Pointed Out That God's Reputation Was At Stake. (Vs 9)**
- 3. He Referred To His Own Example And That Of Others! (Vs 10; 14-19)**
- 4. He Asked For Restoration Of That Which Was Taken! (Vs 11)**
- 5. He Made Them Take An Oath Not To Do It Again! (Vs 12-13)**

CONCLUSION

They needed to get back to their true purpose—the glory of God and not selfish gain! So what about us?

1. Realize there is an attitude to maintain—the cause of Christ!

Galatians 6:14—"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

2. Realize there is a motive to inspire—doing all to the glory of God!

1 Corinthians 10:31—"Whether therefore ye eat..."
Ephesians 1:12—"That we should be to the praise of his glory."
Colossians 3:17—"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

3. Realize there is a power by which to "do right"—the power of God by the Holy Spirit. (2 Timothy 1:7-9)

Every internal problem between God's own can be put away and God can have the victory, if we are jealous for the honor and glory of God, alone!