

LESSON 29 Devotional

Resolving Team Conflicts

Nehemiah was in the process of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Despite having to stand against their enemies, the work moved forward until it was half-way completed. They were gaining traction, and it had to be fulfilling to see the progress; but then, the work was derailed.

In Nehemiah 5, we learn that a major conflict arose amongst the Jewish people working on the wall. Amid the stress of building the wall and standing against the enemies who wanted to harm them, there had been a famine.

In the midst of this crisis, people were mortgaging their fields, they were overtaxed, and they were even pledging their children to buy food. Their own Jewish brothers were forcing them to sell their children into slavery, *and* they were the ones buying them. Some even sold the children to foreigners, only to have Nehemiah and his men buying them back out of slavery.

Jewish law said that if a brother was in need, you were to care for them without charging any interest. Taking their children into slavery was certainly not acceptable. This situation stopped the work and caused a huge conflict amongst the people. Nehemiah had to do something to resolve this conflict and quickly.

Read Nehemiah 5:6-13.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to verse 7, who did Nehemiah first talk with about this issue? After talking with the nobles and officials, why do you believe Nehemiah took the issue before a great assembly?

2. As you read through this passage, break down Nehemiah's actions into steps. What steps did Nehemiah take to resolve this issue? In what are other ways could this have been handled that would have resulted in outcomes there were not as desirable?

3. How would you feel about having to navigate a conflict like Nehemiah's? What would be the hardest part for you? Why?

4. What lessons can you learn from Nehemiah's approach that may help you in resolving internal conflicts?
