

Clearing Hurdles: Overcoming the Obstacles in the Race

Clearing the Hurdles of Discouragement

📖 Nehemiah 2:17–18 (NIV) "...I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." ¹⁸ I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work."

Discouragement **doubts** your **potential**.

📖 Nehemiah 4:1–2 (NIV) "When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews,

² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"

📖 Nehemiah 4:3 (NIV) "Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!"

📖 Nehemiah 4:4–6 (NIV) "Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. ⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. ⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart."

Discouragement **discounts** your **progress**.

📖 Nehemiah 4:7–9 (NIV) "But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. ⁸ They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. ⁹ But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat."

📖 Nehemiah 4:10 (NIV) "Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.'"

1. **Fatigue** attaches to discouragement.
2. **Frustration** attaches to discouragement.
3. **Failure** attaches to discouragement.

Discouragement **disregards** your **protection**.

📖 Nehemiah 4:11 (NIV) "Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work."

📖 Nehemiah 4:12 (NIV) "Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us."

How to Hurdle Discouragement

1. **Learn your weak spots.**

📖 Nehemiah 4:13 (NIV) "Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows."

📖 Job 22:22 (NIV) "Accept instruction from His mouth and lay up His words in your heart."

2. **Lean on GOD.**

📖 Nehemiah 4:14a (NIV) "After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome..."

📖 Hebrews 13:6 (NIV) "So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

📖 Psalm 16:8 (NLT) "I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for He is right beside me."

3. **Leave no one behind.**

📖 Nehemiah 4:14b (NIV) "...fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."

📖 Hebrews 3:13 (NIV) "...encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

📖 Nehemiah 6:15-16 (NIV) "...the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ 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 God."

Digging Deeper: The dictionary defines discouragement as depriving of courage or confidence. Are you discouraged? Do you feel courageous? Would you say you are confident? In what area are you making progress in life? What tends to stop your progress? Looking at your life, do you know where you are most vulnerable? Do you trust that God is with you? Do you believe that God is for you?