



## Unit 7 Guide

### **SERIES: LESSONS ON THE POWER OF COMBINED EFFORT**

#### **Lesson #7: “Joining Together to Stay Focused”**

##### **Nehemiah 6:1-4**

**Announcements and opening prayer.**



**Connect:** an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters. **Icebreaker:** Can you think of a time when you had something you were doing and you kept getting side-tracked?

*It is so easy to get sidetracked in our marriages, our families, our goals and dreams for our lives and even in our faith. In fact, every time you get on target, something seems to come along and knock you off course. I wonder if Nehemiah might have something to teach us about this today?*

**The Bottom Line:** Today we see that God points out that you can expect outsiders to try to refocus your goals.

#### **LESSON PLAN**



**Denotes “Apply”**

**Background:** Baseball Hall-of-Famer Yogi Berra is credited with coining the famous phrase, “It’s not over till it’s over.” This statement is quite accurate in describing the relentless opposition of Nehemiah’s enemies. Having failed to stop Nehemiah’s wall-building effort by open military engagement, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem resorted to new tactics. An invitation to meet in the plains of Ono (v. 2) was rightfully discerned by Nehemiah to be a trap. He refused the offer. Shortly thereafter, an open letter was sent. Such an unsealed communicate was not only a sign of disrespect and open criticism, but also suggested the information therein was public knowledge. The goal of this document was to intimidate Nehemiah into stopping his wall-building work. Nehemiah refused to budge.

#### **Read Nehemiah 6:1-4**

1. What was the motive behind Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem’s invitation for Nehemiah to meet them in one of the villages on the Plain of Ono?
- 🌐 Were you ever bullied or picked on as a child? What was the experience like? What eventually happened?

*These men were not trying to be Nehemiah's friends. They had tried to bully him. That didn't work. With God on his side, Nehemiah had no fear of them, even though the people did. It was Nehemiah who laid out a plan to protect the people.*

**Have someone read Nehemiah 4:13-15.**

*The opposition was determined to find a way to put a stop to Nehemiah's leadership one way or another. They really wanted to do it quietly if possible, to have plausible deniability.*

1. Describe the most intense spiritual warfare you've ever experienced. What were you trying to do? How were you being thwarted?
2. Why didn't their plan to set a trap for Nehemiah work?
3. How many times did they try to get Nehemiah to come down and meet with them?
4. List two or three accomplishments in your life that you completed for God that seemed initially to be impossible.
5. List two or three accomplishments in your life that you completed for God that ultimately were extremely gratifying.
6. Why is it often hard to remember that behind our earthly conflicts is the cosmic war described by Paul in Ephesians 6, that our war is not against flesh and blood, but against evil in the spiritual realm?
7. What role does the church play in keeping us strong in this battle for God's church to be built on earth?

**Read Acts 21:10-14.**

6. How did Paul respond to the fact that there were men who wanted to take his life?

*“In the great spiritual warfare in which we do battle, we are only called to resist and to stand firm. ... James says, ‘Resist the devil and he will flee from you’ (James 4:7). Peter counsels us to ‘be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in our faith’ (1 Peter 5:8–9). The greatest joys come in the greatest victories, and the greatest victories come from the greatest battles—when they are fought in the power and with the armor of the Lord.”—John MacArthur*



**Interactive Teaching Ideas:** ideas for learner-focused teaching. Ask the class to discuss at each table the following assignment and then share the results from each table: Our leadership is called by God to keep us working for Christ and on task for His body to be a powerful witness in Fountain Valley and in the world. What are some ways we can help one another stay in line and working on the goals God has given Pikes Peak Christian Church to accomplish?



**Going Deeper/Homework:**

**Memory Verse:** “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13).

