

October 30, 2022
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
Rebuild // The Story of Nehemiah
Episode 6: The Enemy Within
Pastor Adam Stadtmiller

Nehemiah 5:14-19

¹⁴Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. ¹⁵But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. ¹⁶Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land. ¹⁷Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations. ¹⁸Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people. ¹⁹Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.

The Enemy Within: After overcoming the obstacles of the rubble and relatives, Nehemiah and his people faced the greatest enemy to date. **Greed.**

The greatest threat to the stronghold of your life is always from within its walls.

Context: Powerful Jews were taking advantage of the repatriates, inflicting heavy burdens upon them through predatory lending during a time of famine.

- **Nehemiah 5:1** *Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their fellow Jews. (Famine, Inflation, The Kings tax, Predatory Inflation of 12% per month as well as the 10% required tithe)*

“Greed and contentment cannot coexist”

1. **Let Go of Greed**
2. **Cultivate Contentment**

1. **Let Go of Greed**

- a. **Vs. 15** But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. **But out of reverence for God I did not act like that.**
 - i. Greed is a ravenous glutton whose appetite is never content and once having eaten continues to lust for more.
 - ii. **Vs. 15b** *But out of reverence for God I did not act like that.*

2. **Cultivate Contentment**

- a. **Vs. 14** *Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor.*
 - i. **Nehemiah made the conscious decision to want less and live beneath his means.**
 - **Jesus is our example when it comes to living beneath our means.**
 - ii. **Philippians 2** *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶ [Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.](#) ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.*

“He who is not content with what he has, would not be content with what he would like to have.” *Socrates*

Conclusion: Contentment opens new frontiers and when you want less the boundaries of your life expand. It could then be said, that want is a form of slavery.

- **Vs. 16** *Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land.*

Small Group Questions:

1. What do you find more difficult, dealing with outside challenges or the ones from within? i.e., fears, anxiety, familial strife.
2. Do you struggle with greed?
3. How do you know if you are content?
4. Jesus lived beneath His means. Is this a value that is cherished in our society? What is the cost of wanting more than we need?
5. Contentment opens new frontiers and when you want less the boundaries of your life expand. It could then be said, that want is a form of slavery? Can you explain how wanting less might open more opportunities for you?