

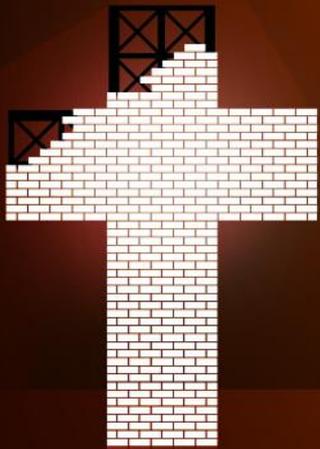
PRINCIPLES FOR GROWTH FROM NEHEMIAH (2)

Nehemiah 4:6

Previously

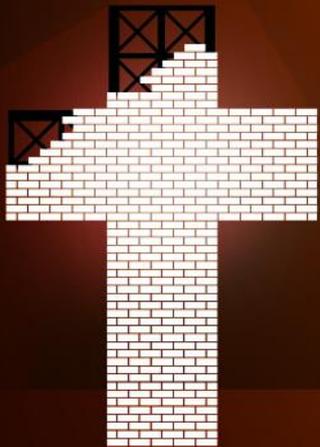
- Last month, we began discussing some principles for growth, both as the church and individually, from the book of **Nehemiah**.

IF there is to be a church here in Bellflower in the future, we need to take steps to make that happen. Steps that will not only help us to grow, but also to THRIVE!

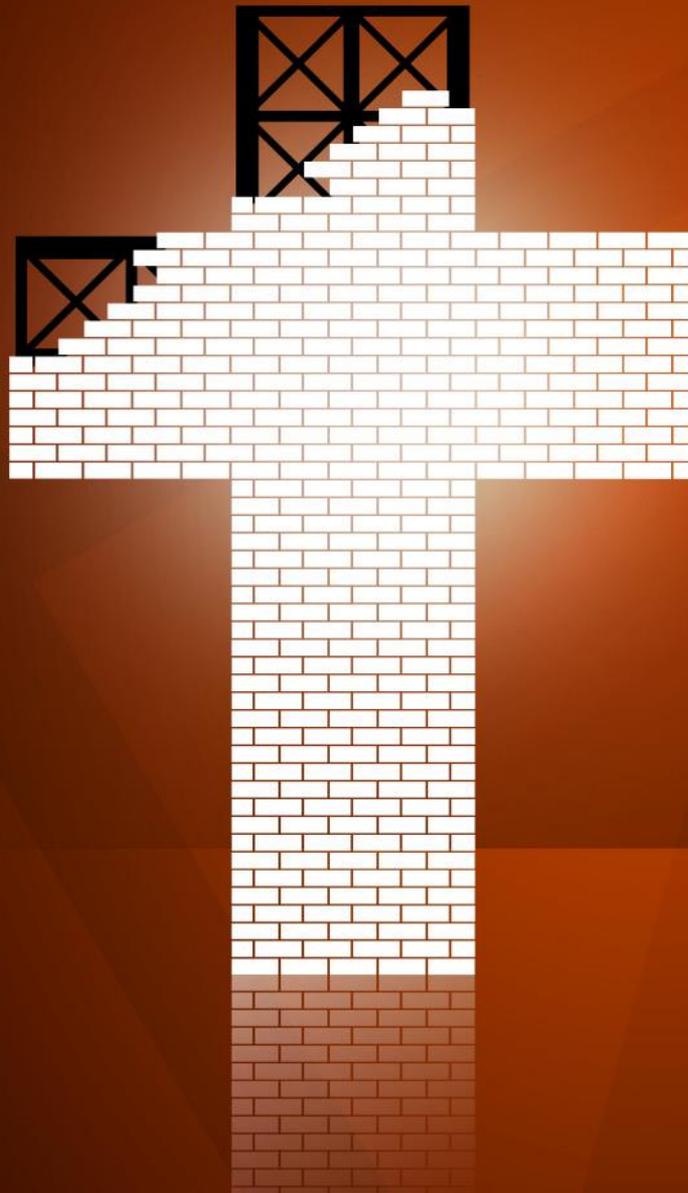


Previously

- We noted 4 principles from **Nehemiah** :
 - 1) We have to care (**1:1-4**)
 - 2) We need to be praying (**1:4-11**)
 - 3) We have to make plans (**2:1ff**)
 - 4) We need to get to work (**2:18**)



In today's lesson:



4 MORE
PRINCIPLES
FOR GROWTH
FROM
NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 4:6

We should Ignore the critics

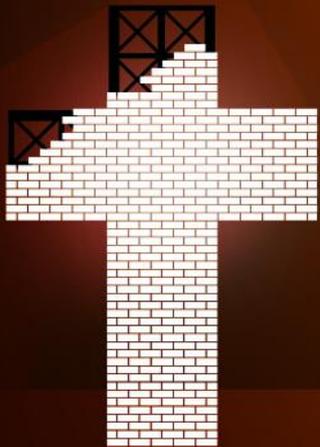
- **Nehemiah 2:18-20, 4:1-3**

Several (foreigners) resisted and began to mock the people as they built the walls.

They challenged their actions - accusing them of rebellion.

They said what they were doing was worthless.

- But the people kept working!



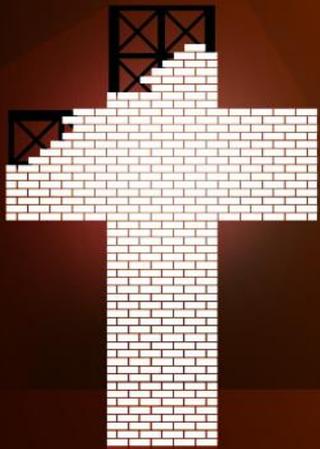
We should Ignore the critics

- When we set out to do something (different or new), we are likely to face criticism.

But, if the work is noble and true,
IGNORE it or answer it!

- Often critics have sinister motives, or perhaps ignorance.

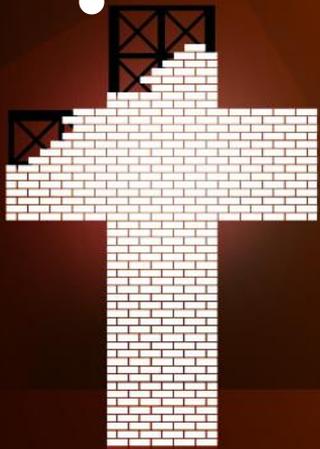
Realize that criticism is not unusual.



We should Ignore the critics

- Jesus was often criticized
- **1 Corinthians 4:2-5**
Ecclesiastes 7:21-22
- Sometimes the best thing we can do is leave it in God's hands.

Note: This is not saying we ignore genuine problems (another point)



We need Every worker

- **Nehemiah 3**, lists various families and individuals getting to work.
 - They all worked
 - Most leaders got involved (**3:1, 18-19**)
 - “Next to” recorded some 16 times in this chapter. Other expressions (e.g. “after him”) as well
- Skilled workers
In front of their own homes
(**29** -meaningful to them)

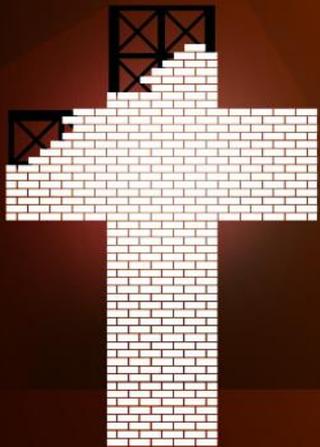


We need Every worker

- If we are to grow, we need everyone doing what they are able to do.

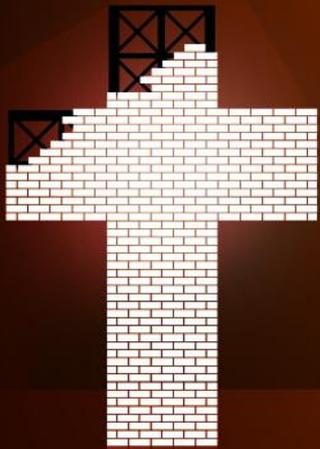
Ephesians 4:16

1 Corinthians 12:12-27



We need Every worker

- When someone is not doing their part, it causes a problem for others. Someone has to “pick up the slack”
 - When all are working, it will render the greatest level of success, whatever the work.



We need Every worker

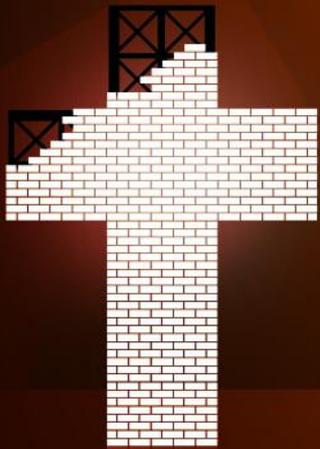
- If we are to grow, we ALL need to be willing to do our part. IF enough are not willing, struggle and possibly failure is inevitable.



I need to work, even when others won't

- **Nehemiah 3:5** - some of the nobles did not put their shoulder to the work.
- The sad reality with any noble task is that some are unwilling to do their part. They will take credit for the good but “not lift a finger”

cf. Matthew 23:3-4

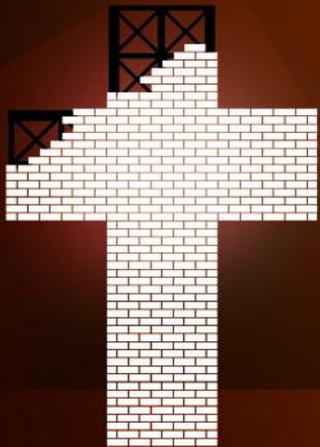


I need to work, even when others won't

- NOTE: While this is applicable to all, as leaders, we need to give extra attention to this!
- Nehemiah did not just bark orders. He got to work with them. He served!

Note **Nehemiah 3:1** -

Eliashib - the high priest



I need to work, even when others won't

- NOTE: As leaders, we need to give extra attention to this!

Jesus, the greatest example - **Matthew 20:28**

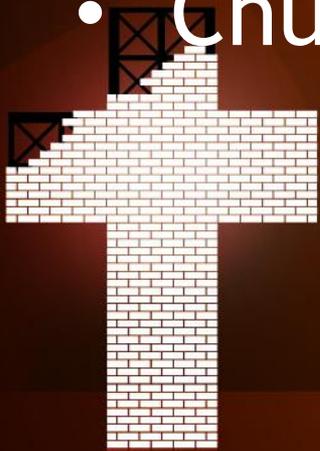
“Follow Me” - **Matthew 4:19, 9:9, 16:24, etc.**

- Church leaders lead by example:

1 Peter 5:3 - elders

1 Timothy 4:12-16 - preachers

1 Timothy 3:10, 13 - deacons

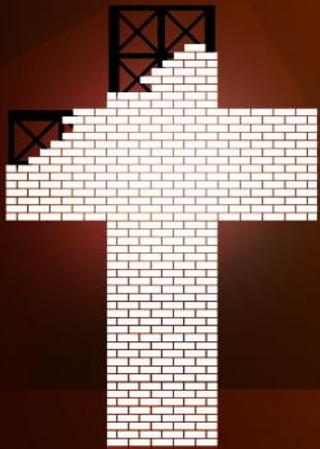


I need to work, even when others won't

- NOTE: Understand, when leaders work, people are “inspired” and follow
 - When leaders FAIL to work, it becomes a source of discouragement and often leads to apathy

This was the sad reality of the scribes and Pharisees -

Matthew 23:1-4



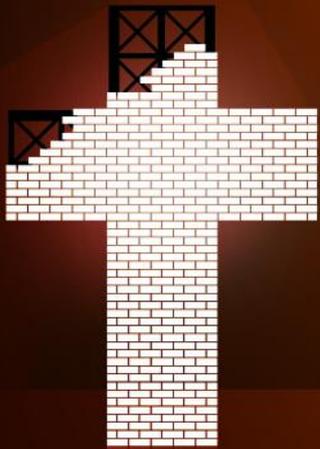
I need to work, even when others won't

- Let us not forget who we are striving to please in this?
 - God is watching - **Proverbs 15:3**
 - One day we will answer to Him -
2 Corinthians 5:10
 - Consider the parable of the talents
Matthew 25:14-30



Do not go looking for trouble

- **Nehemiah 4** addresses several problems:
 - 4:1-5** - as the people build, they are criticized. They ignore and keep working
 - 4:6-9** - enemies begin to conspire against the people and to attack the city.
Nehemiah prays again



Do not go looking for trouble

- **Nehemiah 4** addresses several problems:
4:10-23 - people discouraged by criticisms and threats - Nehemiah takes action and arms the people. They keep working

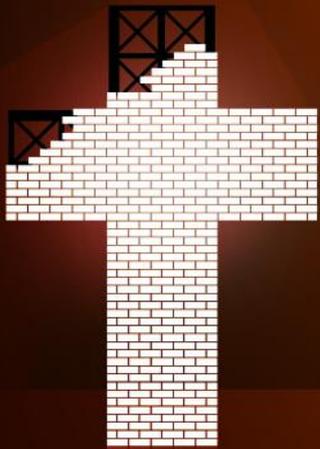


Do not go looking for trouble

- **Nehemiah 4** addresses several problems:

6:1-14 - a conspiracy against Nehemiah to lure him out so they could kill him. He did not fall for their traps OR stop working.

He prays again!



Do not go looking for trouble

- Understand: If you work long enough, there WILL be trouble.

Cf. 2 Timothy 3:12

- Take measures to protect yourself
- Don't deny it is there
- Be cautious - **1 Peter 5:8**

- Prepare yourself - **1 Peter 3:15,**
Ephesians 6:10-18 (defensive)
(cf. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

Do not go looking for trouble

- Understand: If you work long enough, there WILL be trouble.

Cf. 2 Timothy 3:12

- Keep praying about it - **1 Peter 5:7,**
Romans 12:19-21 – put it in
God's hands



Do not go looking for trouble

- Understand: If you work long enough, there WILL be trouble.

Cf. 2 Timothy 3:12

- Just don't go looking for it!

**Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14,
cf. 1 Peter 3:10-12**

Don't let it keep you from
working!



Concluding thoughts

- And thus, we can see progress as Nehemiah keeps building. The walls are up to half their height. But they are not done
- In this we can see principles that we need to consider if we are to be growing as God would have us to do.



**Are you willing
to do your part?**

Let us pray!