

Nehemiah 5:14-19

The Leader's Example

Chapter 4 revealed opposition outside the city and how Nehemiah handled that. In this 5th chapter we have read about Nehemiah dealing with opposition within the city of Jerusalem. The workers had severe difficulties as they worked on the wall and tried to feed their families and pay their bills. They appealed to Nehemiah and he listened. Remember that Nehemiah got angry but took some time to respond. Eventually, those who were guilty of abusing their fellow Jews agreed to return what had been taken. One thing to note is that what Nehemiah writes about here is 12 years later.

I. Nehemiah's Example

Nehemiah was appointed governor of Judah. This is the first mention of his official capacity there. He ruled from 445 to 433BC. In this capacity, he was allowed (and it was common in the Persian kingdom) for governors to collect taxes, food, wine from the governed.

- A. Nehemiah ____ use the food allowance.
- B. Nehemiah ____ impose _____ on the people.

Nehemiah was able to give these things up because he knew something even better: his love for Jehovah and his love for God's people. In this act, Nehemiah is most definitely a _____.

Nehemiah could have used the additional money for the city's treasury but he also knew these taxes would dishearten the people.

In other administrations, the subordinates of the governor would go through a province and collect taxes, sometimes brutally doing so but not in Nehemiah's. vs 16 reveals that Nehemiah and his men continued to work right alongside everyone else on the wall. Nehemiah also didn't go to Washington and become a millionaire. He didn't become a landowner while he was there.

II. Nehemiah's Wealth

One of the duties of a governor was to entertain dignitaries as they traveled to and from Susa. Nehemiah routinely had _____ at his table. It would have been easy for him to use the "king's allowance" on his table but _____. He paid for the food out of his own provision. If he did this for the 12 years, that's 4,380 oxen and 26,280 sheep, not even counting the fowl.

Nehemiah understood his resources came from Jehovah and determined to glorify Him with those funds. What motivated him? The _____ of God. Do you really fear God? Do you fear Him enough that what you do, what you say, what you think is governed by that fear? Nehemiah didn't demand of his brothers and sisters what they could not pay. When he saw his brother in a ditch, he didn't go to the other side of the road to miss him.

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III. Nehemiah's Prayer

Martin Luther wrote that Christianity consists principally in personal pronouns. The LORD is MY shepherd...The Son of God loved ME and gave Himself for ME.

Nehemiah, far from being arrogant in this prayer, desired that his labor would result in great fruit for Jehovah, His people and His city.