

## **Illegitimi non carborundum**

"Don't let the bastards grind you down"

Washington, DC is a place where intense political battles occur. As a young ideologue, fresh out of college, I enjoyed being in the fight. Sometimes we would win and sometimes we would lose, always waiting for the chance to fight again. During political battles, a friend of mine, a retired army general, used to often say, "illegitimi non carborundum". It's a mock-Latin aphorism, loosely translated, "don't let the bastards grind you down". It originated from a British army intelligence officer early in the WW1 and was adopted by the salty US Army General "Vinegar" Joe Stilwell as his motto during WWII. It was later popularized by 1964 presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. It's the motto of the 2nd battalion, 1st Special Forces Group and the final line of the chorus in the U2 song "Acrobat".

I like this phrase, because it's sort of a war cry. It reminds me that there will always be those who just don't "get me", those who question my motives, and those who want to try to tear me down and keep me from the good work I'm trying to do.

In the Old Testament, Nehemiah was called by God to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were regional governors who opposed his work. They mocked and ridiculed both Nehemiah and his workers, questioning their ability to complete the task. Nehemiah's own people joined forces with them and spread rumors and conspired against him. To top it all off, false prophets tried to deceive him and undermine his leadership. Despite facing fierce opposition from multiple fronts, Nehemiah remained steadfast in his determination to complete the task assigned to him. He persevered and trusted in God's faithfulness to overcome the challenges posed by his opponents. Ultimately, the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, and the people were able to secure their city against external threats. (Nehemiah 2-6)

When I'm bloodied in the battle, I need to "hang in there" and not quit. I need to stand strong and not give up and I need to not "let the bastards grind me down".

