



Discussion Notes

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Principles of Expansion and Growth

May 2 Daily Walk Overview – The task of rebuilding the Temple involves more than simply organizing men and materials. Antagonism from local citizens soon arises to threaten the project. Deceitful offers of help, open attacks, false accusations—each must be handled by Zerubbabel and the other leaders with conviction and courage.

Ezra 4:1–5 (NLT) — 1 The enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were rebuilding a Temple to the LORD, the God of Israel. **2** So they approached Zerubbabel and the other leaders and said, “Let us build with you, for we worship your God just as you do. We have sacrificed to him ever since King Esarhaddon of Assyria brought us here.” **3** But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other leaders of Israel replied, “You may have no part in this work. We alone will build the Temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, just as King Cyrus of Persia commanded us.” **4** Then the local residents tried to discourage and frighten the people of Judah to keep them from their work. **5** They bribed agents to work against them and to frustrate their plans. This went on during the entire reign of King Cyrus of Persia and lasted until King Darius of Persia took the throne.

Ezra Chapter 4 Reveals the Tactics of the Enemies to Sabotage Your Personal or Corporate Expansion and Growth

- 1. Tactic #1 – Your enemies will offer to help you as a way of spying on your progress and sabotaging your growth.**
 - a. **Ezra 4:2 (NLT) — 2** So they approached Zerubbabel and the other leaders and said, **“Let us build with you, for we worship your God just as you do. We have sacrificed to him ever since King Esarhaddon of Assyria brought us here.”**

- 2. Tactic #2 – Your enemies will try to discourage and intimidate you, so you will not complete the mission God has given you.**
 - a. **Ezra 4:4 (NLT) — 4** Then the local residents tried to discourage and frighten the people of Judah to keep them from their work.
 - i. Discourage – cause someone to lose confidence or enthusiasm.**
 - ii. Intimidate – to frighten someone, especially in order to make them do what you want them to do.**

3. Tactic #3 – Your enemies will hire, bribe, or pay someone to work against, sabotage you, or resist the results that God is trying to bring about from your hard work and labor.

- a. **Ezra 4:5a (NLT) — 5** They bribed agents to work against them and to frustrate their plans.
 - i. **Adolf Hitler's satanic strategy for seeking to destroy others was this: “Demoralize the enemy from within by surprise, terror, sabotage, and assassination. This is the war of the future.**

4. Tactic #4: Your enemies will try to prolong the length of the attack to wear you down and get you to quit.

- a. **Ezra 4:5b (NLT) — 5** ...This went on during the entire reign of King Cyrus of Persia and lasted until King Darius of Persia took the throne.

5. Tactic #5 – Your enemies will gather inaccurate information against you to launch accusations and release false information if they cannot get you to quit and give up on God’s mission for your life.

- a. **Ezra 4:6–7 (NLT) — 6** Years later when Xerxes began his reign, the enemies of Judah wrote a letter of accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. **7** Even later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia, the enemies of Judah, led by Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel, sent a letter to Artaxerxes in the Aramaic language, and it was translated for the king.

6. Tactic #6 – Your enemies will seek to gain an audience with those of great influence to neutralize your purpose and progress from going forth.

- a. **Ezra 4:23–24 (NLT) — 23** When this letter from King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum, Shimshai, and their colleagues, they hurried to Jerusalem. Then, with a show of strength, they forced the Jews to stop building. **24** So the work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem had stopped, and it remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.

Sabotage is when someone consciously acts against your best interest to harm you emotionally or physically or block your way to success. The people in the land intentionally tried to prevent Ezra and his contemporaries from rebuilding the Temple of God and Nehemiah from rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem to protect the temple and the inhabitants of the city.