

Prerequisite #6: A _____

Introduction:

"I had just made the deepest **personal commitment** of my life. I had followed my holy ambition... and I was discouraged, depressed, and disillusioned."

- **A common pitfall:** _____
- **A timeless axiom:** Our greatest personal commitments and spiritual victories are almost always followed by periods of intense opposition.

Opposition:

Nehemiah 4 - 6

	<u>Chapter 4</u>	<u>Chapter 5</u>	<u>Chapter 6</u>
<u>Opposition:</u>	External	Internal	Individual
<u>Strategy:</u>	Frontal	Within	Subtle
<u>Goal:</u>	To Discourage	To Divide	To Destroy
<u>Means:</u>	Ridicule/Fear	Selfishness, Greed	Deception, Intimidation

How to handle external opposition:

Nehemiah 4

- **Round #1:** The enemy's "first punch" to thwart God's program in our lives is:
 - The "jab" of ridicule and criticism Nehemiah 4:1-3

 - Nehemiah's response = Our example Nehemiah 4:4-6

- **Round #2:** The enemy's "second punch" to thwart God's program in our lives is:
 - The "uppercuts" of discouragement Nehemiah 4:7-12
 - **Four causes of discouragement:** **Key Word:**
 - 1. Loss of strength _____
 - 2. Loss of vision _____
 - 3. Loss of confidence _____
 - 4. Loss of security FEAR

- Nehemiah's response teaches us how to "come off the ropes" and "rule the ring."

Nehemiah 4:13-23

- **Four ways to overcome discouragement:**

1. Be _____!
2. Remember who's on your _____!
3. Fight! _____! _____!
4. Never fight _____!

Summary: The Key = Courage!

- The **COURAGE** to **FIGHT** when external opposition seeks to DISCOURAGE us.

Nehemiah 4

- The **COURAGE** to **CONFRONT** when internal conflict seeks to DIVIDE us.

Nehemiah 5

- The **COURAGE** to **ENDURE** when personal attacks seek to DESTROY us.

Nehemiah 6

Application:

Use this study guide as a bookmark in your Bible for the NEXT 10 WEEKS. Pull it out often and review it when you experience opposition.

Discussion Questions:

1. "God's work is always carried out in a hostile environment." How does remembering this phrase encourage you?
2. In what ways are you experiencing opposition with regard to living out God's agenda in your life and relationships?
3. Which of Nehemiah's examples of "handling conflict and opposition" were most helpful to you? Why?
4. What specific application do you need to make to deal with the opposition you are facing in your life?
5. What can you (and we) expect in the next few months as we step out with Holy Ambition?