

SUCCESS BREEDS OPPOSITION – Nehemiah 4:1-23

Lesson 7

I. What causes opposition?

A. People can be **threatened** by success.

“Some will oppose [another person or a work] because they stand to lose position or power or prestige politically, religiously, or socially.”
Howard F. Vos

1. **Self-centeredness**

2. A change in personal **profits**

B. People can be **jealous**.

1. Diminished by another’s **success**

2. Envious of another’s **improvement**

C. People can have **agendas**.

D. People can feel **excluded**.

E. People can suspect **motives**.

F. People can dislike **change**.

G. God’s work has a great **enemy**.

“He merely exploits or exacerbates existing conditions.”

Howard F. Vos

II. What are strategies for opposition? What are strategies for response?

“God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without trial.” Charles Spurgeon

A. Opposition came through **ridicule**.

1. It is **demoralizing**.

2. It is often **effective**.

3. It causes **discouragement**.

B. What was Nehemiah’s **strategy**?

1. He did not **retaliate**.

2. He **poured** out his **heart** to God.

a. He admitted **anger**.

b. He **relinquished** it to God.

3. He was not **deterred**.

“Praise God and pass the ammunition.”

World War II Slogan

C. Opposition through **violence**.

1. It can come at a low **point**.

2. It was **growing** in strength.

3. It caused **fear**.

4. It was **working**.

D. What was Nehemiah’s **strategy**?

1. He knew God’s strength was **greater**.

2. He **armed** the workers.

“The sword and trowel ... a record of combat with sin and labor for the Lord.” Charles Spurgeon

3. He reminded the people that God was in **control**.

4. He **stood** with the people.

“The Jews succeeded in getting their work done and keeping the enemy at bay: they had a mind to work (vs. 6), a heart to pray (vs. 9), an eye to watch (vs. 9), and an ear to hear (vs. 20).” Alan Redpath