

CONFRONTING SIN - A PATTERN

Lessons of Conflict Resolution from Nehemiah 5

When Nehemiah encountered the selfish and sinful exploitation of Jews by their fellow countrymen, he not only had a hot and holy anger, but he also pursued a holy path of confrontation that is worthy of imitation. Here are some lessons from his response and from the repentant responses of those he confronted.

He was Aware of the Problem - Nehemiah listened (vs.1-6)
He was not so wrapped up in the project (building the walls) that he was blind and deaf to needs

He took time to Assess, Reflect, and No doubt Pray (vs. 7)
A Pattern of his: Pausing before pursuing (Neh. 1)

He took Action - he Confronted those in sin (vs. 7-13)

Confronted them For Their Sin (vs. 7, 9)
Pointed out Sin, Called it what it was

Called them Back to God - His glory / our fear of Him (vs. 9)

Commanded Immediate Action - give it back! (vs. 11)
He Charted a Practical, Clear Path of Action

Created Accountability
He made them take an oath before their spiritual leaders (vs. 12)

Consequences were Set Forth (vs. 13)

To their Credit and God's Glory, the People:
Listened to Nehemiah's confrontation (vs. 7, 8, 12, 13)
Agreed with his assessment (vs. 12, 13)
Committed to change & to be held accountable (vs. 13)
Followed Through on their Commitment (vs. 13)

Throughout this, Nehemiah had been an example of a servant leader
vs. 10 he made loans without usury / interest
vs. 14 he did not take advantage of opportunity for selfish gain
vs. 17 he didn't use rightful privileges so as to not burden the people

FINAL THOUGHTS AND LESSONS

- We are to proactively confront sin in our lives & the lives of others (Gal. 6:1).
- This speaks of a community commitment. We are our brother's keepers!
- Do we love some one enough not just to over look and forgive their sin, but to confront them about them?
- Not confronting sin leads to a break of community and pain for many.
- Note that Nehemiah used Scripture in his confrontation.
- Those who repented returned to praising God in the community (vs. 13).