

ELEMENTARY DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHARACTER TRAIT:

INITIATIVE

DEFINITION:

Taking wise action without being told

MEMORY VERSE:

"In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."

MATTHEW 5:16 NLT

FINISH LINE:

Trust God and stand firm

READ: NEHEMIAH 4

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

(OBSERVATION)

1. Who are the "bad guys" in this story? (*Sanballat, Tobiah, and their armies.*)
2. Look at verse 4. How did Nehemiah respond when he heard what his enemies were saying? (*He prayed to God because he knew only God could help and protect them.*)
3. Look at verse 10. Were some of the Israelites starting to believe the enemies' lies? (*Some thought they'd never finish and worried about their enemies. They had forgotten God's promises.*)
4. Were their enemies able to stop them? (*No, the people kept working.*)
5. Look at verses 15 and 20. Who defeated their enemies' plans, allowing them to return to work on the wall? (*God was in charge and protected them.*)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

(INTERPRETATION)

1. How did the "bad guys" try to stop Nehemiah and the Israelites from finishing the wall? (*They were making fun of them and trying to make them feel like they could not do the work God wanted them to do. They tried to make them forget God was with them.*)
2. Look at verses 9 and 14. How did Nehemiah continue to take INITIATIVE and STAND FIRM even when his enemies were planning to attack him? (*He kept TRUSTING GOD and prayed for help. He reminded the Israelites who God is.*)
3. Do you think the enemies' words could have discouraged some people and made them want to give up? Why?

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

(APPLICATION)

1. What are some of the things God has helped you do to step up, speak out, and show initiative this month?
2. When people try to stop you from showing initiative and trusting God, remember, God can help you stand firm like He helped Nehemiah to stand firm. What are some of your favorite things to remember that are true about God? (*Examples: God is great and glorious. He is bigger than any enemy you may face. He loves you so much and is always with you. If He calls you to do something, He will give you everything you need to finish it. He is trustworthy and His Word is always true.*)