

## Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever believed that fulfilling your God-inspired calling or goal would be “up and to the right?” How did you respond when you learned that wasn’t the case?
2. Have you ever given up on a calling or goal because of opposition? Reflect on whether God is prompting you to pick that calling or goal back up.
3. What are some “halfway” points for which you can celebrate and praise God?

### Prayer for Those Searching for Truth:

*Lord Jesus, you claim to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent and convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.*

### Prayer of Belief:

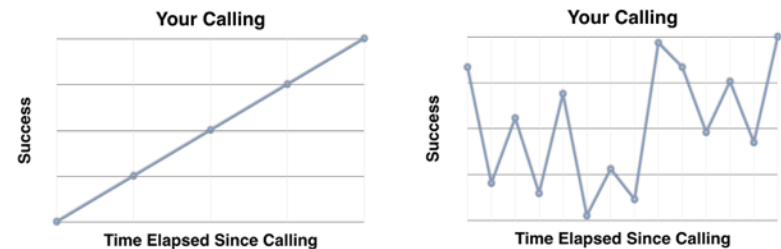
*Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.*



**Nehemiah 4**  
**November 1, 2015**

### Up & To The Right

When following a God-inspired goal or God-given calling, it’s easy to believe that everything will be up and to the right. Like this:



The reality, however, is that living out a calling or fulfilling a goal looks more like the picture on the right.

### NOTES:

## **Purpose**

*He ridiculed the Jews, 2 and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?" - Nehemiah 4:1b-2*

*So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. - Nehemiah 4:6*

The nature of ridicule is to dismiss your efforts. Ridicule renders you and your work worthless, like it doesn't count for anything.

In the face of ridicule, it's important to connect to your purpose!

## **Protection**

*But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. -Nehemiah 4:9*

Ridicule is an attempt to write you off, while a threat is intent to do damage. In other words, no one threatens you if they feel like your work doesn't count.

For Nehemiah, the opposition moved from trying to discredit the work of rebuilding, to threatening the work of rebuilding!

Nehemiah prayed.

Then he set up protection.

## **NOTES:**

## **Perspective**

*Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall." -Nehemiah 4:10*

Discouragement is the loss of confidence or enthusiasm. For Nehemiah, it comes from his own people.

When discouragement comes, Nehemiah calls the people to a new perspective.

He reminds them of God's character.

*After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." -Nehemiah 4:14*

He calls them to look at the progress they have made (vs. 6).

## **NOTES:**

## **Prayer**

*Almighty and merciful God, in your goodness keep us, we pray, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready both in mind and body, may accomplish with free hearts those things which belong to your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

*(Source: Book of Common Prayer, Proper 2, p. 228-229)*