How to Earn the Respect of Others

SERIES: Building a Future with Hope – Part 8
Nehemiah 5:1-13

"You'll earn the trust and RESPECT of others IF you work for good."
Proverbs 14:22a (TEV)

"About this time, some of the people, both men and their wives, began to complain loudly against their Jewish brothers." Nehemiah 5:1

Causes of Conflict (Neh. 5:1-5)

1. WHEN ANY BASIC NEED GOES UNMET

"Some said, 'We all have large families, and WE NEED more grain to eat to stay alive.'"
Nehemiah 5:2 (TEV)

2. WHEN WE FEEL WE'RE FALLING BEHIND

"Others said, 'We've had to sell our fields, and vineyard, and houses just to keep from starving during this famine.'" Nehemiah 5:3 (TEV)

3. WHEN LEADERS ARE INSENSITIVE TO OUR PAIN

"Others said, 'We've had to borrow money to pay the king's taxes...'"
Nehemiah 5:4 (TEV)

4. WHEN WE FEEL POWERLESS TO CHANGE OUR SITUATION

"Although we're the same flesh and blood as our wealthier countrymen and though our children are as good as theirs, we're having to sell our children into slavery! Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we're powerless to do anything about it because our fields and vineyards belong to others!" Nehemiah 5:5 (NIV)

WAYS TO EARN THE RESPECT OF OTHERS (Neh. 5:6-13)

1. EMPATHIZE WITH THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS

Nehemiah: "When I heard their complaints and their charges, I was very angry." Nehemiah 5:6 (NIV)

"Be angry, and yet do not sin." Ephesians 4:26a (NASB)

"Jesus was angry as he looked at the people, for he was deeply disturbed by their indifference to human need..." Mark 3:5 (NCV/LB)

2. PAUSE AND THINK BEFORE I SPEAK UP

Nehemiah: "Then after I thought it over..." Nehemiah 5:7a (GW)

"I pondered the charges in my mind..." Nehemiah 5:7a (NIV)

"After some deliberation..." Nehemiah 5:7a (NJB)

"The godly think before speaking, but wicked people quickly spout evil words without ever thinking." Proverbs 15:28 (NLT)

"Remember this: You must always be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger cannot accomplish the righteousness of God." James 1:19-20 (TEV)

3. TRY TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS PRIVATELY FIRST

Nehemiah: "After thinking about the problem, I confronted the leaders and officials, challenging their actions. I said, 'You are oppressing your own countrymen with interest!' THEN I called a public assembly to deal with the problem." Nehemiah 5:7 (TEV)

Jesus: "If your brother sins against you, go to him privately to point out his fault... If he doesn't listen to you, then go back with one or two witnesses... If he still refuses to listen, go public with the whole church..." Matthew 18:15-17 (TEV)

4. APPEAL TO THE BEST IN PEOPLE

Nehemiah's Challenge: Neh. 5:8-13

"What you're doing is wrong! We must honor God by the way we live, so that Gentiles can't find fault with us." Nehemiah 5:9 (CEV)

"If your goals are good, you'll be respected." Proverbs 11:27a (TEV)

5. DO EVERYTHING WITH HUMILITY & GENEROSITY

Nehemiah: "...For the 12 years I was governor, neither I, nor my team, ate the food entitled to the governor. The previous governors before me had placed heavy burdens of taxation on the people to pay for this. Even their assistants took advantage of people but I never did that. Out of reverence for God I did not act like they did. Instead, I devoted myself to working on the wall and so did all my men. None of us acquired any land. Also, I paid the cost of 150 people who daily ate at my table along with many foreign guests... In spite of all this, I never demanded what was due to me as governor, because the people were having a difficult time. So, remember me with favor, O my God, for all I've done for these people." Nehemiah 5:14-19

"If you're humble, you will be respected." Proverbs 29:23b (TEV)

"Whoever gives generously to the needy and shows kindness will be powerful and respected." Psalm 112:9 (TEV)