

## For the Family

**Review** our story so far:

After hearing a report that Jerusalem was in ruins, Nehemiah spent many days praying and planning about what to do. He received permission from the king to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the city walls.

### Read Nehemiah 2:9-20

**Explain** that Nehemiah traveled to Jerusalem, inspected the walls and rallied the people to rebuild them. The walls were needed to protect the people from invaders. That is why some people living in the area didn't want the walls rebuilt. They didn't want the people of Jerusalem to be safe. They tried to stop the rebuilding by insulting and challenging the people.

**Read Nehemiah 2:19:** *But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"*

**Explain** that sometimes when we do what God wants us to do, people who don't love God will try and stop us. They might tease us or insult us, hoping we will stop obeying God. They might tell us that we are going against what people want.

**Share** an example of a time you were obedient to God, even though people who don't love God gave you a hard time.

**Read Nehemiah 2:20:** *Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build ..."*

**Explain** that this is how Nehemiah responded to the taunts of God's enemies. He believed that God would give them success. He said that God's people would do what God wanted done.

**Pray together** that you will be obedient to God, even if people who don't love God give you a hard time. Thank God for helping you do the right thing, even when it is hard.



## Learning to Lead

### *Nehemiah 2:9-20*

**Our Story So Far:** Nehemiah received a report that the wall around Jerusalem was in ruins, and her gates were burned. He prayed to the Lord, and made himself available to help in this crisis.

Four months later, Nehemiah spoke with the king. Overcoming the danger and risk it posed, Nehemiah approached the king with tact and diplomacy. As the king warmed to his project, Nehemiah was emboldened to ask for everything he needed. In the end, he said, *"the good hand of my God was upon me."*

**This Week:** Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem with a security force and supplies to rebuild the walls and gates of the city. When he arrives, he secretly inspects the walls and gates under the cover of darkness. He then rallies the people together and tells them it is time to build the wall. The people agree and set out to take on the task. Some local leaders taunt and berate the people, accusing them of rebelling against the king. Nehemiah replies by telling them that the God of heaven will help them complete the wall.

### Open

1. Have you ever witnessed the aftereffects of a storm, fire, auto accident, earthquake, or war? What was it like to walk through the wreckage?

2. Have you ever had the task of persuading a group of people to take on a project? How did you approach this task? How did it go? Did you have to overcome opposition?

### Read Nehemiah 2:9-20

## The Journey to Jerusalem

1. Why did King Artaxerxes send army officers and horsemen with Nehemiah?

2. Why were Sanballat and Tobiah displeased?  
How would the rebuilding of the walls affect them?

## A Secret Inspection

1. What do you think Nehemiah did during his first three days in the city?

2. Why do you think Nehemiah conducted his initial inspections in secret?

## Sharing His Vision with the People

Once Nehemiah had finished his inspection, he was ready to start rebuilding the walls. It was time to go public with his vision, and to enlist the people for the task.

1. What do you notice about the way Nehemiah cast his vision?  
What made his speech so persuasive?

2. The people's response was in two parts:  
(1) They answered, "*Let us rise up and build.*"  
Why do you think they used the phrase "*rise up*"?

(2) They "*strengthened their hands for the good work.*"  
What does the phrase "*strengthened their hands*" mean to you?

## Responding to Opposition

1. How did Sanballat and the others attempt to stop the project?  
What "weapon" did they use?

Why do they think they accused the people of rebelling against the king?

How might that have been an effective strategy?

2. Nehemiah's response is in three parts:  
(1) "*The God of heaven will make us prosper.*"  
How does this respond to the accusation of rebellion against the king?

(2) "*We his servants will arise and build.*"  
How does this statement correspond to the first one?

(3) "*You have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem.*"  
Why do you think Nehemiah felt the need to tell them this?

## Read 1 Peter 3:8-17

What does it mean to repay insult with blessing? (vs. 9)

How can we "*seek peace and pursue it*"? (vs. 11)

Why should we not fear those who would slander us for our righteousness? (14)

Why should we be prepared to give a defense for the hope we have? (15)

Why should we answer with gentleness and respect? (16)

## Reflect

1. When is it hardest for you to act:

- (a) When your project lies in ruins?
- (b) When you are low on workers?
- (c) When you face criticism or opposition?

2. Share a time when you were criticized for doing God's work.  
How did you respond at the time?

Would you respond differently now, if given another chance?

## Next Steps:

- I will spend time listening to God and faithfully examining what needs done in his kingdom.
- I will follow Christ faithfully, even when others around me give me a hard time.
- I will encourage others to follow God's vision for their lives.
- I will make sure I don't have a critical spirit against my brothers and sisters in Christ.

## Memory Verse – Nehemiah 2:18

*And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me.*

*And they said, "Let us rise up and build."*

*So they strengthened their hands for the good work.*