

## For the Family

**Review** our story so far:

After hearing a report that Jerusalem was in ruins, Nehemiah prayed and planned what to do. The king gave him permission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. He traveled to Jerusalem, inspected the walls, and rallied the people to rebuild them. The people replied, *“Let us rise up and build.”* Nehemiah spread groups of people around the wall, and they began repairing and rebuilding the wall, and repairing the gates.

**Read together Nehemiah 4:6-9.**

**Explain** that the people of Jerusalem had enemies who didn’t want the wall to be built. These people made fun of them and said they would never be able to finish. They threatened to hurt them if they kept going. The people became discouraged and some wanted to stop working. But they did two things that helped them to keep going.

**Read together verse 9:**

*And we prayed to our God  
and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.*

They did two things: (1) They prayed. (2) They set a guard.

They asked God to do his part, and then they did their part.

**Talk together** about how important it is for your family to pray to God for help and protection. We need to trust him that he will always do his part.

Then talk together about how you as a family do your part. Talk about the family rules you have that help and protect your family. For example: locking doors, and using car seats or seatbelts. Review the things you do as a family to keep each other safe.

**Pray together** that God will help and protect you from his enemies. Tell him you will obey the family rules that help keep everybody safe.

**Next Week:** Restoring the Community



## Surviving the Pressure of Opposition

**Nehemiah 4:1-6 (4:1-23)**

**Our Story So Far:** Nehemiah was told that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were in ruins. He prayed to the Lord, and then asked King Artaxerxes permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and repair the gates. The king allowed him to go, and Nehemiah said, *“The good hand of my God was upon me.”*

Nehemiah traveled to Jerusalem with a security force and supplies. He secretly inspected the walls and gates, and rallied the people together. They rose up and started the work. Some local leaders taunted and berated the people, accusing them of rebelling against the king. Nehemiah replied that the God of heaven would help them rebuild the wall.

**This Week:** Sanballat and other enemies of Jerusalem become angry when they see the construction work, and taunt the people. Nehemiah prays against them, and the work continues. Then the enemies plot to confuse the workers. So Nehemiah prays again, and sets up some security. Nehemiah encourages the people to remember the greatness of God, and to fight for their families. He organizes them so they can both rebuild the walls and gates, and protect each other.

### Open

1. What kind of criticism or opposition is most difficult for you to take?

From strangers?

From friends?

From family members?

2. Share a time when you experienced strong opposition to accomplishing something you felt God was leading you to do.

## Read Nehemiah 4

### Opposition Through Ridicule 1-6

1. Why was Sanballat angry at the rebuilding of the wall?  
What tactic did he use to try to stop the project?  
How effective was it, according to verse 6?
2. What was Nehemiah's response?  
How is this response different from his response in 2:20?
3. What are some 'jeers' directed at people who are trying to build God's kingdom today?

### Opposition Through Confusion 7-9

1. Read the verses and note how the opposition escalates.  
2:10:  
  
2:19:  
  
4:1:  
  
4:7-8:
2. What did they mean that they "*plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it*"?
3. What is Nehemiah's response? 9
4. How might enemies of God's kingdom "*cause confusion*" among his disciples today?  
How could we "*set a guard*" against that?

### Internal Opposition – Discouragement and Fear 10-15

1. What are the people afraid of? 10  
  
What threat did their enemies make? 11  
  
What did some of their allies say? 12
2. What is Nehemiah's response? 13-14
3. What are some things that disciples today are afraid of? 2

## Prayer and Preparation

16-23

1. Read verses 4, 9, 14, & 20  
What do you learn about their dependence on prayer?
2. Read verses 16, 18, & 23  
What do you learn about the practical steps they took?
3. How do prayer and practical steps work together?

## Nehemiah's Prayer

4-5

Read again Nehemiah's prayer in verses 4-5.  
Compare it to Hezekiah's prayer in 2 Kings 19:14-19.  
What is the main purpose of these prayers?

Read Matthew 5:43-48  
Read Romans 12:14-21  
Read 1 Peter 2:20-23

How do we reconcile the prayers of Nehemiah and Hezekiah with the teaching of Jesus, Paul, and Peter?

What is the best overall approach when we come under opposition for doing kingdom work?

### Next Steps:

- I will seek to make prayer a priority in my life (especially in the midst of opposition).
- I will do the right thing even when it is not popular or seemingly prudent.
- Rather than retaliate when wronged by others, I will seek God's guidance and wisdom to respond appropriately.
- I want to do something significant for God, instead of standing in the way of his work.

### Memory Verse – Nehemiah 4:9-10

*And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. In Judah it was said, "The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall."*