

For the Family

Review our story so far:

After hearing that Jerusalem was in ruins, Nehemiah prayed and asked the king to go and rebuild the walls. He traveled to Jerusalem, inspected the walls, and rallied the people to rebuild them. He spread people around the wall, and they began repairing the wall and gates. Some enemies of Jerusalem tried to stop the project, but Nehemiah prayed and set up some guards so the people could keep working.

Read together Nehemiah 5:1-12.

Explain that because of the work on the wall, many people didn't have enough money to feed their families. There were some rich people who could have helped, but instead made things worse.

Talk together about Nehemiah's reaction to this:

1. Nehemiah got angry, (verse 6). When we see other people getting mistreated, that should make us angry. We should want things to be right and fair, the way God wants things to be.
2. Nehemiah got control of himself, (verse 7). We never want to take action while we are angry. We have to make sure we are in control of ourselves. We want to help people make good choices, not just give them a hard time because we are mad.
3. Nehemiah talked privately with the people who were cheating their fellow Jews, (verse 7). Whenever we have a problem with someone, we are to go to them first if we can. (For children, they need to talk with a trusted adult first.)
4. Nehemiah called a community meeting, (verse 7-8). Sometimes a problem needs to be talked about in public, so everyone can agree together on the best solution.

Pray together that if you see people being treated in a way that would make God angry, that you will do what you can to make things right, just like Nehemiah.

Next Week: Sanballat tries to trick Nehemiah



You Can't Eat Walls

Nehemiah 5

Our Story So Far: Nehemiah learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were in ruins. He first prayed, and then asked King Artaxerxes permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and the gates.

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

Sanballat and other enemies of Jerusalem continued to taunt the workers and plotted to confuse them. Nehemiah first prayed, and then set up security all around the wall. He encouraged the people to remember the greatness of God, and to fight for their families.

This Week: An outcry arises that many cannot afford to feed their families. Some wealthy people are exploiting the poor through excessive interest on loans, and by repossessing their land. Nehemiah speaks out against this, and the wealthy agree to stop charging interest to the poor, and to return their property.

Open

1. What is your opinion about the "quick loan" business that lends money at high interest to people with poor credit?
2. When you are short on money, what do you go without?

Read Nehemiah 5

The Outcry 1-5

1. What is the “*great outcry of the people and their wives*”? 1

What has brought about this condition?

Who are the three groups most affected? 2-4

2. How might this situation impact the construction of the wall?

Nehemiah’s Response 6-11

1. Why is Nehemiah angered by this situation? 6

Would you consider this a “righteous anger”? Why?

Read Exodus 22:25-27

How does this help explain Nehemiah’s anger?

2. What does Nehemiah do with his anger before he talks to anyone? 7

3. What charge does he bring against the nobles and officials? 7

How important is it that Nehemiah spoke with them privately before taking this issue before a public assembly?

4. What does he ask the nobles and officials to do? 10-11

How does Nehemiah lead by example in this? 10

What is the reaction of the nobles and officials? 12

How does Nehemiah ensure that they will follow through on their commitment? 12-13

Nehemiah’s Governorship 14-19

1. What changes did Nehemiah make from the previous governors? 14-15

Why did he make that change? 15

2

What expense did he take on during this time? 17-18

What reason does he give for doing this? 19

The Fear of the Lord 9, 15

Read Leviticus 25:35-38

How is “*the fear of the Lord*” connected with helping the poor?

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-22

What five responses does the Lord want from his people? 12-13

How is God described in verses 14-22?

What does this passage tell us about fearing the Lord?

Reflect

1. Nehemiah saw an injustice among God’s people, and he became angry enough to do something about it. Do you see injustice among God’s people today? Are you willing to be a change agent?

2. Loving God and loving others may require personal sacrifice. What privileges and rights are you ready to give up so that God’s work may prosper?

3. Would you say you have a healthy fear of the Lord? How can you demonstrate a fear of the Lord in your life?

Next Steps:

- I will take steps to seek resolution of an unresolved conflict in my life: _____.
- I will seek to resolve conflict in a godly way whenever I experience it.
- I will strive to live in such a way that I can say, “Follow me, as I follow Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Memory Verse – Nehemiah 5:9

So I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?”

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