

For the Family

Review our story so far:

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to repair the walls around the city. He inspected the walls, and rallied the people to rebuild them. He spread people around the wall, and they began the work. Some enemies of Jerusalem tried to stop them, but Nehemiah prayed and set up some guards. There were some people who did not have food for their families. Nehemiah encouraged some rich people to share what they had.

Read together Nehemiah 6:1-5.

Explain that Sanballat was trying to get Nehemiah to stop working. Nehemiah told him he was doing a great work, and couldn't stop. He knew Sanballat was trying to trick him.

Read together Nehemiah 6:6-9.

Explain that Sanballat began telling lies about Nehemiah. He told people that the Jewish people planned to rebel against the king, and that Nehemiah himself planned to be king. Nehemiah told him that none of that was true, that Sanballat had just made it all up, to get Nehemiah into trouble with the king.

Read together Nehemiah 6:10-13

Explain that Sanballat hired a prophet to tell Nehemiah a false prophecy that he should hide in the Temple, because there were people trying to kill him. Nehemiah said he wouldn't hide from anyone, and that it was wrong for him to go into the temple, because he wasn't a priest.

Talk together about how when we are doing an important job, that sometimes people will try to stop us. They may try to trick us to do something else instead of what we are supposed to be doing. They may tell lies about us and spread false stories. They might even try to get us to do something that we know is wrong. Don't let anything stop you from doing the right thing.

Pray together that you will always do the right thing, even if people try to stop you with tricks, lies, or threats. Thank God for the opportunity to do great things for him.

Next Week: Father's Day



Say “Oh No” To Ono *How to Survive Personal Attacks*

Nehemiah 6

Our Story So Far: Nehemiah learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were in ruins. He prayed, received permission from King Artaxerxes, and went to Jerusalem. He inspected the walls and gates, and rallied the people to rise up and do the work. Some local leaders taunted them, accusing 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 prayed, and set up security all around the wall. He encouraged the people to remember the greatness of God, and to fight for their families. An outcry arose because many people could not afford to feed their families. Some among the wealthy were exploiting the poor through excessive interest on loans, and repossessing their land. Nehemiah spoke out against this, and the wealthy agreed to stop charging interest to the poor, and to return their property.

This Week: Sanballat and other enemies of Jerusalem realize the repair work is almost finished, and renew their opposition. They try to trick Nehemiah to meet with them, spread false stories about his intentions, and bribe a prophet to give him a false oracle. Nehemiah knows their false intentions, and doesn't allow them to distract him from the work.

Open

Share something that was once rumored to be true about you, but wasn't.

How did you handle the situation at the time?

Review

1. What have you learned about Nehemiah's character so far?

Read Nehemiah 6:1-14

Intrigue: A Trap for Nehemiah 1-4

1. What is the situation at the opening of the chapter?

2. What was Nehemiah's evaluation of the invitation for a meeting with Sanballat and Geshem? 2

3. What was his response? 3

Reflect

1. How did Nehemiah's perspective about what he was doing help him respond to this potential distraction?

2. Are you involved with anything currently that you would call "a great work"?

If so, what are the convictions behind this great work that help keep you on track?

If not, what would it take to get you involved in a great work?

Are there some merely good projects you may need to drop in order to attempt a truly great project, worthy of your best effort?

Innuendo: The Rumor Mill 5-9

1. Why did Sanballat send the message in an open letter? 5

2. What accusations did Sanballat make against Nehemiah? 6-7

3. What is Nehemiah's response? 8

What is his evaluation of the situation? 9

4. What is Nehemiah's prayer here? 9

Reflect

1. What can happen to an organization when false rumors are spread about its leaders?

2. How would Jesus want us to respond when we hear gossip?

3. How is Nehemiah's prayer for God to "strengthen his hands" related to being the victim of gossip?

How does a prayer of "strengthen my hands" contrast with a prayer of "rescue me out of this situation"?

Intimidation: The Hired Prophet 10-14

1. What does Shemaiah say to Nehemiah? 10

2. What is Nehemiah's response? 11

3. What is Nehemiah's assessment of the situation? 12-13

4. What is his prayer? 14

Takeaways

Share with the group your take away from this discussion.

Next Steps:

- I will commit to doing a great work for God.
- I will not allow the secondary things in life to keep me from doing the great things.
- I will not allow tricks, lies, or threats to keep me from doing God's will.
- Whenever I am personally and unfairly attacked, I will pray for the Lord to "strengthen my hands."

Memory Verse – Nehemiah 6:9

*For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking,
"Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done."
But now, O God, strengthen my hands.*