



UNIT 18 | SESSION 2

NEHEMIAH REBUILT THE WALLS

NEHEMIAH 1-7

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 7:10

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How should we feel when we sin? When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to turn from our sin because we love Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. Jesus came to protect us from our greatest enemies, sin and death. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue everyone who trusts in Him.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

Recall the last time you were faced with devastating news or found yourself filled with angst, worry, or fear. How did you respond?

Anger and bitterness are common reactions to bad news. We may feel tempted to isolate ourselves from others. Grief is complex, and responses vary greatly. However, according to the Bible, Nehemiah's response is the best response.

We read about Nehemiah's general response in Nehemiah 1:4. Then in Nehemiah 1:5-11, we discover the specific way that Nehemiah prayed in response to this devastating news. He recognized God's faithfulness, requested God's ear, confessed sin, and committed his people to the Lord's care.

Nehemiah began his prayer with a recognition of the faithfulness of God. He indicated his confidence that God had been and would continue to be faithful. He then requested God's ear. Though Nehemiah was confident that God heard him, he opened and closed his prayer of dependence by begging God to listen to his request.

Why did Nehemiah pray this way? Likely, he was further demonstrating his deep conviction that God and God alone is able to work in such a way that would bring about

restoration.

Nehemiah's prayer also demonstrates his belief that sin has serious consequences. He confessed his own sin and the sin of his family, recognizing that God was fully aware of their sin, but also that this sin was not to be taken lightly and needed to be dealt with.

Finally, he committed his family—the Jewish people—into the hands of this faithful and just God. He trusted God to be faithful to His word and His people. Though Nehemiah didn't know what the outcome would be, he was confident in his God, that He would remain faithful no matter what.

Nehemiah's response demonstrated a deep love, trust, and confidence in God that is exemplary for each of us. When we face moments of devastation, we can—with deep dependence—turn to God and find comfort.

RETURN FROM EXILE

Phase 1 (538 BC):

Temple rebuilt (Ezra 1-6)

Phase 2 (458 BC):

Leaders and judges returned (Ezra 7-10)

Phase 3 (444 BC):

Jerusalem rebuilt (Nehemiah 1-13)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever been discouraged while doing something hard? Maybe it was a hard school assignment or a game that didn’t go your way. How did you deal with discouragement?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Rebuild the Wall” on the activity page.

SAY “Today, we will hear how a man named Nehemiah led God’s people to rebuild the walls around the city of Jerusalem. We will also learn how God protects those who trust in Him.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: CAN YOU DO IT?



Before this session, use masking tape to create a line on one side of the room. Form teams of four or five kids.

Provide each team with an orange or a small ball. Challenge kids to use their noses to push the orange or ball across the room and cross the masking tape line. Direct the first kid that crosses the line to run back to her team with the orange so the next kid in line can begin. The first team to complete the challenge wins.

SAY “You could have given up when this challenge got difficult, but you stuck with it. Today, we will hear a story about a time when God’s people completed a task that required determination and perseverance. We will learn that God is faithful to help His people and give them strength.”

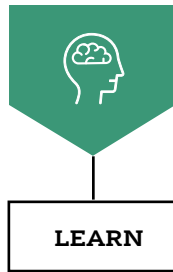
OPTION 2: CUP STACK

Form a team of two or three kids. Give each kid on the team a small ball. Give the remaining kids 10–20 plastic cups. Instruct the kids to build a wall with the cups. Instruct the kids with the balls to try and continually knock down the cups by throwing the balls at the cups.

Direct kids to rebuild the wall by continuing to stack the cups after they are knocked down. Challenge kids to defend the wall and keep the balls from hitting the cups.

SAY “It was challenging to stack the cups as the balls were being thrown. In today’s Bible story, we will learn how God’s people faced challenges when trying to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, but God helped them succeed.”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi everyone! I’m so glad you are here! My name is [your name], and I am so happy to share God’s Word with you today. If you have your Bible with you, will you take it out and set it on your lap? [Distribute Bibles to any kids who do not have one.]

Have you ever set out to do something that seemed like an impossible task? [Allow responses.] Today, we will hear a story from the Bible about a man named Nehemiah who led God’s people in a challenging task. Throughout this story, we will see how God was with His people, and we will be reminded how God sent His Son, Jesus, to protect and rescue everyone who trusts in Him. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “ Our big picture question for the next few weeks is, **How should we feel about sin?** Does anyone remember the answer? [Allow kids to respond.] The answer to our big picture question is, **When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to turn from our sin because we love Him.**

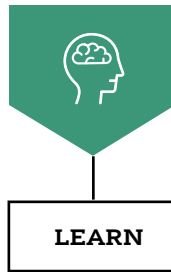
God’s people had disobeyed, and as a consequence, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. As we read our story today, we should be reminded that sin should lead us to feel sorry for how we have rejected God’s good commands. Israel failed to show they loved God; however, because of Jesus, we can turn from sin and love God. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Israel’s rejection of God and His commands led them into exile. Yet, God was merciful and continued to be with His people, also promising that they would return to their homeland. Eventually, God’s people were freed from exile, but their home had been destroyed. Sin’s consequences had resulted in the destruction of their city.

God continued to be faithful to His people and was going to rebuild what sin had destroyed. In today’s Bible story, we will learn how God chose Nehemiah to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Nehemiah 1–7. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Nehemiah Rebuilt the Walls.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

NEHEMIAH REBUILT THE WALLS

“**God’s people had lived in Babylon for 70 years.** Then King Cyrus, the king of Persia, took over Babylon and let them go home. **Some of God’s people went home to Judah, but some of them stayed in Babylon. Nehemiah (NEE huh MIGH uh) stayed and worked for the king of Persia.**”

One day, some men came from Judah. Nehemiah asked, “How are God’s people in Jerusalem?” The men had bad news: “The people are in trouble. The walls around Jerusalem are broken down, and the gates are burned down.”

Nehemiah sat down and cried. Then he spent time praying and fasting. The king noticed Nehemiah and asked, “What’s wrong? Why are you sad?” Nehemiah was afraid; no one was supposed to be sad around the king. Nehemiah said, “The city where my ancestors are from is in ruins.”

The king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem. Nehemiah led the people to start rebuilding the walls and gates. The workers put in doors, bolts, and bars. They cut stones and lifted them into place on the wall, and they filled in gaps and holes. All around the city, people worked side by side. Soon the wall was half as tall as it had once been!

But not everyone was happy that Jerusalem’s walls were being rebuilt. Some men who lived nearby made a plan to attack them and stop their work. God’s people prayed and chose men to guard the walls all day and all night, but the people were discouraged.

Nehemiah reminded the people that God was with them. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “God is great and powerful! Be ready. If our enemies attack us, God will fight for us!” Enemies could threaten God’s people, but they could not make God’s people stop building. Their enemies were not in charge of rebuilding the wall; God was!

So God’s people went back to work. Some stood guard with weapons, and others worked on the wall. Some men worked with one hand and held a weapon in the other. They were always ready to fight, just in case.

Nehemiah was a wise and good leader for God’s people. In just 52 days, the wall was complete! The gates were repaired, and the wall was restored. The city was ready for more of God’s people to come home. When all of Jerusalem’s enemies heard that the wall had been rebuilt, they were afraid because they knew God was with His people.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display a map: Display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map and point out how Nehemiah traveled from Babylon (E11) to Jerusalem (G10) to rebuild the walls.

Create a wall: Use blocks or cups to build a wall around the kids as you tell the story.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Christ Connection: Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. Jesus came to protect us from our greatest enemies, sin and death. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue everyone who trusts in Him. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ When Nehemiah was overcome with sadness, what was the first thing He did? Look at Nehemiah 1:4. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 1:4.] Nehemiah sought the Lord through prayer. As he prayed, he remembered who the Lord is; that He is the God who always keeps His promises and loves His people. Even in a time of great distress, Nehemiah knew the Lord was with His people and heard their cries.

The enemies of God’s people taunted them because they did not like that they were rebuilding the wall. They even made plans to attack the wall, but God protected His people. How did God show that He was in control? Look at Nehemiah 4:15. [Choose a volunteer to read Nehemiah 4:15.] God frustrated the plans of their enemies. This means that God made it so the enemies’ wicked plans would not happen.

Eventually, Nehemiah and the people completed the wall. When their enemies saw that they had completed this task, how did they respond? Look at Nehemiah 6:16. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 6:16.] They saw that the work was completed with the help of the one true God.

If we have received Jesus as Savior, God has completed the work of salvation for us. God sent His Son, Jesus, to conquer sin and death and to save those who receive Him as Lord. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. Jesus came to protect us from our greatest enemies, sin and death. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue everyone who trusts in Him. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 18, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why does the Bible say God fights for His people? Isn’t fighting bad?
2. How does Jesus protect us from our enemies, sin and death?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Tell the kids that Stephen and Erin Spencer (names changed) are also missionaries in Southeast Asia and work in the same area as David and Lark Washington.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

SAY “ At one time, many people in this region stayed so busy with their work, they did not make time for anyone to tell them about Jesus. Since COVID-19 has slowed down the pace of life in the area, many people make more time to listen and talk about God with others. ”

Tell the kids that Stephen and Erin Spencer met an elderly lady in a Southeast Asia village. Explain that the lady wondered if the Bible stories she heard were true. Tell the kids that she said to her family, “There might be something to this living God they’re talking about.” Tell kids that one day, not long after she made that statement, the woman’s daughter came in to tell her that their pig had died.

SAY “ In this area, a pig can be sold for income that a family can live on for two to three months. The daughter asked, ‘Is there anything this ‘living God’ can do?’ The elderly lady went to the pigpen, where a crowd from the village had gathered. She crawled into the pigpen, got on her knees, and said, ‘God, if You’re real, then show these people that You’re real.’ While she was praying, the dead pig stood up. The woman believed in God, and she was baptized the next day. Many people have believed in Jesus after seeing the answered prayers of this elderly lady in the village. ”

Pray, asking God to help the new believers grow in their faith and continue to tell other people in their village about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write out the key passage on index cards, writing only one word on each card. Create several sets depending on the size of your group.

SAY “ What is ‘godly grief’? [Allow kids to respond.] Godly grief means that we are genuinely sorry for our sin because it is an eternal offense against God. Godly grief should lead us to turn from sin and obey God because we love Him more than our sin. ”

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 2 Corinthians 7:10 together.

Form kids into small groups and distribute a word card set to each group. Challenge them to place the word cards in the correct order as quickly as possible.

Lead kids to sing “Lead Us To Salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Thank You, Lord, for protecting and providing for your people. Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death. Help us share the good news of the gospel with others. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**

