



# Ten-Minute Family Devotional

week seventy eight

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## Nehemiah

Take your children to your front door and show them how thick and hard the door is and how the lock works. Then ask them the following questions to stimulate a discussion:

- ❖ Why do we build houses with strong front doors?  
*One reason is that they keep out animals and bad weather.*
- ❖ Why do we have locks on our doors?  
*To keep out people we don't want to come into our homes.*
- ❖ Why do some people put up fences around their yards?  
*To give privacy, and sometimes to keep pets in and unwanted animals and people out.*
- ❖ Why were walls built around the city of Jerusalem?  
*For all the same reasons we have locks and doors and fences. The walls protected the city from attack and intrusion.*

Say, "This week you will learn how God moved Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls."

# day one

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## Picture It

Imagine how sad you would be if you heard that your grandparents' house was burned to the ground, and they were living in a tent until it could be rebuilt. Wouldn't you and your family be sad when you heard the news and want to pray for them and go to help them?

In our story today, a man named Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and the gates had been burned by fire. He became very sad at the news and prayed to God for help.



## Read Nehemiah 1.

## Think About It Some More

Nehemiah was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes was the same king who gave permission to Ezra to return to his people in Jerusalem, and he gave all the gold and silver and other gifts to help rebuild the temple. When Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were still broken down, he was very sad because that meant that God's people and the temple of the Lord were open to attack. But instead of becoming afraid, Nehemiah prayed to the Lord for help.

## Talk About It

Why was Nehemiah sad?

*The walls of Jerusalem were broken down and the gates were burned.*

Why were the walls of Jerusalem so important?

*The walls protected the people who lived inside from robbers and attack. Parents, remind your children of how your front door locks keep people out who don't belong in your home.*

What was the most special thing inside the walls of Jerusalem?

*God's rebuilt temple was inside the walls.*

## Pray About It

Read Nehemiah's prayer in verse 5 and use it to praise God like Nehemiah did.

# day two

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## Remember It

What do you remember about yesterday's story? What do you think is going to happen today?



## Read Nehemiah 2.

## Think About It Some More

Nehemiah was a courageous man. He was not afraid to ask the king to send him to Jerusalem to repair the walls. He wasn't afraid to stand up and challenge the people of Jerusalem to start the work. And he wasn't afraid of Sanballat, who accused him of rebelling against the king. The reason Nehemiah could be so courageous and brave was that he trusted the Lord.

## Talk About It

Who gave Nehemiah the idea to fix the walls of Jerusalem?

*In verse 12 Nehemiah said that god put it on his heart to fix the walls. Parents, if your children don't know the answer, have them look up verse 12. If they can't read, read that verse and have them raise their hands when they have the answer.*

What did Nehemiah do at night?

*Nehemiah inspected the walls of the city.*

When Nehemiah answered Sanballat, whom did he say was going to help them rebuild the walls?

*Nehemiah said that God was going to help them rebuild the walls.*

## Pray About It

Ask God to give you courage to live for him like Nehemiah did.

# day three

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## Connect It To Jesus

Can anyone guess how our story is about Jesus or points forward to him?



### Read Nehemiah 3.

(Parents, this is a long section of Scripture. If you have younger children, read Nehemiah 3:1 – 15. Reading the whole list of repairs helps to give a picture of how all the families worked together to finish the job.)

## Think About It Some More

God gave Nehemiah a great plan: all families of Jerusalem would work together to rebuild the wall. With everybody helping, the job of rebuilding the huge walls of Jerusalem could be completed quickly.

Nehemiah assigned each family to work on the wall near their own house. The people were glad to rebuild the walls where they lived because the walls protected their homes from attack. All around Jerusalem the families were working to complete the project.

While they were working, there was something special happening that they didn't know about. One day, about 4,000 years later, Jesus would walk along the very walls they were rebuilding, and he would walk through the gates of Jerusalem they were repairing. They didn't know it, but their work to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was a part of God's plan to save his people from their sin.

One day Jesus would teach at the temple they rebuilt and be arrested within the walls they were rebuilding. Then, when Jesus was found guilty, he would once again walk through one the gates in the wall to be crucified just outside the city.

## Talk About It

What was Nehemiah's plan on how to get the large wall around Jerusalem rebuilt?

*Nehemiah assigned each family to rebuild the wall near their own house.*

If you lived in Jerusalem why would you want to rebuild the wall near your house?

*The wall protected Israel from attack. If you didn't repair the wall near your house, and enemies attacked, guess where they would try to come? That's right—in the very spot you lived.*

What do you think Sanballat thought when he saw the whole wall going up in front of him?

*We will learn about Sanballat tomorrow, but he wasn't too happy.*

## Pray About It

Thank God for the wisdom he gave Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

## day four

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### Remember It

What has God been teaching you this week through our Bible story?



**Read Nehemiah 4 and 6:15 – 16.**

### Think About It Some More

At first Sanballat made fun of the people of Jerusalem who were working to rebuild the huge walls of Jerusalem. But when he heard the breaches (holes) in the wall were being closed up, he stopped laughing. He knew that when the openings were closed and the wall rebuilt, he would have a hard time attacking Jerusalem if he wanted. Israel would grow strong again. Then they could attack Sanballat!

That's why Sanballat gathered together the other leaders in the area to form an army. They wanted to plan a surprise attack to defeat God's people before the wall was finished.

But God made sure their plan was discovered by Nehemiah. When he found out, he gathered the people of God to pray and then ordered them to guard the lowest parts of the wall with weapons. When Sanballat heard the workers were armed with swords and spears, he realized his plan to attack by surprise wouldn't work. Every day the workers took their weapons with them. If Sanballat tried to attack, the people of God were ready for him. With each passing day the openings of the wall were closing up, and the wall grew taller until attack was impossible and the wall was finished.

The sad part is that, even though the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, and the people confessed their sin and promised to follow God (Nehemiah 9), God's people still sinned against him. Rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple was not enough. God needed to send Jesus, his only Son, to die on the cross to take away our sin.

### Talk About It

KIDS< ask your parents if they can remember a time when they worked together with a bunch of folks to get a big job done.

*Parents, try to remember a big job that was made easier by a large group of people. Perhaps a group of your friends helped a person move or build a house on a mission trip.*

Who did Nehemiah say frustrated Sanballat's plan to attack?

*If your children don't remember the answer, have them look at 4:15 or read it to your younger children and have them raise their hands as soon as they know the answer. God frustrated Sanballat's plan.*

What did the people inside the city do while they worked to discourage anyone from attacking them?

*They brought their swords and spears and bow and arrows to use to fight. That way if an enemy spy came to see what was going on, he would see they were not only working—they were also armed.*

How long did they work each day?

*They worked all day long, from the time the sun rose at dawn, until the stars shone in the sky at night.*

## Pray about It

Thank God for helping his people finish the walls of Jerusalem.

# day five

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## Discover It

Today we look at a passage from a psalm or one of the prophets to see what we can learn from it about Jesus.



**Read Zechariah 3:8 – 10.**

## Think About It Some More

Several times in these lessons we have seen where the prophets of old use the code word “branch” to refer to Jesus. (For example, see Isaiah 4:2; 11:1 – 2; and Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15 – 16.) Here in our last lesson of the Old Testament, Zechariah said something amazing. He said that this Branch will remove the iniquity (take away the sins) of God's people in a single day.

That is exactly what Jesus did when he died on the cross and took the punishment we deserved. On the cross when Jesus said, “it is finished” (John 19:30), he meant that the punishment God poured out on him (instead of us) was finished and taken away. In a single day, the Branch had taken away the sins of the world.

## **Talk About It**

Who is the Branch that Zechariah is talking about?

*The Branch is Jesus.*

What did Zechariah say the Branch would do in a single day?

*Zechariah said that he would remove the iniquity [the sins] of god's people in a single day.*

What did Jesus do to take all out sins away in a single day?

*Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment we deserved upon himself..*

## **Pray About It**

Thank Jesus for taking all our sins away by his death and resurrection from the dead.