

FROM THE MOUNDS OF RUBBLE

unit 18 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

God's enemies tried to stop His people, but they still rebuilt the wall. God's enemies tried to stop Jesus by killing Him, but God planned for Jesus's death and resurrection to be the only way for people to be saved.



TO PERSEVERE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Nehemiah 1–6

GOD EXCHANGES OUR DISCOURAGEMENT FOR PERSEVERANCE

NEHEMIAH 4:1-14

1 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious. He mocked the Jews 2 before his colleagues and the powerful men of Samaria and said, “What are these pathetic Jews doing? Can they restore it by themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they ever finish it? Can they bring these burnt stones back to life from the mounds of rubble?” 3 Then Tobiah the Ammonite, who was beside him, said, “Indeed, even if a fox climbed up what they are building, he would break down their stone wall!” 4 Listen, our God, for we are despised. Make their insults return on their own heads and let them be taken as plunder to a land of captivity. 5 Do not cover their guilt or let their sin be erased from your sight, because they have angered the builders. 6 So we rebuilt the wall until the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had the will to keep working. 7 When Sanballat, Tobiah, and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the repair to the walls of Jerusalem was progressing and that the gaps were being closed, they became furious. 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw it into confusion. 9 So we prayed to our God and stationed a guard because of them day and night. 10 In Judah, it was said: The strength of the laborer fails, since there is so much rubble. We will never be able to rebuild the wall. 11 And our enemies said, “They won’t realize it until we’re among them and can kill them and stop the work.” 12 When the Jews who lived nearby arrived, they said to us time and again, “Everywhere you turn, they attack us.” 13 So I stationed people behind the lowest sections of the wall, at the vulnerable areas. I stationed them by families with their swords, spears, and bows. 14 After I made an inspection, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the great and awe-inspiring Lord, and fight for your countrymen, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes.”

GOD'S POWER DOES THE WORK IN US

NEHEMIAH 6:15-16

15 The wall was completed in fifty-two days, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul. 16 When all our enemies heard this, all the surrounding nations were intimidated and lost their confidence, for they realized that this task had been accomplished by our God.

MAIN POINT.

God gives us everything we need to live for Him.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS IMMANENT

When we say that God is immanent, we mean that God is personable and relatable to those made in His image, while remaining completely distinct and unique from all of His creation. It means that God is not a distant deity, who only sits on His heavenly throne with no interaction, but instead, He is a personal God who created people in His image to be in personal relationship with Him.

DISCUSSION

GOD EXCHANGES OUR DISCOURAGEMENT FOR PERSEVERANCE

NEHEMIAH 4:1-14



- When you're struggling, who's the first person you turn to? Why do we struggle to go to God first?
- How does culture mock believers? How should we react?
- Read Nehemiah 1:5. What did Nehemiah believe about God? How did those beliefs help him persevere? As believers today, why do we struggle to persevere?

GOD'S POWER DOES THE WORK IN US

NEHEMIAH 6:15-16



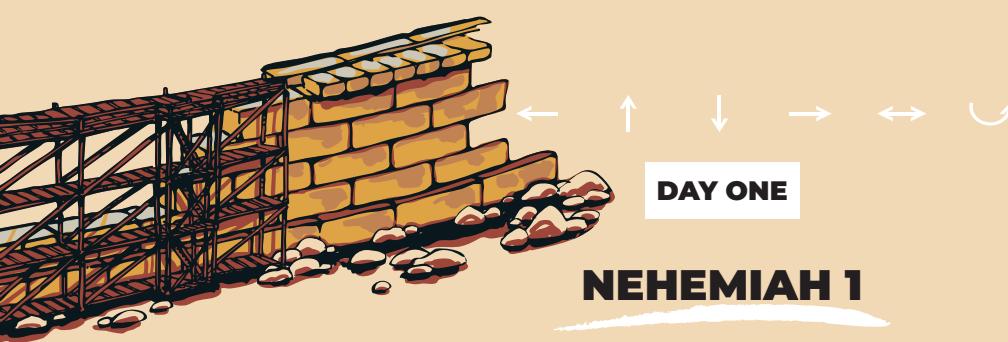
- Why do we want recognition and praise so badly? How does our culture make this tougher?
- People knew God accomplished the rebuilding of the wall. Is the way you live an undeniable example of God's work? Why should it be?



HOW ARE YOU LETTING FEAR OF BEING LEFT OUT OR REJECTED DISCOURAGE YOU FROM LIVING BOLDLY FOR JESUS? WHAT WOULD HELP YOU PERSEVERE?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Sometimes, life feels like it's crumbling all around us, like a war zone. Circumstances we couldn't control smashed everything to pieces. When we look around, all we see are ruins and rubble where strong towers and bridges once stood. And in these times, we may feel like we'll never be able to rebuild. The destruction feels too deep, too permanent. Maybe life crumbled when you heard the word "cancer" spoken over someone you loved. Maybe your parents divorced. Maybe your sibling or friend died in a car crash. Maybe you tried alcohol or drugs for the first time and can't walk away. Maybe you compromised godly standards for purity. The truth is that life does crumble sometimes. It breaks and crashes down. And the other truth is that even in your best efforts, you can't rebuild what broke—not on your own. But God can. God responds when you turn to Him, when you hand Him the pieces of what's left, when you repent. He rebuilds you and restores you (1 Pet. 5:10). He makes you new.



In this introduction to Nehemiah, we learn a lot about Nehemiah's character. He was a man of God, an exile, and a cupbearer to the king of Persia. When news arrived, he learned that the people left back in Jerusalem were in trouble. The wall and gates of the city had been destroyed, and the people's protection had been eliminated with them. Nehemiah mourned at the news. He grieved because God's enemies had prevailed. He was full of sorrow for the suffering and pain back in his homeland. But, he immediately turned to the Lord, interceding for the people and their suffering. Notice the intensity of Nehemiah's prayer. He began by acknowledging God's greatness, faithfulness, and mercy. He didn't shy away from confessing the sins of his people, including himself and his father's house. He highlighted God's promises, reminding Him of His word given to Moses.

Nehemiah's prayer is a powerful example for us. When we face discouraging news or feel burdened by the brokenness around us, our first response should be to turn to God in prayer. Like Nehemiah, we can approach God with honesty, acknowledging both His power and our failings. We can hold on to His promises and intercede for those who are suffering. This chapter sets the stage for Nehemiah's courageous actions. His deep sorrow and fervent prayer weren't just emotional outbursts; they were the spark that made him determined to rebuild. May we, like Nehemiah, allow our hearts to be moved by the needs around us and be inspired to action through the power of prayer. Remember that even in the face of overwhelming challenges, God is faithful, and our prayers can be the first step towards restoration.

- **HAVE YOU EVER FELT BURDENED FOR A SITUATION OR A GROUP OF PEOPLE, EVEN WHEN YOU WEREN'T DIRECTLY IMPACTED? WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?**
- **WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER ABOUT GOING TO GOD FOR HELP OR GUIDANCE ABOUT A PROBLEM?**

PRAY

GOD, OPEN OUR EYES TO SEE THE BROKENNESS AROUND US AND THEN TO BRING OUR BURDENS TO YOU. GIVE US THE COURAGE TO ACT WHEN YOU CALL US TO.



DAY TWO

ISAIAH 41:10-13

In this week's passage, Nehemiah had been given a massive task: rebuilding the ruined walls of Jerusalem, a project that must have felt impossible. As the people started rebuilding, they faced intense opposition and threats from enemies. Later, in Nehemiah 6, we learn they completed the wall in 52 days! The task was so incredible that the enemies of Jerusalem were astonished and intimidated. They lost their confidence because they recognized that they couldn't go up against God or His people. God had protected them, fought for them, and completed the task.

Isaiah 41:10-13 reflects the mighty warrior God we see in Nehemiah. We don't have to face difficult tasks alone. We don't have to fear those who oppose us. Why? Because God is with us, strengthening us when we lose our determination, helping us navigate tricky situations, and holding on to us when we feel like letting go. The remedy for fear isn't just trying harder not to be scared; it's remembering that God is with you and He is your God. His presence is enough. And He isn't just present; He's actively involved! When you feel weak, He strengthens. When you need a hand, He helps. When you feel like falling, He holds you up with His powerful, righteous hand. God promises this about anything that comes against you—doubts, anxiety, temptations, unfair situations. God promises to deal with those things, making them "as nothing." You don't have to fight those battles alone. He's not just holding your hand; He's grasping it in a firm, loving grip and whispering, "Don't be afraid, I will help you."

- **HOW SHOULD GOD'S PRESENCE WITH YOU CHANGE HOW YOU FACE CHALLENGES?**
- **IN WHAT SPECIFIC AREAS OF YOUR LIFE (SCHOOL, FRIENDSHIPS, DECISIONS) DO YOU NEED GOD'S STRENGTH AND HELP RIGHT NOW?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR HOLDING MY HAND AND PROMISING TO BE WITH ME ALWAYS. HELP ME TO REMEMBER YOUR POWERFUL PRESENCE WHEN FEAR TRIES TO CREEP IN. STRENGTHEN ME, HELP ME, AND GUIDE ME THROUGH EVERY CHALLENGE.



DAY THREE

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30

Paul tells the Philippian church (and us) to “live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.” This isn’t about being perfect but about your actions matching your beliefs. Let’s be honest: One of the biggest reasons people give for not following Jesus is that they’ve seen us live as hypocrites. We’re all guilty. If you say you follow Jesus, does your life show it? Do you choose kindness over gossip, honesty over cheating, and compassion over judgment? Do you stand firmly with other believers, united in your purpose to share Jesus? Paul says to live this way without fearing those who oppose you. In school, online, or even in some family situations, living for Christ brings pushback. People might make fun of you, exclude you, dislike you, or just not understand you. But Paul says, don’t back down. Your courage in these moments is a powerful testimony to God’s work in you, which is maybe the most challenging part. Paul says it’s “granted to you on Christ’s behalf not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.” Wait, suffer? As a privilege? Yes! When you face tough times for choosing Jesus, you’re actually participating in what Jesus Himself went through. You’re joining a long line of faithful people, including Paul and Nehemiah, who endured struggles for the gospel. It means your faith is real, and it connects you deeply to Christ’s own journey.

Living out your faith in a way that truly reflects the gospel takes courage, especially when it’s unpopular. But remember, you’re not doing it alone. Jesus is with you, and standing firm for Him is an incredible privilege that builds your faith and points others to Him.

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU TO “LIVE YOUR LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST” IN YOUR DAILY LIFE, AT SCHOOL, OR WITH FRIENDS?**
- **WHY DO YOU THINK PAUL CALLS SUFFERING FOR CHRIST A “PRIVILEGE”? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS TRUTH?**

PRAY

LORD JESUS, THANK YOU FOR THE GOSPEL AND THE PRIVILEGE OF LIVING FOR YOU. GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO STAND FIRM, TO UNITE WITH OTHER BELIEVERS, AND TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT TRULY REFLECTS YOUR LOVE, EVEN WHEN IT’S TOUGH.



DAY FOUR

HEBREWS 13:5B-6

Life can have so many ups and downs, changes, and worries about the future. Feeling anxious or alone sometimes is normal. But today's verses from Hebrews offer an incredible promise that can totally change how you face those fears: God is always with you. God will never leave or abandon you. He is with you in every moment—when you're crushing it, when you mess up big time, when you're lonely, when you're overwhelmed. He won't ever walk away, give up on you, or decide you're not worth His time. People might let you down, friendships might shift, plans might fall apart, but God's commitment to you is rock-solid and unchanging. He's not just there; He's for you.

If the Lord is your Helper, He's on your side—actively working in your life, guiding you, strengthening you, and providing for you. You don't have to be just not scared. You can actually have a deep inner peace and a courage that comes from knowing who walks with you. What others think, what someone might say, whether you'll succeed or fail, whether you'll fit in—none of this matters. When God is your constant Helper, human opinions and pressures lose their power over you.

So when anxieties creep in, or you face a situation that makes you nervous, remember these verses. God is your constant Companion and powerful Helper. With Him by your side, you can truly face anything.

- **WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC WORRIES OR FEARS YOU FACE THAT YOU THINK THIS VERSE DIRECTLY SPEAKS TO?**
- **IF GOD PROMISES, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU OR ABANDON YOU," HOW DOES KNOWING THIS CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON CHALLENGES OR TIMES WHEN YOU FEEL ALONE?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR THE INCREDIBLE PROMISE
THAT YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE OR ABANDON
ME. HELP ME TO TRULY BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE
MY HELPER SO I CAN LIVE WITH COURAGE AND
WITHOUT FEAR.



DAY FIVE

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Have you ever felt really scared about something? Maybe it was speaking in front of the class, trying out for a team, or even just having a tough conversation with a parent or a friend. It's totally normal to feel that way. We often wish we were braver, right? In 2 Timothy 1:7, Paul tells us exactly what God hasn't given us and what He has. He hasn't given us a spirit of fear because fear isn't from Him. When we feel overwhelmed by anxiety or doubt, that's not God's doing. Instead, God has given us a spirit of power. Think about that! This isn't your own strength but God's strength working through you. He gives you the power to overcome challenges, to stand up for what's right, and to live out your faith even when it's tough.

God's love even empowers us to do good: to be kind, to forgive, and to show compassion even when it's difficult. God's love isn't weak; it's strong and active. Finally, He's given us a spirit of sound judgment; this means having a disciplined, self-controlled mind—one that can think clearly, make wise choices even when you're tempted, and not be swayed by every negative thought or peer pressure. It's about having peace and clarity, not chaos and confusion. And where does this Spirit come from? God, Himself. Through the Holy Spirit, His power, love, and sound judgment live in us. This truth should excite us and prompt us to live boldly and unafraid! So, the next time you feel that grip of fear, remember this verse. You don't have to rely on just your own bravery. You have access to God's incredible power, love, and judgment.

- **HOW DO YOU THINK HAVING A SPIRIT “OF POWER, LOVE, AND SOUND JUDGMENT” COULD CHANGE HOW YOU APPROACH CHALLENGES IN YOUR LIFE?**
- **WHAT’S ONE PRACTICAL STEP YOU CAN TAKE THIS WEEK TO LEAN INTO GOD’S SPIRIT OF POWER, LOVE, OR SOUND JUDGMENT IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR NOT GIVING ME A SPIRIT OF FEAR. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD FILL ME WITH YOUR SPIRIT OF POWER, LOVE, AND SOUND JUDGMENT TODAY AND EVERY DAY. HELP ME TO WALK CONFIDENTLY IN THE GIFTS YOU HAVE GIVEN ME.