

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.

POWER 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 Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. 2 And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?" 3 Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!" 4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. 5 Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders. 6 So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. 7 But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. 8 And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. 9 And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. 10 In Judah it was said, "The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall." 11 And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work." 12 At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, "You must return to us." 13 So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

GOD'S POWER DOES THE WORK IN US

NEHEMIAH 6:15-16

15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of 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.



DAY ONE

NEHEMIAH 1

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 that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.” 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 NOR FORSAKE 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 AND LOVE AND SELF-CONTROL” 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.