

Nehemiah

God's Workman

Track 44



Nehemiah carried a drink to the king. He was an important servant in the palace of the great king of Persia.

But today, the king noticed something different. “Young man,” he said. “Why is your face so sad? You are not sick, are you? No, I think you have a broken heart.”

Nehemiah set down the cup. His hand started to tremble. Should he tell the king why he felt sad? Would the king be angry with him?



“O king,” Nehemiah answered. “I am sad because Jerusalem, the city of my people, is a terrible mess. The city wall is broken down, and the people are in danger.”

“What do you ask for?” said the king.

Nehemiah prayed silently to the Lord. “Please let the king be kind,” he prayed.

“If it pleases you, my king,” said Nehemiah. “I would like to go to Jerusalem to help the Israelites rebuild the walls.”

Nehemiah waited. What would the king say?

“Yes, you may go,” said the king.

Hooray! Nehemiah couldn’t help but smile. He knew God had answered his prayer.





Nehemiah set off for Jerusalem at once. When he got to the city, he looked around closely. He saw all the work that needed to be done.

Then he called the Israelites together. “Let’s rebuild the walls so we will be safe and strong again. God has sent me here to help you do this good work. He will be with us,” said Nehemiah.

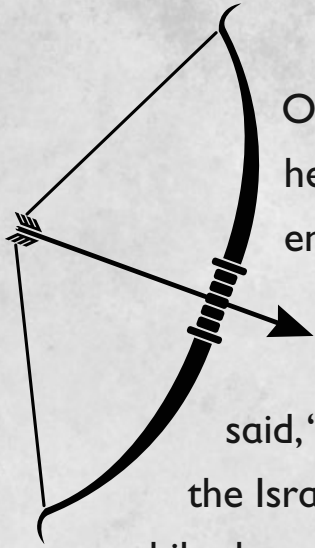
“Let’s start building!” cried the people.

Nehemiah gave the families different jobs to do. Some people cleaned up the rubble; others carried heavy loads. Some laid stones on the wall; others built high gates out of logs. Side by side, the people worked as hard as they could for the Lord.

But soon, some enemies started to make fun of them. “Ha, Ha!” laughed Sanballat. “Do you really think you can build that wall?”

“Hee, Hee!” laughed Tobiah. “Your wall is so weak that it would fall down even if a fox tiptoed on it!”

Nehemiah and the people did not listen. They were too busy working for the Lord. And every day, their wall got taller.



One day, Nehemiah heard that their enemies were planning to attack. Their enemies said, "Let's sneak up on the Israelites and kill them while they work."

Nehemiah and the people prayed to the Lord for help. Then he said to the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Hold your swords, your spears and your bows while you work. No matter what, we will still keep working for the Lord."

When the enemies saw the Israelites were ready to fight, they knew they had lost. They tried a few more tricks, but nothing worked. Nehemiah and the people *would not stop* working for the Lord.

Finally, in just a short time, the wall was finished!

Hooray! Nehemiah smiled bigger than ever. Everyone, even their enemies, knew that this great work had been done with the help of the Lord.



Learn from Nehemiah's biography:

- God helps His children to do His good work.
- Whatever you do, keep working hard at it. You're working for the Lord!

Parent Ideas

Nehemiah, God's Workman

Scripture: Nehemiah 1- 6

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God helps His children to do His good work.
- Whatever you do, keep working hard at it. You're working for the Lord!

1. Read-together activity –

Before you sit down to read, gather some blocks or dominoes. Put one pile near you, and another pile near your child. Also have a timer or stopwatch nearby. Then read the biography to your child, but stop whenever you read a sentence about the Israelites working for the Lord. Once you stop, set the timer for one minute while you and your child each race to build a tower by stacking blocks or dominoes. After the minute is up, return to reading the biography. At the end of the biography, see who has the biggest tower. If your child can handle playful teasing, send other family members into the room to make fun of your towers or distract each of you while you build.

2. Discussion activity – On sheets of paper, write simple sentences or draw pictures to represent the main action scenes in the biography. (Represent a different scene on each sheet of paper.) Mix up the papers, and then ask your child to describe what happened in each scene and put the scenes in the proper time order.

Then ask these questions:

- At the beginning of the biography, why was Nehemiah sad?
- What are the ways God helped Nehemiah and the Israelites? (At the beginning of the biography? During the middle? At the end?)
- Do you think God was pleased with the way the Israelites were working? Why?

Parents, help your child to see all the ways God helped Nehemiah and the Israelites: He caused the king to be kind to Nehemiah; He sent Nehemiah to lead and help the Israelites; He gave the people strength and focus to work; He protected them from their enemies; He helped the wall to be finished in a short time – in only 52 days! God was probably very pleased with the Israelites because they worked hard, focused on the job He asked them to do and trusted in Him.

3. Application activity – Brainstorm ways you and your child can each work for the Lord. To add fun and energy, bounce a ball between you. Each time a person catches the ball, he must name one way to work for the Lord. Remember, that *anything* we do (within God's will, of course!)

can be work for the Lord – as long as we have an attitude of serving God while we do it (Colossians 3:23). So don't just name things you do at church, say things like "cleaning my room," "doing my school work," "making dinner" or "working at the office." Put some of your ideas into practice in the upcoming week.

4. Application activity – Invite some Christian teenagers or adults to share with your child about the various ways they work for the Lord, whether they work in a Christian ministry context or secular context. There are several ways to arrange this. Here are two ideas:

- Invite the adults (or teenagers) over for dinner. Then have them each share briefly about their work. Ask them to bring as many visual aids as possible. (You may want to invite your pastor as part of this group to allow your child to get better acquainted with him.)
- Before or after a church service, meet up with various people you know. You and your child can interview them briefly about their work. Emphasize to your child the variety of ways people can work for the Lord.