

Leader Guide

Reimagine.

Fall 2026 | Week 3

Message Date 9/27/2026

THE GOAL

Last week the wall reached half its height. This week we see that things got harder before they got better. In Nehemiah 4:7–23, the enemies grow furious, the workers grow tired, and the rubble feels endless. But Nehemiah prays, sets a guard over the work, and calls the people to “Remember the Lord” and fight for their families and homes. In Nehemiah 8:1–12 and Galatians 6:1–10, we find what keeps us going: a strong mind built on God’s Word, the joy of the Lord as our strength, and a handful of people building alongside us.

Our goal this week is for every person to leave encouraged that a hard season in the middle of the build doesn’t mean the blessing has stopped. It’s just a hard season. We want them to guard the progress God has given, inspect their wall regularly, and keep building on their doorstep and in their church. Let’s encourage our people keep the 30-Day Prayer Challenge and cheer each other on: Keep Going!

MY STORY

- 1) What’s something you’ve tried to do one-handed — eat a burrito while driving, carry groceries while holding a toddler, balance coffee while opening a door — that went hilariously wrong?
- 2) Nehemiah’s crew didn’t change clothes for the entire build. What’s the longest you’ve ever gone in the same outfit — a camping trip, a road trip, a new-baby fog, and are willing to admit it?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday’s message?



DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

Nehemiah 4:7–23 (NLT)

⁷But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious. ⁸They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion. ⁹But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

¹⁰Then the people of Judah began to complain, “The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves.”

¹¹Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, “Before they know what’s happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work.”

¹²The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, “They will come from all directions and attack us!” ¹³So I placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed the people to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows.

¹⁴Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, “Don’t be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!”

¹⁵When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall. ¹⁶But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah ¹⁷who were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. ¹⁸All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.

¹⁹Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, “The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. ²⁰When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!”

²¹We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. And half the men were always on guard. ²²I also told everyone living outside the walls to stay in Jerusalem. That way they and their servants could help with guard duty at night and work during the day. ²³During this time, none of us—not I, nor my relatives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me—ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us at all times, even when we went for water.

- 4) Notice exactly when the opposition got loud: “when... they heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious” (v. 7). Why do you think progress and healing so often stir up resistance, and have you ever experienced that in your own life?

There's something freeing about realizing that resistance is often a sign that something good is actually happening. Sanballat and Tobiah didn't bother getting furious while Jerusalem sat in ruins — they got furious when the gaps started closing. The same is often true for us. When you begin healing a marriage, getting your finances in order, setting a healthy boundary, or taking your faith seriously, not everyone will be excited about your repair. Sometimes it's people; sometimes it's old habits, old voices, or the enemy of our souls who would rather we stay broken. Scripture lets us see this ahead of time so we don't mistake opposition for failure. If you're feeling pushback right now, it may be worth asking a hopeful question: "Could this be happening because the wall is actually going up?" The gaps being repaired is a very good thing — and God is right there with you in the middle of it.

- 5) Nehemiah's response to the threat was twofold: "*we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night*" (v. 9). He did what was within his control and trusted God with the rest. Which comes more naturally to you — praying and waiting, or working and guarding — and what might it look like to hold both together this week?

Many of us lean one way or the other. Some of us are wonderful at praying but hesitant to take the practical steps that are ours to take. Others of us jump straight into action and only remember to pray once we're worn out. Nehemiah gives us a gentle, balanced picture: he sat with God first, because God is our defender, and then he faithfully did the part that was in his hands. That's not a lack of faith — it's faith with its sleeves rolled up.

- 6) Right after the wall reached the halfway point, things got worse, not better. The workers were tired, the rubble felt endless, and they concluded, "*We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves*" (v. 10). Which of those three feelings — tired, overwhelmed, or alone — do you relate to most right now, and how does it help to know this is often what the middle of God's blessing feels like?

I know for me (Justin) Sometimes the work feels like it's never going to end, but this might be one of the most encouraging truths in the whole passage: God's people felt exactly the way many of us feel, right in the middle of a work He was clearly blessing. The halfway point is often the hardest point. The excitement of starting has worn off, the finish line still feels far away, and the rubble we haven't moved yet seems to stare back at us. If you're there right now, you're not failing — you're building.

- 7) When Nehemiah looked over the situation, he said, "*Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!*" (v. 14). Who or what are you fighting for right now, and how does remembering the Lord — and remembering them — change the way you see the hard work in front of you?

Nehemiah didn't try to talk the people out of their fear by pretending the danger wasn't real. He took an honest look at what was true, gathered everyone together, and then did two beautiful things: he turned their eyes toward the faithful One, and he reminded them why the work mattered. Look to Jesus and remember why we started in the first place. Hold fast to him.

- 8) After the threat was exposed, the people didn't relax — they became more watchful. Half worked while half stood guard, the builders worked *“with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon,”* and a trumpeter stood ready so everyone could *“rush to wherever it is sounding.”* (vv. 16–20). What would it look like for you to set a guard over the progress God has already given you, so it isn't lost?

It's so natural to breathe a sigh of relief once a hard moment passes and to let our guard down. But Nehemiah understood that progress is precious, and precious things are worth protecting. This is why it's so incredibly important to guard our hearts from complacency and pride. I know that when I have taken time in my history to look back and see how far I've come it is easy for me to take credit instead of giving credit to God. It's so important that we guard our heart and protect the work that's been done.

Galatians 6:1–10 (NLT)

“¹Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ²Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

⁴Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. ⁵For we are each responsible for our own conduct. ⁶Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them.

⁷Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. ⁸Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. ⁹So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. ¹⁰Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.”

- 9) Paul writes, *“Share each other's burdens”* (v. 2) and *“whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith”* (v. 10). The message reminded us that we don't need a hundred people to build with — just a handful — and asked, “Have you ever thought about the people who might need you?” Who are the handful of people you're building with, and who might be needing you right now?

God never designed us to build alone. Nehemiah stationed people by families, and Paul pictures believers carrying each other's loads. The encouraging news is that you don't need a huge crowd — just a handful of people pursuing God with you. It's wise not to put all your hope in just one or two people, especially in a season where people move and life changes quickly, but a small circle of faithful friends in your church can be one of the greatest gifts in your life. They won't be perfect, and neither will we, but they give us people to be strong with while we work through it.

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Reflection Questions for Chair Time: think about the following questions and pray through them with Jesus.

- 1) Ask God to show you where you feel tired, overwhelmed, or alone in the building right now. Bring it to Him honestly, then ask Him to let His joy become your strength for the next stretch of the wall.
- 2) Ask God: Who am I really fighting for? Sit quietly and let Him bring faces to mind — then ask Him who, in your church family, might be needing you this week.
- 3) Ask God to gently inspect your wall with you. Is there a small crack at your doorstep He wants you to address now, or someone He's inviting you to ask to walk alongside you in accountability? Write down whatever He brings to mind.