

Leader Guide

Reimagine.

Fall 2026 | Week 1

Message Date 9/13/2026

THE GOAL

This week we launch a brand-new series — Reimagine: The Blessing of God is Within Your Reach — and we will be diving into the story of Nehemiah to discover that God’s blessing has never been far from His people. It has always been within reach. They are tied to obedience that starts right on their own doorstep. In Nehemiah 2:11–20, we watch Nehemiah quietly and honestly inspect the brokenness around him — not to make excuses, but to find a way forward — and then move ahead in confident faith that God’s hand would help him succeed.

Our goal for this week is that every person would take an honest, unhurried look at their own “wall” — whether in family, finances, work, relationships, or faith — and begin trusting that God is inviting them into His ongoing work of rebuilding and renewal. Good intentions alone won’t carry us far. What will carry us is learning to see, hear, and believe what God does. It’s the application of the intention that will bring about the rebuilding of our wall. And for some, our walls will be in good shape but require some maintenance for others, it is a true rebuild. The point is to be honest with ourselves and receive God’s grace to move forward.

MY STORY

1. What’s the most over-ambitious project you’ve ever started — a home renovation, a garden, a New Year’s resolution — and how did it actually turn out?
2. If you could instantly become an expert builder of ONE thing — LEGO sets, sandcastles, IKEA furniture, blanket forts — what would you pick, and why that one?

QUICK REVIEW

3. What caught your attention from Sunday’s message?

DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

Nehemiah 2:11–20 (NLT)

“So I arrived in Jerusalem. Three days later, ¹² I slipped out during the night, taking only a few others with me. I had not told anyone about the plans God had put in my heart for Jerusalem. We took no pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding. ¹³ After dark I went out through the Valley Gate, past the Jackal’s Well, and over to the Dung Gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates. ¹⁴ Then I went to the Fountain Gate and to the King’s Pool, but my donkey couldn’t get through the rubble. ¹⁵ So, though it was still dark, I went up the Kidron Valley instead, inspecting the wall before I turned back and entered again at the Valley Gate.

¹⁶ The city officials did not know I had been out there or what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to anyone about my plans. I had not yet spoken to the Jewish leaders—the priests, the

nobles, the officials, or anyone else in the administration. ¹⁷ But now I said to them, ‘You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!’ ¹⁸ Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king. They replied at once, ‘Yes, let’s rebuild the wall!’ So they began the good work.

¹⁹ But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously. ‘What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?’ they asked. ²⁰ I replied, ‘The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem.’”

4. Nehemiah inspected the broken walls quietly, at night, before telling anyone his plans. What’s the value of taking time to honestly assess a situation with God before we act on it or announce it to others?

Nehemiah didn’t rush to fix what he hadn’t first taken time to see clearly. Before he ever picked up a stone, he sat with the truth of the situation — in the dark, alone, unhurried. That’s an invitation for us too. So often we want to skip straight to solutions, but God often wants to meet us in the quiet first, letting us see things as they really are before we start moving. Slowing down long enough to look honestly at our “wall” isn’t a delay in God’s plan for us. Before I announce it to others, I tend to want to think through if there’s a cost here that I need to pay. For example, if God is telling me or encouraging me to take better care of my physical health for my family’s sake thinking about the reality of where I am and where can I put the exercise routine in my schedule before I announce it to everyone is helpful.

5. In verse 18, once Nehemiah shared how “the gracious hand of God” had been on him, the people immediately responded, “Let’s rebuild!” Why does naming what God has already done for us tend to stir up faith and action in the people around us?

When we pause to remember what God has already done, we are celebrating and remembering the goodness of God. Nehemiah didn’t manipulate the people into action with guilt or pressure — he just told his story, and it gave others permission to believe God could move for them too. That’s a beautiful picture of how encouragement works in a Life Group, a family, or a friendship. Your story of God’s faithfulness, even a small one, might be exactly what helps someone else take their next step. You don’t need a perfect testimony to be useful to someone else — you just need an honest one.

6. When Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mocked Nehemiah’s plan, he didn’t argue — he simply said, “The God of heaven will help us succeed.” What might it look like for you to answer doubt or discouragement with that same quiet confidence?

Nehemiah’s response is such a gentle model for us — he didn’t need to win the argument, because he wasn’t depending on his own strength to finish the work. When criticism or doubt shows up (and it will), we’re invited to respond the same way: not with anxiety or defensiveness, but with a settled trust that God is the one who brings the success. That kind of confidence isn’t arrogance— it’s rest. You’re free to let some conversations end with simple trust in God rather than a need to convince anyone of anything.

7. Nehemiah’s inspection wasn’t about finding excuses to give up — he was looking for a way forward. Where might God be inviting you to take an honest look at something you’ve been avoiding, not to feel defeated by it, but to find your next step?

It’s easy to avoid looking closely at the broken places in our lives because we assume an honest look will only leave us discouraged. But Nehemiah shows us a different way — you can look right at the rubble and still walk away hopeful, because you’re not looking at it alone.

8. This passage shows both personal responsibility (Nehemiah's own resolve) and a corporate one (the whole community rebuilding together). How have you experienced the blessing of both your own obedience and being part of something bigger than yourself?

God designed this walk with Him to be both deeply personal and beautifully shared. Nehemiah had his own doorstep to tend to, but he wasn't rebuilding alone — an entire community picked up the work alongside him. That's such good news for us. Your obedience matters, and it's yours to carry — but you were never meant to carry it in isolation. Whatever stone you're stacking this season, there are people around you — in this very Life Group — who get to cheer you on, pray with you, and stack their own stones right beside you.

John 10:10–11 (NLT)

"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep."

9. Jesus contrasts the thief's purpose — to steal, kill, and destroy — with His own purpose: a rich and satisfying life for us. How does that promise reshape the way you think about the "blessing" you're hoping God will bring?

It's worth pausing here, because this verse gently corrects a mindset many of us carry without realizing it — that a blessed life just means a comfortable or easy one. Jesus's promise is bigger and better than that: a life that is rich and satisfying, full in the ways that matter. That's good news for anyone who has felt like blessing has passed them by. Whatever "the thief" has stolen from you — confidence, joy, years you feel you can't get back — Jesus's stated purpose for you is restoration, not just consolation. You're invited to receive that as truth over your life right now.

10. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. How does remembering that His sacrifice already secured your place with Him free you to pursue obedience out of gratitude rather than pressure?

This is such an important distinction to hold onto as we head into a season of prayer and obedience together: nothing we do this month earns us a place with God — Jesus already secured that, fully, at the cross. That means every stone we stack, every act of obedience, is a response to love we've already received, not a transaction to earn more of 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 one "wall" in your life right now — a relationship, habit, dream, or fear — that He's inviting you to rebuild with Him this week. Sit quietly and simply listen.
2. Ask God: What do You want me to see, hear, and believe about this situation? Write down anything that comes to mind, even if it feels small or unclear.
3. Thank God for one specific way His hand has already been on your life — even in something small — and ask Him for courage to take your next step of obedience this week.