

PARENTS' PAGE LESSON 21: Rebuilding the Walls

Timeless Truth: God keeps his covenant with those who love him.

Bible Basis: Ezra 7:1, 7, 10-11; Nehemiah 1:2-6, 11, 4:4-6, 13-23, 8:1-12

Key Verse: Don't be afraid of your enemies. Remember the Lord. He is great and powerful (Nehemiah 4:14).

Resource: *The Story for Kids*: Chapter 21

Parent Tips:

Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table during the week. The Living Faith activity takes your family to a Web site to play a classic "wall breaker" video game. The Extra Mile encourages your family to do something to make God's people safer.

Get the Point:

Preschool: Nehemiah was sure of God's power. God is on my side.

Elementary: Nehemiah was sure of God's power. God is on my side.

Middle School: When God's people work together for what God wants, they can accomplish amazing things quickly.

High School: When God's people work together for what God wants, they can accomplish amazing things quickly.

Table Talk

Preschool/Elementary

- When the walls around Jerusalem were completed, the people celebrated. Ezra, the priest, read God's law to them from sunrise to noon (Nehemiah 8:3). Why do you think he did that?
- Do you think the people got bored?
- What's the longest you've ever been in church? What did you do?
- What's the longest that you've listened to somebody talk about God? What do you remember most?
- After Ezra spoke, the people went away and celebrated with great joy, because they now understood God's word. Why did they react this way?
- Do you react the same way when you hear God's Word? Why?

Note: Young readers will enjoy "Get Ready" in *the Jesus Storybook Bible* on page 170.

Middle/High School

- Rebuilding the wall was a monumental task. God's people got help from a powerful king and were pestered by nearby rulers. To protect his people and still get the work done, Nehemiah told the workers to carry supplies in one hand and a sword in the other. What does that tell you about the working conditions?

- Does God want you to be helpful, on one hand, and ready for battle with the other? How could you do that in your daily life?
- In the beginning of this chapter of *The Story*, God's people are making some decisions that go against God's law. Why don't they learn?
- Are there areas of your life where you need constant reminders to follow God's standards?
- Is reminding people through godly role models or writing a new thing or has it been the way God worked with his people for a long time?
- How did Ezra help the Jewish people get back on track with God? Do you think knowing God's Word better would help you, too?
- How does it feel to know that you've just read through the Old Testament? Do something to celebrate.

Living Faith

Nehemiah was brilliant in getting all of God's people to work together in rebuilding Jerusalem's wall. By working together, they completed the project in 52 days! Before that, the Jews had languished in their attempts to protect and rebuild Jerusalem. King Cyrus first allowed God's people to return to Jerusalem in 560 B.C. Then the second temple was completed in 516 B.C., but for 70 years the city was vulnerable to attack. In fact, many of the surrounding rulers made sure to keep the Israelites weak. But when Nehemiah showed up in 445 B.C., it took just less than two months to secure the walls and give God's people a safe place to live. In all it took 115 years for God's people to rebuild and fortify Jerusalem.

Have your family pretend to be raiders on Jerusalem by playing a classic "breakout" video game. You can go to www.silvergames.com/game/break-it/ or go to Google and search for "Breakout games." See which family member is best at breaking down the walls. Let everybody take a couple of turns and then give a prize to who scores the highest.

Extra Mile

When Nehemiah learned that God's people were having a hard time and that people were making fun of them, he wept. He didn't want God's people to suffer. He wanted them to be safe and protected.

Sit down with your family and brainstorm ideas on what you could do to make God's people safer in your area. Maybe there's a project at your church that needs to get done. You could:

- Help build a walkway at church.
- Paint or mark the handicap spaces more clearly.
- Put up signs to better direct people to classrooms or the sanctuary.
- Volunteer to help care for babies in the nursery.
- Shovel snow off the sidewalk in winter.

There are tons of other ideas. Concentrate on ideas that will keep God's people safe, and then ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to make these ideas a reality. You may need to include another family from church or the whole congregation. Dream big. Nehemiah did, and God helped him accomplish his goal extremely fast.