

Overview

Biblical Passage Nehemiah 4:1-3, 6:5-9, 6:15-16

Supporting Passages Nehemiah 1:1-4, 2:1-6, 2:11-28

Memory Verse Isaiah 41:10

Biblical Truth In the face of great odds and much ridicule, Nehemiah and the Jews rebuilt Jerusalem's wall.

Context While we would like to think that people would cheer us on as we strive to carry out God's mission, the reality is that we are likely to encounter scorn and ridicule from those who stand in opposition to God's plans. Living Loud means that whenever that happens, we need to rely on God's strength to continue to carry out His work, because if it is His work, then He will accomplish it. And He chooses to accomplish it through us.

Learning Goals

- **Explore:** Your students will learn that when God calls them to a task, He will provide them with the strength to complete it.
- **Transform:** Your students will evaluate their lives and look for how God is strengthening them for the tasks to which He has called them.

Prayer Suggestions

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that your students will understand that they will encounter opposition as they seek to carry out God's mission.
- Pray that your students will ask God to strengthen their hearts, minds, and hands to be and do all that He desires.
- Pray that your students will rise to the challenge and carry out God's work with full assurance that He is with them.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

In the midst of his efforts to expand the reach of the Babylonian Empire, Nebuchadnezzar staged multiple campaigns against **Jerusalem** and deported Jews in three waves. The Babylonian army's final, devastating siege of the city lasted 30 months, and on July 18, 586 B.C., the army breached Jerusalem's wall. With little resistance, the Temple was burned and the city destroyed.

After spending 70 years in Babylonian captivity, just as **Jeremiah** had prophesied, the exiled Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem (Jer. 29:10). When **Nehemiah**, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, learned that the city's wall had been broken down, rendering the returning exiles defenseless, he wept and cried out to God.

Later, as Nehemiah stood before Artaxerxes, the king noticed his cupbearer's depressed demeanor and inquired about the cause. Somewhat surprisingly, Artaxerxes was supportive of Nehemiah's desire to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Another group of exiles had previously attempted a reconstruction effort but abandoned the project when the neighboring peoples frustrated their plans. The enemies of Judah had written a letter to Artaxerxes, warning the king of the danger of allowing the Jews to complete such a project in "that rebellious and wicked city" (Ezra 4:12). Recognizing the potential for a Jewish revolt, the king dispatched his associates to Jerusalem to issue an order to halt work, and the reconstruction subsequently came to a standstill.

Now, with the king's approval, Nehemiah set out for Jerusalem, accompanied by army officers and cavalry. After a three-day stay, under cover of darkness he surveyed the state of the city's walls and gates. Having seen the ruins with his own eyes, the prophet then gathered the local Jews and informed them of his plan to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. "The God of heaven will give us success," Nehemiah promised (Neh. 2:20).

Importance

This passage of Scripture is important because it reminds students of the Essential Truth that **God Is**. Nehemiah worshipped the "God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His commands" (Neh. 1:5). Because Nehemiah knew who God was, he felt compelled to do everything that he could to rebuild Jerusalem and lead the people of God to resume worshipping the one true God in that holy city. As students study this passage, they will learn from Nehemiah's example how to rise to the challenge, rely on God's strength, and stand firm in the face of ridicule as they seek to carry out God's mission.

This passage also teaches the Essential Truth that **People are God's Treasure**.

Interpretation

Nehemiah 4:1-3 In the Hebrew Bible, these verses are a continuation of the previous chapter, which details the Jews' reconstruction of Jerusalem's fallen walls and gates. With the high priest and his fellow priests setting the example, volunteers rebuilt various sections of the wall and its gates simultaneously (Neh. 3:1). The refortification of the city was crucial not just for security reasons but also for the reunification of the community. The rebuilding of the wall would facilitate the restoration of the Jews' identity as the people of God, a uniqueness that had been largely lost during the exilic period.

Sanballat the Horonite was one of three rulers of neighboring regions—the others were **Tobiah** the Ammonite and **Geshem** the Arab—who mocked Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild the wall (Neh. 2:19). If the Israelites were to successfully complete this rebuilding project, they would once again become a political threat to their neighbors, including **Samaria**, where Sanballat served as governor. Sanballat's anger, no doubt, was fueled by a sense of powerlessness, since this time the Jews had the Persian king on their side and were rebuilding the wall with his permission.

The Samaritan ruler uttered five contemptuous questions as he mocked the Jews' efforts to refortify Jerusalem. The Hebrew word that is translated as "feeble" in some translations can also be rendered as "miserable" and is employed elsewhere in the Old Testament to describe people who are without hope. The implication was clear: The Jews were a weak people whose efforts would be in vain.

Tobiah joined Sanballat in taunting the Jews, asserting that their workmanship would be so inferior that even the paw of a fox could send the wall tumbling. Since normally an army's breach of a fortified wall could only be achieved with great effort, such an observation was extremely insulting. But Nehemiah was undeterred: The work would continue, and the wall would be rebuilt.

Nehemiah 6:5-7 Nehemiah's enemies had become increasingly frustrated as the Jews diligently resurrected the wall of Jerusalem from the rubble. Sanballat and Geshem had failed in their four previous attempts to lure Nehemiah out of the city (Neh. 6:1-4). The fifth time that the messenger arrived, he carried with him a letter accusing the Jews of planning a revolt against the Persian ruler. During the time of Nehemiah, letters were usually written on sheets of papyrus or leather, then rolled up and tied with a string before being sealed to ensure the privacy of its contents. The fact that Sanballat's letter was unsealed indicates that he wanted to make this message public. Sanballat wanted the rumor to spread via the open letter that the Jews had nefarious intentions in rebuilding the wall and could not be trusted. The Jews were expecting a messiah, and the rebirth of Jerusalem would necessarily accompany this new king's rise to power. By portraying Nehemiah as a wannabe king, Sanballat believed that he could kindle the suspicions not only of the Jews' neighbors but also of the Persian king himself, who would not tolerate a threat to his authority. By falsely accusing Nehemiah of traitorously usurping Artaxerxes' kingly authority, he hoped to frighten the prophet into abandoning the project.

Nehemiah 6:8-9 Nehemiah refused to be intimidated by Sanballat's letter. Sure of his God-given calling and certain that Artaxerxes would see through this thinly veiled personal attack on his cupbearer's integrity, Nehemiah remained undeterred in his desire to complete the wall-rebuilding project. Nehemiah's concise reply was designed not only to repudiate his accusers but also to help the Jews recognize that Sanballat's words were pure propaganda.

The prophet's characteristic response to the situation was to pray. When Nehemiah first learned about the city's

state of disrepair, he prayed to God, seeking forgiveness for the Jews' rebelliousness, recalling God's covenant with His people, and asking for grace as he approached the king to address the situation (Neh. 1:5-11). When Nehemiah appeared before Artaxerxes, he paused to pray before making his request to rebuild the wall (Neh. 2:4-5). In this situation, the prophet prayed to God for strength to complete the task at hand. Nehemiah was driven not by self-confidence but by an abiding faith in God. Neither taunts nor threats would derail this work.

Nehemiah 6:15-16 On October 2, 445 B.C., nearly a century and a half after Jerusalem's wall had fallen and after only 52 days of labor, Nehemiah and company completed the reconstruction. While this may seem like an inordinately brief period, the builders didn't have to construct the wall from scratch. Portions of the old wall to the north, west, and south had survived the Babylonian assault, so in those areas the builders were able to salvage the ruins. Only on the east side of the city, where the wall had been totally demolished, did workers have to rebuild it from the foundation up. While the Jews would invest additional time filling breaches and building the fortified wall higher, the essential repairs had been completed. In subsequent days, the Jews would gather to dedicate the wall with a joyful celebration, as the priests and Levites purified the people, the gates, and the wall (Neh. 12:27-30).

Nehemiah had proven to be an exceptional leader. Not hindered by the attacks of his enemies, he kept his people focused on the task at hand. The prophet was motivated by his fear of the Lord, not a fear of earthly antagonists. Ironically, the same people who had sought to frighten the Jews were now fearful themselves. Nehemiah's opponents had originally been "disturbed that someone had come to seek the welfare of the Israelites" (Neh. 2:10). Now they realized that the "someone" in question was actually God, since the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall had been a divine initiative. Recognizing that God had been at work among the Jews, they suddenly were cognizant, by comparison, of their own powerlessness. Human opposition was no match for the power of God.

Implications

The apostle Paul said, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31b). Nehemiah had a clear sense of God's call to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem in the wake of a difficult period in Israel's history. The reconstruction of the holy city's wall was a necessary step in restoring Israel's covenant relationship with God and recovering the nation's ancient worship practices. The people responded favorably to Nehemiah's leadership, and the prophet's unwavering confidence in God and the mission engendered enthusiasm among the people, enabling them to complete the task at hand despite opposition. Nehemiah trusted in God as the source of his strength. Would you have been as fearless and as focused as Nehemiah was if you had faced those taunts and threats?

Nehemiah set a worthy example for the Jews who labored alongside him to rebuild Jerusalem's wall, and he remains a source of inspiration for us today. Most students can relate to Nehemiah's experience of being ridiculed or threatened, and they need to understand that if they follow the example of the prophet's actions, calling upon God and refusing to be intimidated by opposition—then God will accomplish great things through them. Remind students that if God has called them to take on a task, then He will be faithful to equip them to do it and faithful to do it through them. Help your students to recognize how God has already been at work in their lives, strengthening them to do His will. Challenge students to turn to God when they feel weak or threatened. After all, if God is for them, who can be against them?

Teaching Plan

Connect Activity

Review Questions: John the Baptist: On Mission Regardless of the Cost

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the “Review Questions” activity sheet. Print one copy for your own use.

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide context for today’s lesson.

Media Option: Can Rush Do It?

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

Students will watch a video about a hero attempting to overcome great odds.

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the “Can Rush Do It?” video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the “Media” tab.)

Play the video for your students. When the video is over, ask students what they thought about the video.

Say: **Rush is an example of a guy rising to the challenge to take on a brave task. Today we will look at a real character from Scripture, Nehemiah, who with God’s help, truly rose to a monumental task.**

Drama: The Boxes

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will watch a drama about a guy who doesn’t want to pick up a big box.

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist two students to enact the drama. Give copies of the script to cast members ahead of time so that they will be ready to perform it.

Prompt students to perform the drama. Afterward, ask: **Why do you think Jared was so unwilling to even try to pick up the box? Do you think that we sometimes approach situations the same way in life?** Allow learners to respond. Then say: **Today we’ll look at a project that was so huge that it**

had already been attempted, abandoned, and was about to be attempted again—but now with God in charge.

Explore Activity

Master Teacher Key Study: Something Only God Could Do

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Nehemiah 4:1-3, 6:5-9, 6:15-16 to understand how Nehemiah was able to restore the wall surrounding in Jerusalem.

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Also download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.

Learning Goal: Your students will learn that when God calls them to a task, He will provide them with the strength to complete it.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Nehemiah 4:1-3, 6:5-9, 6:15-16.

Transform Activity

Deeper Discussion

(5-7 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss how God is preparing them for both present and future tasks.

(5-7 minutes, easy set-up)

Learning Goal: Your students will evaluate their lives and look for how God is strengthening them for the tasks to which He has called them.

Use the following questions to begin a discussion about how God strengthens us to complete the tasks to which He has called us.

- **What is one specific way that God is preparing you for a task that He has given you right here and now?**
- **What task do you sense that God is preparing you to carry out in the future?**
- **How would you say that you express and live out your trust in God's ability to strengthen**

you and complete what He wants to do through you?

- **Give an example of someone in your life who, like Nehemiah, had a strong sense of God's call and purpose and wouldn't give up.**

Creative Prayer

(5 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will pray for strength to meet the task that God assigns to them.

(5 minutes, easy set-up)

Provide a stone or pebble for each student.

Learning Goal: Your students will evaluate their lives and look for how God is strengthening them for the tasks to which He has called them.

Distribute the rocks to students. Explain that they represent a brick or stone from the Jerusalem wall as well as any task or assignment that God gives to His people. Share with students that just as God intended for Nehemiah to lead the way in rebuilding the wall, He has a purpose that He wants to fulfill by using us as His instruments. Lead students to take their rock to a private place in the room and pray according to the following prompts.

- **Pray for direction in knowing what God's purpose is for you.**
- **Pray for strength for that task.**
- **Pray that you will not turn away from the task because of fear or discouragement.**

Students may partner with one or two other students to pray together. Encourage students by reminding them that just as God provided strength to Nehemiah and the Jews when Nehemiah asked, God will do the same for us.

Reverb Student Book Option: Sacrifice

(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb student book, preview the activity on page 263. If possible, provide a copy of the book to reference as you mention the activity to students.

Learning Goal: Your students will evaluate their lives and look for how God is strengthening them for the tasks to which He has called them.

As students work through pages 258-263 in the *Reverb* student book this week, challenge them to take about 10-15 minutes and read through the "Sacrifice" activity on page 263. Ask: **How much of an impact does prayer have in your life? Do people just see you as a "holy" person because you pray, or do they see your actions along with your prayers?** Say: **There's a big difference.**

Living Loud 4, "Nehemiah: Rising to the Challenge"
Review Questions

1. Who had the desire to kill John the Baptist?
 - a. Herod
 - b. Herodias
 - c. the daughter of Herodias
 - d. Jesus

2. Who made a promise to Herodias' daughter that was later regretted?
 - a. John the Baptist
 - b. the king's cupbearer
 - c. Herodias
 - d. Herod

3. How much of Herod's kingdom did he promise to the daughter of Herodias?
 - a. 25 percent
 - b. 30 percent
 - c. 50 percent
 - d. 100 percent

4. What crime/sin did John the Baptist accuse Herod of?
 - a. adultery
 - b. theft
 - c. gluttony
 - d. disobedience before his parents

5. Why was John imprisoned by King Herod?
 - a. He disobeyed Herod.
 - b. He spoke out against Herod's marriage to Herodias.
 - c. He sinned against Herodias.
 - d. He was disrespectful to Herod.

Living Loud 4, "Nehemiah: Rising to the Challenge"

Answers

1. Who had the desire to kill John the Baptist? (*Lesson 3*)
 - a. Herod
 - b. Herodias**
 - c. the daughter of Herodias
 - d. Jesus

2. Who made a promise to Herodias' daughter that was later regretted? (*Lesson 3*)
 - a. John the Baptist
 - b. the king's cupbearer
 - c. Herodias
 - d. Herod**

3. How much of Herod's kingdom did he promise to the daughter of Herodias? (*Lesson 3*)
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5. Why was John imprisoned by King Herod? (*Lesson 3*)
 - a. He disobeyed Herod.
 - b. He spoke out against Herod's marriage to Herodias.**
 - c. He sinned against Herodias.
 - d. He was disrespectful to Herod.

Living Loud 4, "Nehemiah: Rising to the Challenge"
Drama

(She picks up the small box labeled "Fragile.")

The Boxes

Characters:

LEIGH
JARED

Props: one small box and one large box

Costumes: Both Leigh and Jared can be dressed casually

Creative Note: Have Jared be overly hesitant to even consider the box whatsoever.

(A stage is bare except for two boxes. One box is very large and has written on it in large, block letters: "Caution! Heavy! Do Not Lift Alone!" The other box is much smaller, stacked on top of the first one, and has a single word written on it: "Fragile." Two friends, LEIGH and JARED, enter.)

LEIGH: Thanks so much for agreeing to do this for me. I really appreciate it.

JARED: Oh, yeah. Sure thing. I'm glad to. Whatever you need.

LEIGH: Oh, great. Because I really want your help, but I know it's a lot to ask.

JARED: Oh, come on. How hard can it be?

LEIGH: Well, it really shouldn't be too bad. It's just two boxes, and there are two of us. So . . .

JARED: Two boxes? Really? No problem. Just point the way.

(LEIGH approaches the boxes with JARED.)

LEIGH: Okay. Well, here they are. No offense or anything, but I'd really feel more comfortable handling this top one myself.

LEIGH: So, if you'll just grab that bottom one, we can get on our way.

(LEIGH starts to exit, thinking that JARED is following along behind her. He is not. Instead, he is reading the label on the big box.)

JARED: Wait a minute.

(LEIGH stops in her tracks, notices JARED isn't tracking with her, and starts back.)

LEIGH: What? What's the problem?

JARED: You want me to carry this?

LEIGH: Yeah.

JARED: Look, Leigh, I'm flattered at what you obviously believe is my super-human-incredible-hulk-like strength, but I don't think I can do this.

LEIGH: Come on. You're kidding me.

JARED: No. I'm not.

LEIGH: Why not?

JARED: Look at the size of it and how it's labeled.

LEIGH: Well, I think you should at least give it a try.

JARED: If I give it a try, I could really end up hurting myself. Besides, you know, my arms are kinda short and I'm not even sure I can reach around to grip the sides.

LEIGH: I really think you're selling yourself short.

JARED: No. No, I know myself, and I guarantee you I'm not selling myself short.

LEIGH: Jared, you don't even know what's inside it.

JARED: Doesn't matter.

LEIGH: Doesn't matter?

JARED: Nope. I'm not doing it. Can't do it.
It can't be done.

LEIGH: Are you sure about that?

JARED: Yeah. Pretty sure.

LEIGH: But you said you'd do this for me.

JARED: I know, but I guess I
underestimated what it would be.

LEIGH: Jared. I packed this stuff myself
and I am absolutely, totally,
beyond-a-shadow-of-a-doubt
certain that you can carry this
box to where I need you to.

*(JARED looks at LEIGH for a moment. He then
looks at the box. He moves toward it and hunches
down as if he's about to try to lift it. At just the last
minute, though, he changes his mind.)*

JARED: No. Nope. Can't. Just can't. I'm
sorry. I really am. Maybe next
time. When it's just a little easier.
You know.

(JARED starts sheepishly backing out.)

JARED: This is really embarrassing and
everything, but it's just the way it
is. So . . . I guess I'll just . . .

(JARED is now at the edge of the stage.)

JARED: I'll see you later.

*(JARED exits. LEIGH sighs and places the small
fragile box on top of the large one.)*

LEIGH: I guess sometimes if you want
something done, you've got to do
it yourself.

*(LEIGH reaches down, easily picks up both
boxes, and walks off the stage.)*

(The End)

Master Teacher Key Study **SOMETHING ONLY GOD COULD DO**

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Intro: God sometimes calls believers to difficult assignments.

Description: Nehemiah was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. He was one of God's chosen people, an Israelite. Upon learning that the city wall and gates of Jerusalem had been almost entirely destroyed some 70 years earlier during Babylon's invasion, Nehemiah prayed and wept for days on behalf of his people. Nehemiah prayed and asked King Artaxerxes' permission to travel to Jerusalem, the city of his ancestors, and help rebuild the city. This would be an overwhelming task.

Illustration: With each passing presidency, the office of the U.S. president seems to grow more and more difficult as the problems of the world become more complex. It is not an easy job, and a progression of photographs from the time that a president enters office until he leaves indicates that many presidents age quickly during their years in office. To be president is a high calling, and it is much more than an ego trip. It places great stress on the individual as well as the president's family. One would really have to have a great sense of call and desire to lead in this way. It's not all glory and photo ops. There are many, many lonely moments in which a president is left with terribly difficult decisions to make that may not be popular with the public.

1. When God calls us to a difficult task, others may not understand and thus try to stand in our way (Neh. 4:1–3).

Description: When God calls us to do something, He doesn't necessarily inform everyone around us that we've been called to accomplish this task. When Nehemiah encouraged those in Jerusalem to help him rebuild the city wall and gates, some of the people responded immediately and began helping. Others, like Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, began to taunt and tease Nehemiah and the others. Nehemiah could have just given up—but he didn't.

Illustration: A young, prospective pastor stood in front of his potential congregation and told them that he would come and serve as their pastor with the condition that they understood that he would be leading them to be serious about being the Church and living out the Great Commission of Christ in their community and around the world. Otherwise, he would not agree to serve as their pastor. The church readily accepted his agenda and the assignment until he began to preach and implement real changes in the church. Suddenly people started leaving, saying that they were tired of the emphasis on missions and living as the Church. It all made them feel too guilty, they said. But many faithful believers remained, and this church today is becoming a model of what the Church in the 21st century is supposed to look like because of the determination of the pastor to remain faithful to the assignment that He has been given by God.

Application: Those who want to follow the plan that God has for their lives will sometimes face obstacles that seem to get in the way of doing what God wants them to do. During these times, we need to follow Nehemiah's example, persevere, and be faithful to the task that God has called us to perform.

2. When God calls us to a task, prayer is the key to our success (Neh. 6:5–9).

Description: Throughout the time that Nehemiah and others were rebuilding the city walls, there were many obstacles to overcome if they were going to complete the task God had called them to: They faced ridicule, discouragement, anger, fear, laziness, and more. Nehemiah recognized that if this task was to be completed, then they needed the strength that only came from God. So he asked for it.

Illustration: A pastor tells the story of when his son (another famous pastor) turned 16. He told his dad that he really wanted a car. His dad said that was good, but he was concerned about how much time his son was spending with God—or the lack of it. He instructed his son to spend some time in God’s Word and then come back, at which time they would discuss getting a car. His son returned a few weeks later and made the same appeal: He wanted a car to drive. His dad asked him to share with him about his time spent with God in His Word. He asked, “Where have you been reading in the Word?” The son couldn’t really give an answer. The dad told him to go back and do what he had asked him to do, and they would discuss a car later. One night, when his son was laying in bed, he finally picked up his Bible and began to read. He hadn’t been reading long when a key dropped out of the Bible. It was a car key! He ran to his dad and asked, “What’s this?” His dad replied, “It’s the key to your car.”

Application: God, like our father, stands ready to do so many things (not just give us a car) when we relate to Him and simply ask.

3. When God calls us to a task, others will eventually see that it is accomplished because of God’s help (Neh. 6:15–16).

Description: When Nehemiah and his fellow Jews completed rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days, their enemies were afraid because they realized that God had helped them accomplish their work.

Illustration: Sometimes what people perceive with their eyes is not reality. In the 2009 comedic motion picture *17 Again*, Zac Efron plays the teenage version of Mike O’Donnell—the adult version was played by Matthew Perry of *Friends* fame—who wakes up one day to find himself 17 years old again. This gives him the opportunity to remake his life. Only Mike knows that he is not 17, but everyone else perceives him to be young. The reality for those looking on at Nehemiah, his fellow Jews, and the Jerusalem wall was that it was a God-assigned project. That being so, it would be built. But all the scoffers could see were flesh and blood—until the wall was restored in 52 days. Suddenly, reality for them changed.

Application: We can trust the fact that when God assigns us a task, others will eventually know that God is behind it. That is reality.

Conclusion: When God calls you to a task, He will provide you with the strength to complete it.

Description: God doesn’t just call us to a difficult task and then leave us on our own to get the job done. If God calls you to a task, it is as good as done with Him in it and behind it. He will give equip, work through, and strengthen you to get the job finished. This strength might come from the loving support of others, through encouragement as you pray, or from unexpected help that comes along the way.

Application: When we realize who is behind the issuing of a task, we can trust God with the details. The only thing that He asks of us is our willingness to be used and our faithfulness to persevere even when others and circumstances may work against us.

REVERB::LIVING LOUD::lesson four

NEHEMIAH: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

biblical passage: Nehemiah 4:1–3, 6:5–9, 6:15–16

memory verse: Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

SOMETHING ONLY GOD COULD DO

1. When God calls us to a difficult task, others may not _____ and thus try to _____ in our way (Neh. 4:1–3).
2. When God calls us to a task, _____ is the key to our _____ (Neh. 6:5–9).
3. When God calls us to a task, others will eventually see that it is _____ because of God's _____ (Neh. 6:15–16).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is one specific way that God is preparing you for a task that He has given you right here and now?
- What task do you sense that God is preparing you to carry out in the future?
- How would you say that you express and live out your trust in God's ability to strengthen you and complete what He wants to do through you?
- Give an example of someone in your life who, like Nehemiah, had a strong sense of God's call and purpose and wouldn't give up.