

# Small Group Guide: Building with Purpose

## Based on Nehemiah 4 - "Eyes Fixed on God"

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### OPENING PRAYER & ICEBREAKER (10 minutes)

#### Icebreaker Question:

- What's one project or goal in your life that felt too big to accomplish, but you did it anyway? What kept you going?
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### RECAP & CONTEXT (5 minutes)

#### Key Scripture: Nehemiah 4

**Main Idea:** When we're doing God's work, opposition is expected—but our strength comes from keeping our eyes fixed on God rather than our circumstances, and remembering we're called to build His kingdom together.

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (40-45 minutes)

## 1. Recognizing Opposition

- The pastor mentioned that "opposition should be expected when we're inside the will of God." Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
- In Nehemiah 4:1-3, Sanballat and Tobiah mocked the Jews with specific attacks: "You're weak," "You're under-resourced," "This project is too big." Which of these lies do you most commonly hear in your own self-talk?
- Have you experienced external opposition (from others) or internal opposition (your own negative thoughts) when trying to do something for God? Share an example.

## 2. The Power of Self-Talk

- The pastor confessed that his greatest opposition wasn't external but his own negativity and stress. How does this resonate with your experience?
- Read Nehemiah 4:10 again: "The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There's too much rubble." How do we know when we've shifted from healthy awareness of challenges to unhealthy fixation on impossibility?
- What would it look like practically to "pray like Nehemiah" (verses 4-5, 9) when facing opposition rather than responding with anxiety or retaliation?

## 3. Remembering Our "Why"

- Nehemiah told the people: "Remember the Lord who is great and awesome and fight for your brothers, for your sons, for your daughters, for your wives and for your homes" (v. 14). Why is remembering our purpose so crucial when we're worn down?
- The pastor said, "We have a greater product than Penn State hockey ever will be. We have the good news of Jesus Christ." How does this perspective change the way we approach:
  - Our work?
  - Our relationships?

- Our service in the church?
- What are some practical ways we can keep our eyes lifted to God when circumstances feel overwhelming?

## 4. Building with One Hand, Fighting with the Other

- In verses 16-18, the workers held weapons in one hand and tools in the other. What does this image teach us about the Christian life?
- The pastor mentioned drug addiction, broken families, and poverty in our own community. What "section of the wall" might God be calling you to build? What would it look like to do that work while staying spiritually vigilant?
- How do we balance being "smart" (posting guards, being prepared) with trusting God (not being paralyzed by fear)?

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### KEY TAKEAWAYS (5 minutes)

Have someone read these aloud:

1. **Opposition is normal when doing God's work** - Don't interpret resistance as being out of God's will.
2. **Our greatest enemy is often internal** - Self-talk and negative thoughts can be more damaging than external attacks.
3. **The project IS too big for us** - That's exactly where God wants us, so we depend on Him, not ourselves.
4. **We're called to build together** - Like the families in Nehemiah 3, ordinary people doing extraordinary things for God's glory.
5. **Keep your eyes on the horizon** - Don't get so bogged down in logistics that you forget to celebrate what God is doing.

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### PRACTICAL APPLICATION (15 minutes)

#### Personal Reflection:

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- What "rubble" in my life am I focusing on instead of God's power?
- What lie have I been believing that contradicts Scripture?
- What is one way I can "build the wall" this week in my sphere of influence?

#### Group Action Steps:

**This Week:**

1. **Identify Your Self-Talk** - Pay attention to your internal dialogue. Write down negative thoughts that sound like Sanballat and Tobiah. Counter each one with a truth from Scripture.
2. **Build Your Section** - Choose one practical way to advance the gospel in your context this week:
  - Invite someone to church or small group
  - Serve a neighbor in need
  - Have a gospel conversation with a coworker
  - Volunteer in a ministry area
3. **Prayer Partners** - Pair up with someone in the group. Share one area where you're facing opposition (internal or external) and commit to praying for each other daily this week.

**This Month:**

- Consider where God might be calling you to serve regularly in the church. If you're not already serving, reach out to a ministry leader about getting plugged in.
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## **CLOSING REFLECTION & COMMUNION MOMENT (10 minutes)**

**Read together:** Nehemiah 4:14 *"Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, for your sons, for your daughters, for your wives, and for your homes."*

### **Silent Reflection Questions:**

- Where have I allowed lies to steal my joy and rob my hope?
- What has Jesus gifted me that I'm taking for granted?
- How can I shift from consumer to contributor in God's kingdom work?

**Closing Prayer:** Have someone close in prayer, asking God to:

- Help the group keep their eyes fixed on Him, not circumstances
  - Give strength to build while staying spiritually vigilant
  - Unite the group as they each work on their "section of the wall"
  - Remind everyone of the power of the gospel to transform lives
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## **FOR NEXT WEEK**

- Read Nehemiah 5-6 in preparation for next week's discussion
  - Follow through on your action steps
  - Be ready to share how God worked through your obedience
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*"So we built the wall... for the people had a mind to work." - Nehemiah 4:6*