Build Your Part of the Wall

Week 2 • A 5-Day Devotional Guide

Finding Hope, Purpose and Renewal in the Book of Nehemiah

Introduction

“Somebody should do something.” We have all thought it. A need is obvious, but we hope someone else will step in. Sometimes we genuinely cannot help. Sometimes the whole task feels so big that we never start on the small part we could do.

Nehemiah 3–5 takes us from people working side by side to the pressures and choices that test their shared life. Rebuilding involves more than putting stones in place. It means supporting tired people, confronting injustice and using influence generously.

This week, keep the talk’s invitation in view: you are not being asked to rebuild everything. Receive God’s love, notice what is in front of you and ask what one faithful contribution you can make.

Big idea: You may not be able to rebuild everything, but you can build your part.

How to Use This Guide

Read the full passage in your own Bible each day. The focus verses highlight a shorter section to sit with; they do not replace the full reading. Then read the thought, consider the questions and make the prayer your own. These five readings follow the attached devotional plan through Nehemiah 3–5.

This content was created with the help of AI using the preparation content from the sermon.

Day 1: Different People, One Shared Purpose

Scripture

Read: Nehemiah 3:1–16
Focus passage: Nehemiah 3:1–5

Thought for the Day

A chapter full of names might not sound like the most inspiring place to start. But don't rush past it. These people are the story. Priests, goldsmiths, perfume-makers, rulers and families all take their place. Shallum's daughters are there too. Different people, working next to one another, building something none of them could build alone.

Nobody is rebuilding the whole wall. Each contribution joins up with somebody else's. The leaders don't just ask others to get involved; some roll up their sleeves themselves. Yet the nobles of Tekoa refuse. We aren't told why. The contrast invites us to ask whether we are willing to join in, not simply whether we can see what needs doing.

Perhaps you look at what others bring and decide your contribution isn't worth much. But a welcome, a meal, a practical task or a conversation can make a real difference. Following Jesus isn't about earning your place by being useful. We respond to his love by sharing it. You don't have to do everything. What could you do?

Reflection

• What strikes you about the different people who take part?

• Where does comparison, status or waiting for someone else stop you contributing?

• What one practical contribution could you make today?

Prayer

God, thank you that ordinary people can play a part in what you are doing. Free me from comparison and the need to be noticed. Help me value the people beside me and be willing to offer what I can. Amen.

Day 2: Start with What Is in Front of You

Scripture

Read: Nehemiah 3:17–32
Focus passage: Nehemiah 3:28–30

Thought for the Day

The list continues. More names, more sections, more people getting on with the work. Several repair the wall opposite their homes. Others tackle another section. The work is shared, but it is also specific: real people take responsibility for a particular place.

Sometimes the size of a problem stops us doing anything. We can't fix the whole situation, so we leave the small thing undone. This chapter offers a different picture. Their sections connect. One household's effort becomes part of something much bigger.

Start with what is in front of you. At home, could you take responsibility for something you normally leave to someone else? In your community, could you include someone or check in on a neighbour? In church, could you offer practical help or encourage someone in their faith?

This doesn't mean every nearby need is yours to fix. Your capacity matters, and saying yes to one responsibility may mean saying no to another. But don't let the things you cannot do hide the thing you can. Move from "somebody should" to one realistic "I will".

Reflection

• What do you notice about where people work and how their contributions connect?

• What need is already in front of you at home, in your community or at church?

• What will you do, and when will you do it?

Prayer

Father, open my eyes to what is in front of me. Give me wisdom about my limits and courage to act where I can. Help me turn a good intention into one practical expression of your love. Amen.

Day 3: Pray, Make a Plan and Stay Together

Scripture

Read: Nehemiah 4:1–23
Focus passage: Nehemiah 4:9, 19–20

Thought for the Day

Getting started doesn't mean everything becomes easy. The people face ridicule, threats and exhaustion. There is still so much rubble. You can imagine how quickly "let us start rebuilding" could become "why did we ever start?"

Nehemiah responds with prayer and practical action. They pray and post a guard. They organise the work and prepare to gather when help is needed. Trusting God doesn't mean pretending the danger isn't real. Nor does practical planning mean they have stopped trusting him.

The chapter includes a severe prayer against their opponents. That is not permission for us to treat every critic as an enemy or to seek revenge. Following Jesus includes loving our enemies. We can bring our fear and anger honestly to God while choosing a different response.

What pressure are you facing? You may need encouragement to keep going. You may need correction, rest, protection or a different plan. Building your part doesn't mean struggling on your own. Ask for help. Listen to wise advice. Pray about the situation, then take the next sensible step with others beside you.

Reflection

• How do prayer, planning and mutual support work together in this chapter?

• Where are you tired, discouraged or under pressure?

• Who could help you take a wise next step rather than struggle alone?

Prayer

God, you know the things that make me afraid and the places where I am tired. Help me pray honestly and act wisely. Keep me from bitterness and revenge. Give us courage to support one another and humility to ask for help. Amen.

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Day 4: Build People Up, Don’t Burden Them

Scripture

Read: Nehemiah 5:1–13
Focus passage: Nehemiah 5:9–12

Thought for the Day

The next threat isn’t coming from outside. It is happening within the community. Families are hungry. Some have mortgaged their fields and homes; others have borrowed to pay taxes. Children are being forced into servitude. Meanwhile, other members of the same community are benefiting from their distress.

Nehemiah listens. He becomes angry, thinks carefully and confronts those responsible. His response goes beyond telling people to be nicer. He calls for property to be returned and for the harmful financial demands to stop. The lenders make a public commitment to put things right.

This matters because rebuilding a community is about more than getting a job finished. We could complete the wall and still damage the people inside it. A busy church, a successful team or a well-run household is not healthy if vulnerable people are being ignored or exploited.

Where do your choices affect someone else’s wellbeing? Are you willing to listen when someone says an arrangement is unfair, especially when it benefits you? Following Jesus means more than feeling sorry about harm. Where we have contributed to it, repentance involves change and, where possible, practical repair.

Reflection

• What are the people crying out about, and what does Nehemiah ask to change?

• Where could your decisions or influence add to someone else’s burden?

• Is there something you need to stop, put right or seek wise help to address?

Prayer

God, help me listen to people who are hurting. Show me where I excuse unfairness because it suits me. Give me courage to change what is wrong, repair what I can and use my influence to protect others rather than burden them. Amen.

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Day 5: Use What You Have for Others

Scripture

Read: Nehemiah 5:14–19
Focus passage: Nehemiah 5:14–15

Thought for the Day

Nehemiah doesn't simply ask other people to change. He describes how he uses his own position. He refuses the governor's food allowance because the demands on the people are already heavy. He continues the work and provides food for many others. His reverence for God shapes what he does with his rights and resources.

He could have asked, "What am I entitled to?" Instead, his choices show concern for what the people can bear. He accepts a personal cost rather than adding to their burden. That is a different way of leading.

This isn't a rule that leaders must never receive support, or that generosity means giving beyond your means. It is an invitation to notice how your advantages affect others. At home, at work, in your community or in church, what have you been entrusted with? Time, money, experience, influence or the opportunity to make room for someone else?

Jesus shows us authority expressed through service. Our response begins with receiving his love, not proving our worth. Then we ask how to pass that love on. You cannot rebuild everything. But you can use what you have to build your part. Choose one act of generosity, and decide when you will do it.

Reflection

• What does Nehemiah choose not to claim, and why?

• Who is affected by how you use your resources, rights or influence?

• What specific act of generosity or service will you carry into next week?

Prayer

Father, thank you for what you have entrusted to me and for the love you have shown me in Jesus. Help me hold my advantages with humility. Show me how to serve without adding to others' burdens. Give me faith to build my part and trust you with what is beyond me. Amen.