

BUILD THE FUTURE - Part 1 Introduction 9.7.2025

Warm-Up

Question 1: What is the furthest you have traveled from home? What was that experience like?

Question 2: What event/memory/activity from the trip has stuck with you?

Additional Question: What impact has that continued to have on your life?

Question 3: What stood out to you from the message on Sunday?

Know It - Read Nehemiah 1:1-4 together.

Question 1: Why did the realization of the broken wall devastate Nehemiah so deeply?

Additional Thought: A city wall offers protection, security, and peace of mind to its citizens. Consider how Nehemiah and the people felt knowing that lacking or losing safety can be traumatizing and disorienting for people.

Additional Question: Why do you think Nehemiah was moved by what was happening in Jerusalem despite living in a whole different country?

Group Dynamic Tip: Invite everyone to share how they would have felt in Nehemiah's shoes.

Question 2: How does Nehemiah's reaction lead to a God-given vision?

Additional Thought: We recently walked through a series called *Inside Out* as a church, which focused on accepting and processing different emotions. Here we see an example of Nehemiah allowing himself to feel his emotions and bring them to the Lord which eventually leads to a life-changing vision for his life and the course of Israel's history.

Group Dynamic Tip: If your group walked through our *Inside Out* series, invite them to reflect back on what stood out to them when it comes to dealing with emotions in a healthy and biblical way.

Own It

Question 1: Do you believe that God has a vision or purpose for your life? Why or why not?

Additional Thought: While everyone's calling and vision for life is very different, our purpose is the same - to serve God, bring Him glory, further the Kingdom, and love people.

Additional Scripture: Ephesians 2:6-10; 1 Peter 2:4-10 What additional insight do these passages give you?

Additional Question: What are you passionate about that motivates you and gives you direction and purpose?

Conversation Caution: In recent years, many people have struggled with the idea that their life has a lack of purpose and meaning. Approach the subject graciously and ensure that you remind everyone in the group, including yourself, that God has a purpose, plan, and calling for each of us.

Group Dynamic Tip: Invite group members to encourage each other by calling strengths/gifts they see in one another.

Question 2: Have you ever experienced something broken, either physically or emotionally, that stirred strong emotions?

Additional Thought: Sin and brokenness is a symptom of a fallen, corrupt world. We have each seen it in our lives, in the lives of those around us, and in the greater context of global humanity. Our hearts *should* break for what breaks the Lord's.

Additional Scripture: Psalm 34:17-22

Additional Question: How were you inspired and/or convicted by what you experienced?

Conversation Caution: Provide the space and encouragement for your group members to share their experiences but don't push for details if someone is overly hesitant.

Group Dynamic Tip: If needed, stop for a time of prayer to lift up any heavy topics that come up during the conversation.

Next Steps

Question 1: What burdens and brokenness are you currently carrying and how is the Lord prompting you to respond to them?

Additional Thought: First identify the "what" that you feel moved to step into then determine "how" the Lord is calling you to for your next step.

Additional Scripture: Matthew 5:21-23; Matthew 11:28-30

Additional Question: How have you contributed to the brokenness around you? Is there something you need to do in order to bring healing, clarity, or peace to someone else?

Conversation Caution: Being confronted with brokenness and/or conviction can be uncomfortable to deal with in a group setting. Know that even if your group doesn't share much during this time, the Holy Spirit is still working.

Group Dynamic Tip: It may be more appropriate to give group members a few minutes of silence to think through these questions and write down how the Holy Spirit is asking them to engage.

Question 2: What is one small step you can take this week through prayer or action to respond to what God is asking you to do?

Additional Thought: Always remember that you are looking for YOUR next step. God's call to action looks different for each of us.

Additional Scripture: James 5:13-16

Additional Question: Would you like accountability when it comes to the step you just shared? If so, what does that look like?

Group Dynamic Tip: If your group members' next step involves reaching out to someone for reconciliation or any kind of communication, encourage them to pull out their phones and do it immediately.

Digging Deeper - These resources are for groups that would like to dive into historical context and/or additional study.

- Read the books of Ezra-Nehemiah. (They are considered one book by the Jews)
- Review the following video from [BibleProject.Com](https://bibleproject.com/videos/ezra-nehemiah/)
<https://bibleproject.com/videos/ezra-nehemiah/>
- Download the document entitled “Background Details for Nehemiah” and review.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

THE EXILE AND RETURN (586–445 BC)

- 586 BC – Babylon destroys Jerusalem and takes many Jews into exile.
- 539 BC – Persia conquers Babylon.
- 538–515 BC – Zerubbabel leads first return; temple rebuilt
- 458 BC – Ezra leads second return; teaches the Law.
- 445 BC – Nehemiah, cupbearer to the Persian king, return to rebuild Jerusalem's walls

WHO WAS NEHEMIAH?

- Jewish official serving as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I of Persia
- A layman with access to the king and a heart for God and his people

POLITICAL & SOCIAL CLIMATE

- Jerusalem in ruins, with broken walls and opposition from hostile neighbors
- Internal disunity, economic oppression, and spiritual complacency among the returned exiles

NEHEMIAH'S ROLE IN ISRAEL'S STORY

- Rebuilt Jerusalem's walls, giving security and hope to the people
- Restored worship, community, and obedience to the Law

KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE BACKGROUND

- God is faithful to His promises
- Spiritual and physical restoration go hand-in-hand
- Leadership matters for God's people
- Ordinary people can make a difference