8

God's Fight

Key References: Nehemiah 4; 5; *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 53 pp. 641-645; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 115-120; Our Beliefs, nos. 8, 11, 10










powertext

"When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work" (Nehemiah 4:15).

powerpoint

We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 61.

Has anyone ever poked fun at you for doing what was right or tried to force you to stop doing it? Have you ever felt discouraged and wanted to give up? That is just how some of the Jews and Nehemiah felt when they were rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Read on to discover what happened.

30th day, Av, Year 20

Sanballat is furious. Today he went through the city roaring, "What are those Jews doing? Will they build their wall back up? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?" Then Tobiah started saying that even a fox could climb up and break down the wall.

I couldn't let this pass. I prayed loud enough for them to hear me: "Hear us, God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on themselves. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from Your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders."

As usual, they skulked away, but I know they'll be back. We can't let them stop us. You would think they wouldn't be so stubborn, especially since I have a commission from the king. The wall is halfway up! The people are willing to work hard, and I will do everything I can to help them continue.



8

Sunday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:15 and this week's story, "God's Fight."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Nehemiah 4:15.

PRAY Thank God for the promise of His strength.

Monday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:1-9.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write a brief letter from Nehemiah's perspective to Sanballat, telling him why the people of Israel will continue building the wall.

PRAY Ask God to show you how to respond to a person who gives you a hard time.

Tuesday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:10-15.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, describe Nehemiah's battle plan in your own words.

DO Find a garden plot or flower bed that needs weeding (or an area of ground with a lot of rocks). Take some time to remove the weeds (or rocks) from the ground.

PRAY With each weed (or rock) that you remove, ask God to take charge of the difficulties in your life. Thank Him for doing so.

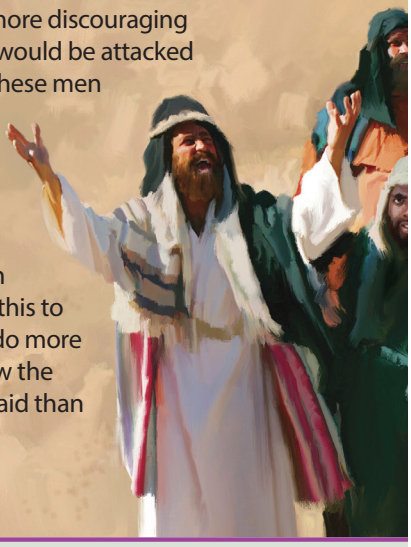
31st day, Av

Sanballat and Tobiah came back, filled with even more venom. The situation is getting dangerous. I had a meeting with the company leaders before we started work this morning. We prayed and decided to post guards to watch day and night.

Sanballat is not only mean-spirited, but he is lying about us. He taunts us and says we are plotting against King Artaxerxes. Recently Sanballat was heard boasting about his own plot, saying he would sneak in and stop the work by killing us.

If that's not enough, some of the Jews are complaining about the work. A group of men told me the workers are getting tired, and there's too much rubble to continue rebuilding the wall. That last comment really hurt. How can they complain when we're halfway finished? I know the workers are tired. I'm tired too. Indeed, there is a lot of rubble, but we can't afford to get discouraged. We're too close to finishing!

Another group of Jews who live near Samaria came with more discouraging words. They said we would be attacked wherever we went. These men were talking loudly, and it affected the workers so much that they started to slow down. It would be better for our own people who talk like this to just stay away. They do more harm than good. Now the workers are more afraid than ever.





8

Wednesday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:16-23.

RATE On a scale of 1 to 10, rate which obstacles cause you the most trouble (1=tough; 10=easy):

___ A difficult chore
___ Friends who lie about me
___ People who criticize me
___ Fear of failing

DISCUSS Ask for advice on how to overcome challenges.

PRAY Allow God to guide you through your obstacles.

Thursday

READ Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

WRITE Why was each piece of armor needed?

Belt: _____
Breastplate: _____
Shoes: _____
Shield: _____
Helmet: _____

DRAW Draw the part of this armor you need most to serve God.

PRAY Ask God to equip you with His armor.

Friday

READ Read Ephesians 6:7.

WRITE Talk with an adult about one of your difficulties. In your Bible study journal, write a plan for how you will serve God despite your difficulty.

DISCUSS Discuss your plan with your family at worship.

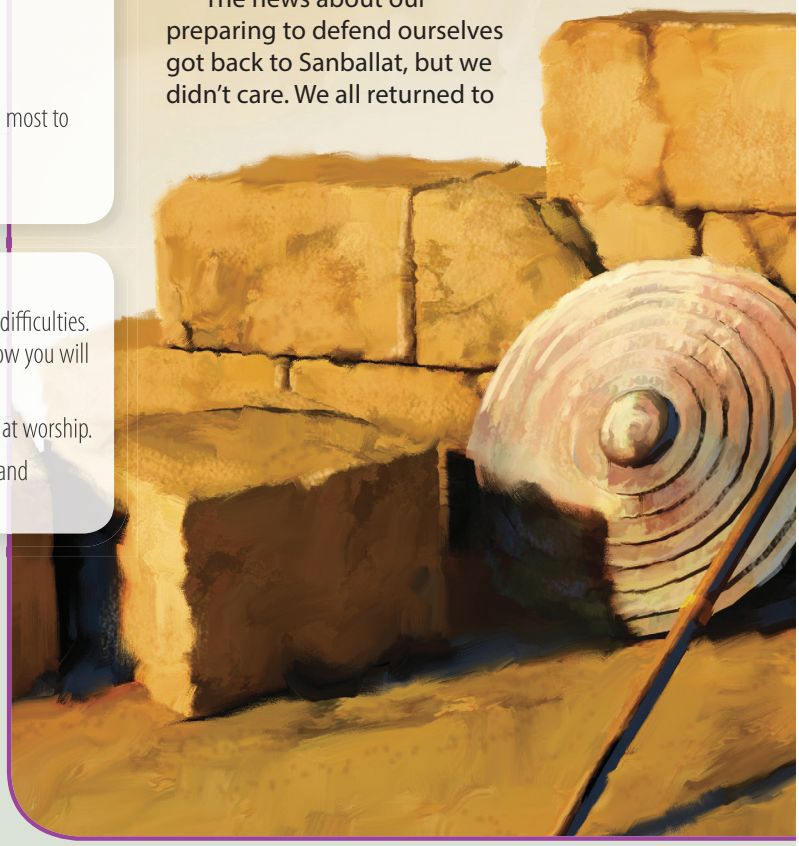
PRAY Thank God for providing the strength and wisdom to handle challenges.

I knew I had to address their concerns, so I developed another plan to defend ourselves in case we are attacked. I'll put some of the men behind the lowest places along the wall, and I'll put some at the open places. I'll make sure families work together and are armed with swords, spears, and bows.

This evening I gathered all the leaders and gave them a pep talk. I told them not to be afraid of Sanballat and Tobiah. I reminded them how great and awesome is the Lord. Then I encouraged them to fight to protect their sons and daughters, their wives, and their homes.

A few days later

The news about our preparing to defend ourselves got back to Sanballat, but we didn't care. We all returned to



work on the wall. Of course now only half the men can work. The other half guard the workers. Still, those who carry materials do it with one hand on their weapons. The builders wear their swords.

I arranged for a trumpeter to be with me at all times. Since we are so far apart on the wall, I told the workers that if they hear the sound of the trumpet they are to come to me immediately and trust that God will fight for us!

A workday

It is hard to keep track of what day it is. We are working from sunrise till the stars come out. We stay up nights guarding the wall. It seems we never take off our clothes or weapons. The wall is getting higher. God is with us. He fights for us. Only through His strength are we able to continue building until the city walls are raised completely.



PUZZLE
8

STRENGTHEN ME

Instructions: Can you break the code below to reveal where we should get our strength from? The first letters of each group will get you started and offer you the key to the solution.

ITGT CHIH ARV NOE DUS OGM AHE
LHS LIT TMR HWE IHN SOG

