



## Lesson Overview

Week of April 18

*Suggested Materials As Your Students Arrive:*

- Building blocks or an easy puzzle

### 1 Life Need:

1 Discuss what it means to build something despite opposition.

### 2 Bible Learning:

2 Learn about Nehemiah's determination to rebuild the city wall of Jerusalem.

#### *Suggested Material:*

- *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit:* Poster and reproducible handout: Exile and Restoration

### 3 Bible Application:

3 Explore how to deal with opposition to Kingdom building.

#### *Suggested Material:*

- *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit:* Reproducible handout: I Had Faith in a Living God

### 4 Life Response:

4 Build God's kingdom despite the opposition.

#### *Suggested Material:*

- The building blocks from Step 1, sheets and strips of paper, pencils or pens, adhesive tape

**Church/Home Theme:**  
Revive Us Again,  
O Lord!

**Lesson Focus:**  
Build God's kingdom in spite of opposition.

**Lesson Scripture:**  
Nehemiah 2:11-20

# Nehemiah: The Captive Cupbearer Rebuilds a Nation

**The Call**—Nehemiah received permission from the king of Persia to return to Jerusalem to repair Jerusalem's wall. The people living there took note of Nehemiah, but he did not discuss his God-commissioned assignment or start any work immediately. First, he traveled around the city at night, inspecting the burned wall and gates. Then, he met with the Jewish leaders and called their attention to the situation. When talking to the leaders, he used the terms "we" and "us," indicating this was a project for everyone together. Nehemiah pointed out the necessity of a wall and the shame, poverty, insecurity, and fear that came with not having one. Then he said this was God's project, and it had the support of the king as well. The men responded positively and agreed to partner with Nehemiah in repairing the wall.

**The Opposition**—Whenever God's work moves forward, the enemy always steps in to attempt to thwart and even stop the Lord's plans. When those in the surrounding area found out what God's people started to do, they laughed and mocked. The passage explicitly names three leaders of the opposition: Sanballat the Horonite, Tobias the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab. They jeered at Nehemiah and his workers, attempting to make him feel foolish for even endeavoring such a vast undertaking, and they accused Nehemiah of defying the king of Persia, which was false.

**The Power**—Nehemiah boldly answered that God would give the project success—He had put His stamp of approval on this project. If they didn't want to be a part of what God was doing, they should get out of the way.

Jesus faced opposition when He walked their earth, and He said His followers would face it as well. Satan does not want God to establish His kingdom, and just as in Nehemiah's time, our enemies mock and discourage God's children. But the Holy Spirit empowers believers to stay in the fight, knowing this is God's plan, and it will succeed.

## As Your Students Arrive

Bring some kind of building blocks to class and give pieces to students as they arrive. Ask each of them to add a block to build some sort of structure. Tell them that this week we'll be looking at building God's kingdom and the obstacles we can run into doing so.

**Link to Last Week:** Invite some students to share how they followed God’s way this past week, especially when it was difficult to do so.

# 1 Life Need

Discuss what it means to build something despite opposition.

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## Nehemiah: The Captive Cupbearer Rebuilds a Nation

There was a Christian campus center here years ago,” said Caitlynnne.  
“But was it actually on campus or near the campus?” asked J.D.

“What difference does it make? I heard it was just a house,” objected Renell. “Besides, it will be too much work.”

Caitlynnne, a junior majoring in psychology, had shared her faith on campus regularly since she came to school as a freshman. There were students who were hurting and seeking God, while some Christians on campus wanted and needed encouragement and fellowship with other Christians.

Caitlynnne learned that a Christian center had existed there about 15 years ago. She heard that a lack of interest had closed it down. However, now it seemed like misrepresentation, misunderstanding, and even a hostile environment were blocking efforts to create another one.

“I’m glad you all could make it today,” Caitlynnne said to a crowd of about 50. She had invited several Christian students and their parents, some local church leaders, a few university administrators, and two Christian attorneys to a meeting to discuss creating another Christian center.

“There will be time for various people to speak,” continued Caitlynnne. “However, I want to be clear: the Christians on this campus will not stop until we have a place to gather!”

“It may be a daunting task,” she said, raising her voice over the applause, “but we will do it!”

1. When doing God’s work for God’s kingdom, why do we often face opposition?
2. Why is it important to keep building His kingdom despite opposition?
3. What Kingdom builder(s) have you admired most? Why?

LESSON FOCUS: Build God’s kingdom in spite of opposition.

Read the story in the student book, then have your students form small groups to discuss how they would answer **Questions 1, 2, and 3.**

Question 1 encourages students to remember that we face everything Satan can throw against us when he sees God’s kingdom advancing. Even our friends may turn against us if we start to do what the Lord calls us to do.

For Question 2, as long as we are complacent about Kingdom building, opposition will likely be limited, but the more we build, the stronger the opposition may become. When we build anything for God’s kingdom, we should keep our eyes on God and what He calls us to, without giving up. Opposition to His plans will be there, but if we stay the course, we know that God is always with us.

Finally, Question 3 asks students to recall people they know who have helped build the Kingdom despite opposition. We can admire people such as the apostle Paul and want to pattern our lives after their courage, always ready to do what it takes for the Lord.

# 2 Bible Learning

Read about Nehemiah's determination to rebuild the city wall of Jerusalem.



On the handout sheet, read paragraphs four and five, then on the poster point out the photos of the Greek Orthodox icon

of Nehemiah and a map of Jerusalem at the time of Nehemiah. Refer to the map as you are reading the Scripture about Nehemiah's tour of the wall.

## NEHEMIAH TAKES A SCOUTING TRIP

Read Nehemiah 2:11-16 with students and discuss these key points:

- Nehemiah, a cupbearer to the Persian king, went to Jerusalem to see the city's ruined wall.
- At night, he took a few men and tried to circumvent the remains of the city wall.
- He didn't yet tell anyone what God

## BIBLE EXTRA

### Nehemiah Returns

Along with Ezra, his earlier counterpart, Nehemiah helped the people of Judah resettle into their devastated land. Although the temple had been rebuilt by Nehemiah's time, the wall of Jerusalem remained "broken down, and its gates . . . burned with fire" (Neh. 1:3). Thus, the city was defenseless.

Nehemiah had served as the cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes I (Neh. 1:11). When he heard of his people's struggles, he was devastated and prayed for mercy for the people. Artaxerxes acknowledged Nehemiah's distress and released him to go to Jerusalem to help with the rebuilding process, appointing him governor of the region (Neh. 2:1-9); Nehemiah served in this position for 12 years before returning to Persia. While the Jews quickly recognized Nehemiah's authority, the officials from the nearby areas did not and viciously opposed him.

had put on his heart about repairing the wall.

- He observed that the gates were broken down and had been burned in the fire that destroyed the city.
- Nehemiah examined parts of the wall but could not reach the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool; there wasn't room for him and the animal he was mounted upon.
- Nehemiah did not tell the Jews, priests, nobles, and officials what he was doing because he knew

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## Nehemiah Takes a Scouting Trip

*Nehemiah 2:11-16, KJV*

11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

13 And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.

15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

*Nehemiah 2:11-16, NIV*

<sup>11</sup>I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days <sup>12</sup>I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

<sup>13</sup>By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. <sup>14</sup>Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; <sup>15</sup>so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. <sup>16</sup>The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

Despite the authority and resources given him by King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah chose not to immediately exercise that authority upon his arrival in Jerusalem, nor even "[tell] anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem"





Further commentary on this Scripture passage can be found on pp. 757-758 in *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*.

already of the opposition he would encounter.

#### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 4

After the long trip from Persia, Nehemiah rested for three days, not telling anyone why he had come. Then, he scouted the walls of the city “during the night with a few others” (vs. 11). It is likely that the purpose of this reconnaissance mission, taken with a few trusted colleagues, was to accurately assess how much work needed to be done and what would be required to accomplish it.

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(vs. 12). After taking three days to regain his strength after the long trip from Persia, he scouted the walls of the city “during the night with a few others. . . . There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on” (vss. 11-12). It is likely that the purpose of this reconnaissance mission, taken with a few trusted colleagues (who probably came with him from the king’s palace), was not only to survey the damage but to try to accurately assess how much work needed to be done and what would be required to accomplish it. Before announcing his plan to reconstruct the walls, Nehemiah counted the cost—which, he quickly discovered, was a heavy one.

His scouting trip, with him riding a “mount” and his associates walking, took the group past several gates and landmarks of Jerusalem, starting from the west side of the city and moving counterclockwise (vss. 13-15). He now saw with his own eyes “the walls of Jerusalem . . . broken down, and its gates . . . destroyed by fire” (vs. 13). The walls had in fact been so devastated that Nehemiah’s mount could not get through the Fountain Gate; thus, he went through the Valley Gate, along the Kidron brook and into the valley of Jehoshaphat, examined the southern walls from there, then reentered the city through the same Valley Gate.

In verse 16, Nehemiah reiterated that during all of this he had said “nothing” to anyone else about his plans. Knowing the opposition he would encounter (vs. 10), Nehemiah decided not to draw attention to himself—nor give advance notice to the other Jewish leaders, or those he would employ to repair the walls—until he was ready to put his plan into action.

4. What did Nehemiah do after his arrival in Jerusalem?
5. Where did Nehemiah go, and what did he see?
6. Who else did Nehemiah tell about his mission at this time, and why?

#### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 5

Nehemiah and his small group traveled along the walls of the city, starting from the west side and moving counterclockwise (vss. 13-15). He saw with his own eyes “the walls of Jerusalem . . . broken down, and its gates . . . destroyed by fire” (vs. 13). The walls had been so devastated in one section that Nehemiah and his mount had to take an alternative route to view the damage.

#### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 6

At this point, Nehemiah continued to say “nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work” (vs. 16). Knowing the opposition he would encounter (vs. 10), Nehemiah had decided not to draw attention to himself—nor even give advance notice to the other Jewish leaders, let alone those he would employ to repair the walls—until he was ready to put his plan into action.

#### THE WORK, AND THE OPPOSITION, BEGINS

Next read Nehemiah 2:17-20 and

#### BIBLE EXTRA

##### More Than Bearing a Cup

Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the great Persian King Artaxerxes (Neh. 1:11). “Cupbearer” was a humble title for an important post. In *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Edwin Yamauchi suggests that a royal cupbearer would:

1. be trained in court etiquette
2. be physically impressive
3. control the imperial wine cellar
4. be a companion and sounding board for the emperor
5. grant or deny access to the emperor
6. either have the emperor’s absolute confidence or lose his head.

review these summary statements:

- Nehemiah gave his report of what he saw to the Jewish leaders.
- He said the city was in trouble and “in disgrace” because the wall was in ruins.
- Therefore, he said the wall should be rebuilt, and God and the Persian king were in favor of the rebuilding.
- The people agreed and started to rebuild.
- However, enemies came from nearby and mocked the work, saying they were rebelling against the Persian king with their reconstruction.
- Then Nehemiah told them God

would give the Jews success, and their enemies had no claim to stop the work.

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 7

After inspecting the walls, Nehemiah reported what he had seen, then declared, “Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem” (vs. 17). Given the opposition from other influential leaders in Jerusalem (vs. 10) and that the walls had been in ruins for nearly 150 years, the leaders were likely hesitant. Thus, Nehemiah “also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me” (vs. 18).

## BIBLE EXTRA

### The Gates and Wall of Jerusalem

Nehemiah repaired 10 gates in Jerusalem (Neh. 3). His initial scouting trip took him along the southern end of the city, starting from the west and moving east before doubling back.

The Valley Gate led into the valley of Jehoshaphat—also known as the valley of skulls, as it led to Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified; nonetheless, or perhaps because of this, this gate does not exist in modern Jerusalem. The Dung Gate, at the very southern end, led into the valley of Hinnom (Gehenna), and was named because of the dung and other refuse removed from the temple and burned there. The Jackal (or Dragon) Well was also probably located in this valley.

The Fountain Gate was east of the Dung Gate, near the King’s Pool, which was used by the people for cleansing before they entered the temple. It is believed that this was also the pool of Siloam, where Jesus told a blind man to wash his eyes in order to regain his sight (John 9:7).

The hillside past the pool, from Jerusalem into the Kidron Valley, is steep. The old wall of Jerusalem had likely been far down the hill, and a system of terraces that supported buildings had been anchored against that wall. When the old wall was destroyed, the terraces had crumbled too. Nehemiah had to dismount and continue on foot because the slope along the east side of Jerusalem was choked with rubble that even a donkey could not negotiate in the moonlight.

## The Work, and the Opposition, Begins

*Nehemiah 2:17-20, KJV*

17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king’s words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?

20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

*Nehemiah 2:17-20, NIV*

<sup>17</sup>Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” <sup>18</sup>I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work.

<sup>19</sup>But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. “What is this you are doing?” they asked. “Are you rebelling against the king?”

<sup>20</sup>I answered them by saying, “The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it.”

At last, Nehemiah came before the officials of Jerusalem. He reported to them the destruction that he had now seen firsthand, then announced his intent: “Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace” (vs. 17). This “disgrace,” of course, was not simply to do with the sad state they (and the walls) were in but the

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 8

After hearing what God had already done, the Jewish leaders were convinced: "'Let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work" (vs. 18). However, their work was immediately challenged by Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab, who "mocked and ridiculed us," not only questioning the work but accusing them of rebelling against the king (vs. 19).

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 9

Nehemiah doesn't mention his relationship to the king, nor the authority given him to do the work he proposed. Instead, he responded that

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genuine need to be protected from raids by people of the neighboring regions.

It is likely that the Jewish leaders had some trepidation about this plan, given the already established opposition from other influential leaders in Jerusalem (vs. 10). In addition, given that the walls had been in ruins for nearly 150 years, they likely just accepted their condition as "the way things are." Thus, Nehemiah "also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me" (vs. 18). This was not just a great idea on Nehemiah's part; both God and king were clearly with him in this venture. Thus, the leaders were convinced. "'Let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work" (vs. 18).

However, their work was immediately challenged by the foreign-born officials in Jerusalem: Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab, who "mocked and ridiculed us," not only questioning the work but accusing them of rebelling against the king (vs. 19).

Interestingly, Nehemiah doesn't respond by citing his position with the king, nor the regal authority he had already been granted to do the work. His response is two-pronged: 1) It was God who had called them to this work; therefore, He who had authority over all kings would give them success. 2) Conversely, Nehemiah refuted the authority of these men: "you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it" (vs. 20).

This would lead to more heated confrontation and subterfuge from these officials as the work progressed, but in time, the God of heaven would indeed give Nehemiah and his people success.

**7. What did Nehemiah call the officials of Jerusalem to do? How did he persuade them?**

**8. What were the different responses to Nehemiah's call in this passage?**

**9. How did Nehemiah respond to his opponents?**

God had called them to this work, and therefore He who had authority over all kings would give them success. In addition, Nehemiah refuted the authority of his accusers: "you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it" (vs. 20).

## BIBLE EXTRA

### The Work Before the Work

From beginning to completion, Nehemiah's spiritual work also included an unusual amount of common sense. Even before stepping foot in Jerusalem, Nehemiah had done much "legwork" in preparation for the work ahead. Nehemiah 2:7-9 tells us that after he received permission and authority from King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah obtained letters to present to the governors of the Trans-Euphrates region between Persia and Judea, to ensure safe passage. This would be especially important, given Nehemiah's next, almost audacious request.

Nehemiah asked the king for one more letter: to present to "Asaph, keeper of the royal park"—likely in Lebanon—"[for] timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy" (vs. 8). Again, this request was gladly granted by the king, who "also sent army officers and cavalry with me" (vs. 9).

## WINDOW ON THE WORD

### The Importance of Walls

*In ancient times, it was important for cities to be surrounded by one or more walls, with watchmen looking for invaders 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A city with no wall was easily invaded and conquered. Proverbs 25:28 says, "Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control." Security, peace, and protection come with a wall, even today as we see with gated communities. Interestingly, the new Jerusalem will have a wall, but the gates in the wall will always be open, signifying that God is protecting the city and those inside have no need to fear (Rev. 21:10-25).*



# 3 Bible Application

Explore how to deal with opposition to Kingdom building.

Photocopy this page and give instructions to each group. Make copies of the handout from the Resource Kit and give those copies to the group using it.



## Handout:

### 'I Had Faith in a Living God'

Read the story on the sheet, answer the questions, then share your answers with your group.

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

### Discussion Group

Read "Kingdom Building" and answer **Questions 10, 11, and 12**. Most people who have outwardly expressed their faith in Jesus or the Bible have been ridiculed or mocked at some time. Churches have faced opposition from the cities where they're located when they have tried to expand and have been told they have no place in public forums. Some communities have pushed for taxing churches, and individuals have been taken to court for praying in public at school events. Nehemiah shows us that we must persevere in the Lord's work, and when we do, He will give the success.

### There Will Always Be the Naysayers

Read the following scenario and give suggestions for how the church should work with the naysayers to build the Kingdom: Fellowship Church is discussing partnering with a nearby elementary school to help the children. Several church members have suggested giving clothes, shoes, and holiday food baskets to the school; providing tutors for slow readers and students who don't speak English; and sprucing up the building by cleaning, painting, and providing some new landscaping. Other members have protested that the church is too small to do that kind of work, no one has time to volunteer, and it could cost a lot of money, which the church could use on its own facilities. The school principal is also leery of letting church people help, even though the school desperately needs it.

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## Kingdom Building

Unlike Nehemiah, our Kingdom building often does not involve physically building something. Instead, when we build God's kingdom, we are helping bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus. As we say each time we repeat the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10, KJV). One aspect of His kingdom coming is seeing it established here and now in the hearts of people who have committed to following Him and doing His will.

Like Nehemiah, we face opposition whenever we help advance the Kingdom. The apostle Paul told the new Thessalonian Christians that opposition would happen. They would be "counted worthy of the kingdom of God" because they were advancing it in spite of their "suffering" for it (2 Thess. 1:5). The key to their continuing to grow the Kingdom was their "perseverance and faith" (vs. 4) and "his power" (vs. 11) in them—the power of the Holy Spirit.

The world prefers that Christians stay in a box—a church building box—and not bother anyone outside that box. But that is not the mission of Christians and our churches. When we speak up or reach out, opposition will surface just as it did for Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 4 tells how the initial opposition of Nehemiah's enemies intensified, and at the crucial halfway point in the project it looked like it might fail (Neh. 4:6-12). However, Nehemiah and the laborers persevered, keeping one eye on their work and another on the opposition. That is a good strategy for us to follow as well. We can take courage in what Jesus said: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

**10.** *When have people ridiculed you for your faith?*

**11.** *In what ways are you and your church facing opposition right now?*

**12.** *How can reading about what Nehemiah did help us with the opposition we face?*

# 4 Life Response

Build God's kingdom despite the opposition.

Imagine if Jesus would have given in to the opposition facing Him. Think of what the world would be like now if the apostle Paul had concluded that it was too much work and too dangerous to build God's kingdom by planting churches. What if Martin Luther had given in when he was faced with stiff opposition to his church reforms? The Kingdom has advanced when Christians have persevered in the face of opposition.

Ask students to read "Let's Build" in their

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## Let's Build

Nehemiah shows us that many impossible things are possible when people see that God is in their work and blessing it. With the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, we can, as the old hymn says, help "Christ's great kingdom [to] come on earth, the kingdom of love and light."

► *On a strip of paper, write one thing you believe you or your church could be doing now to help advance the Kingdom. Tape that strip on one of the blocks you used at the beginning of class, and put your block on top of other's blocks as a symbol of your helping build God's kingdom in your community.*

### KEY VERSE

Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. —Nehemiah 2:17, KJV

Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." —Nehemiah 2:17, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON Week of April 19 through April 25

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Psalm 111—Praise for God's Wonderful Works.
- Tues.** Zechariah 8:18-23—God's Blessings Intended for All.
- Wed.** Psalm 102:12-22—The Lord, Our Sovereign.
- Thurs.** Psalm 79—Plea for Mercy for Jerusalem.
- Fri.** Jeremiah 9:17-22—Mourn the Destruction of Zion.
- Sat.** Lamentations 3:22-33—God's Mercy and Love Never End.
- Sun.** Lamentations 5:1-22—Remember and Restore Us.

student books, then do the building exercise. If you have the blocks from the beginning of class, and small strips of paper to tape on those blocks, that will be easiest. You can also find online how to fold sheets of paper into boxes like building blocks. Or, you could simply have students write on sheets of paper what they think would build the Kingdom in your community and then post those papers on a board or the walls of your room. Whichever you do, look for patterns in people's responses. They might write, "Help at a local school," "Start an outreach Bible study," "Start a clothes closet," "Host a neighborhood cookout," or "Do yardwork for neighborhood seniors." The possibilities are limited only by how much we are willing to listen to the Holy Spirit and follow His leading.

End the lesson in prayer, asking God to keep us strong, encouraged, and determined to help Him build His kingdom.



As the class members are leaving, hand out copies of this week's *Power for Living*. Take or mail copies of *Lesson Leaflet* to those who couldn't be with you today, or send them to those you would like to join your class.

## Before Teaching Next Week's Lesson

Before next week, read Lamentations 5. Also, collect several pictures of situations in which people have an understandable reason to complain to God. Examples might include a natural disaster in which homes are destroyed or distressed civilians in the middle of a war.