

## GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



# Renovation: Rebuilding for Purpose

Week 05 | **Managing in the Messy Middle (Nehemiah 4:7-23)**

*For a brief overview of why (and how) to engage in each of these practices, you can read the **Guideline For Growing** on our website.*

<https://www.gymeabaptist.org.au/growing/pages/guideline-for-growing>

## What is a Discipleship Menu?

A discipleship menu is a selection of discipleship activities to engage in to continue the conversation that begins on Sunday throughout the week. The aim is to extend our interaction as a community of faith around activities that help us follow Jesus every single day. The activities vary from week to week (though there are some standard activities) and you are encouraged to do as many as you find helpful (like a menu; you don't need to eat everything on it!). Do them on your own (God and you), with a couple of friends (you and a few), or in a Life Group (you and a crew). The important thing is to do a few!

# GBC Sermon Podcast and The Big 3

## Podcast

Don't forget you can review this week's sermon on the GBC Sermon Podcast. The sermon is usually uploaded by Monday afternoon. You can also listen in to the Big Ill podcast; a weekly podcast where Matt, Jess, and Marc sit down and continue the conversation by engaging in three big questions raised by the congregation about the sermon. The Big Ill comes out on Wednesdays.

## Overview

After the initial excitement of beginning to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, the people of Judea face increasing external and internal obstacles to completing their "good work" (2:18). The focus of our text is the external opposition and Nehemiah's response. He acts with courage and perseverance, but the most important thing he does is discern the 'hidden' hand of God in the trouble (4:15). While God's hand is not obvious or explicit in the text, there are at least two places we can see his fingerprints. First, in the simple fact that the 'plot' was known to them, enabling them to prepare to meet it. Second, the fact that the people – under enormous pressure – don't quit or grumble against Nehemiah, but keep working at the wall. When we face hardship – and the lament of verse 10 summarises their struggles, "So much rubble to haul, worn out and weary, will we ever finish this wall?" (CEV) – we are reminded to look for the hidden hand of God and draw courage from God's presence in the midst of opposition and obstacles.

## Passages to Read

We believe that the Word of God is living and active and that reading and reflecting on it is one way we encounter God. As you read, we encourage people to ask a set of simple questions: What stands out to you? What

questions do you have? What is the invitation of God to you? Who can you tell?

The readings this week are all psalms of lament; psalms written in the rubble of life. One of the striking features of psalms of lament is their witness to the sometimes hidden hand of God. As you read them, consider the nature of their lament (what they are experiencing) and the evidence of their faith in God's presence and activity on their behalf.

- Psalms 6; 13; 56; 86; 142

## Questions to Reflect on

These questions can be used as the basis of a small group discussion or as journal questions. As with the rest of this menu, use the questions that are most useful for you or your crew.

1. Nehemiah and the people were in the "messy middle"; too far from the beginning to remember why they were so excited to start, but too far from the end to get excited about finishing. Recount a time you have found yourself in a similar situation.
2. External opposition and internal 'friction' can slow us down and keep us from pressing through. How does opposition and friction affect you?
3. How can you discern the fingerprints of God in your life?
4. A sense of purpose can provide us with courage to persevere. When have you been sustained by a sense of purpose in a difficult time?
5. The lament of the workers expressed their weariness and lack of resources to complete the task. What lament is on your heart?

## A Prayer to Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to where God is at work in and around you and to grant you the courage to act according to your faith that God is at work.