

# BUILDING UNITY

# BRICK BY BRICK

## STUDY GUIDE

### CHAPTER 5

#### INTRODUCTION

Great progress was happening on the wall, but as is the case with most building projects, problems arose. The people were struggling financially. They were in a famine and could not grow enough food or afford what was available. This wasn't due to enemies outside the Jewish community but rather Jews exploiting other Jews. This led to slavery and debt, leaving many people destitute while others thrived at their expense.

What ugly things people can do to each other in pursuit of money and power!

#### READ: NEHEMIAH 5:1-5

##### Discussion 1

1. **As you read through this section, what did you notice about those who were complaining and those who were being complained about?**
2. **In what ways do we see similar things happening in our world today?**

How we respond to injustice has become one of the most polarizing attributes of our time. While some define any offense as needing a huge response, others sit on the side of seeing the offended ones needing to forgive and move on. Both sides can be right to an extent, but the right response takes true Godly wisdom.

## READ: NEHEMIAH 5:6-19

How we respond to injustice has become one of the most polarizing issues of our time. While some believe any offense demands a huge response, others insist that those offended should simply forgive and move on. Both perspectives have merit, but the right response requires true godly wisdom.

Nehemiah was angry. Ephesians 4:26 reminds us not to let our anger lead us to sin, and here in this chapter, we see a great example of righteous anger being used for righteous reform. Nehemiah did not sit and stew. Instead, he thoughtfully pondered, likely prayed, and then wisely acted in accordance with what he knew was right.

The moneylenders had been charging their fellow Jews interest on loans. This may seem normal today, but God had called them to something better! (See Exodus 22:25–27; Leviticus 25:35–37; Deuteronomy 23:19–20; 24:10–13.) They were walking in disobedience to God’s law and seeking their own prosperity over His glory. This caused some people to sell themselves and their families into slavery to pay off their debts. Once again, this went against God’s law and brought disgrace to His name. They could rebuild all the walls they wanted, but to truly glorify God again, their hearts needed to be rebuilt in obedience.

Nehemiah confronted the offenders directly and offered solutions. He led by example—loaning and giving in ways that honored God. His leadership inspired the wealthy moneylenders to repent and make restitution. Because of this, they were able to restore a healthier society—one in which the people of God could worship Him freely once again.

### Discussion 2

1. **Why do you think Nehemiah hadn’t noticed this issue before the people came with their complaint?**
2. **The response of the offenders was quick and complete. What made them willing to make things right?**
3. **How can we follow this example of caring for one another in the church?**

## CHALLENGE:

**There are different kinds of needs in the lives of those around you. Find a way to meet a need this week—through prayer and care—and look for the opportunity to meet a spiritual need by sharing the truth of the Gospel.**

**Come ready to share how that went next week!**