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BUT THE **FAITHFULNESS**
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INSIDE.

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Inspire (for parents)

My son started playing baseball at age five on the T-ball Rockies. I had the privilege to coach him and 12 energetic boys who were taking their first swing at the sport. I renamed the team the “Rock-pile” because they congregated wherever the ball was hit. Occasionally a big kid would smack the ball into the outfield. Telling them to “stay home” in their positions didn’t work. Why would it? It’s called baseball not base-position. Frankly, their biggest excitement were the snacks after the game.

My son soon learned baseball could be a game of failure. If you’re not very good, you fail nine out of 10 times. If you’re average, you fail eight out of 10 times. If you’re really, really good, you fail six or seven out of 10 times. If you didn’t know better, you’d think baseball attracted the broken kids without much talent and prone to failure.

My son was often frustrated, and on a few occasions he wanted to give up (until I reminded him of the snack). Out after out, he tried again.

Then the faithfulness paid off with the big hit, the spectacular catch, or earning the game ball and his team’s admiration. What seemed broken was soon redeemed.

If we can teach our children to fail successfully, they can pursue a life of significance in a tough world. It’s not the failure but the faithfulness that reveals what’s inside. Batters miss. Teams lose. People criticize. Storms come. Walls fall. But God never fails, He always redeems!

by Doug Webster

Getting Started ◀
Scripture: Nehemiah 1–4; 6–9
 (Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem)
Main Point: God Redeems What Is Broken
 This resource is designed to allow your family to have time in God’s Word **before your children attend church**. Because God’s plan is for parents to be the primary spiritual nurturers of their children’s faith, we know that as you grow spiritually, your children will grow spiritually as well.

Equip (for parents)

God chose to redeem Jerusalem, even though it had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. Jehoiachin—the last king of Judah—had rejected Jeremiah’s advice and rebelled against Babylon. Though Jerusalem had resisted Nebuchadnezzar’s army for about a year and a half, it eventually gave in, and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city along with its temple. This was a thunderous blow—not only had the Jews loved their city, but especially its temple, which represented God’s pleasure with and presence among His people (Psalms 48, 84, 87).

This happened to Jerusalem because God’s people had disobeyed His covenant. By allowing Babylon to destroy Jerusalem and take the people captive, God chastened His people for their sin, as He had promised He would (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27–30). But He also promised, as Nehemiah said in 1:9, that “If [they would] return to [Him] and obey [His] commands, then even if [their] exiled people are at the farthest horizon, [He would] gather them from there and bring them to the place [He had] chosen as a dwelling for [His] Name.”

This gathering process took place in three separate waves over about one hundred years. The hundred-year process of restoring the city of Jerusalem and its temple symbolized how God was redeeming what was broken—not only the physical city, but also the hearts of His people who lived in it. This process was the way our gracious God gathered His people back to the place He had “chosen as a dwelling for [His] Name.”



Support

(for parents & kids)

> **JUST FOR FUN**, read this part of The Big God Story sitting outside next to a wall or fence. Gather your family together and read **Nehemiah 1:1–10** (Nehemiah’s prayer).

Explain to your children that Nehemiah was in God’s favor, and He used Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and gather His people back together.

Next, read **Nehemiah 9**. Ask your children if they believe that the Israelites saw what they had done wrong. Then discuss with them what this portion of Scripture tells us about God.

Remind your children that what they just heard from the Bible is part of The Big God Story, and they will hear more in church this week about Nehemiah and how God redeems what is broken.

“RESTORING THE CITY OF JERUSALEM SYMBOLIZED HOW GOD WAS REDEEMING WHAT WAS BROKEN.”