

# **CHAMP SPORTS DEVOTIONAL**



## **Winter 2025-26**

CHAMP Office – 704.341.5387  
Weather Hotline – 704.341.5473  
[www.champsportsinfo.com](http://www.champsportsinfo.com)

# Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

## Season Schedule

**Practices Begin:** Week of December 1  
**Uniform Distribution:** Week of December 1  
**Game Schedules:** Week of December 1  
**First Game Day:** Saturday, December 13  
**Winter Break:** December 15 – January 1  
**Practices Resume:** Friday, January 2  
**End-of-Season Celebration:** Saturday, February 14  
**Season Ends:** Saturday, February 14

For any questions or concerns,  
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**Weather Hotline:** 704.341.5473  
Updated Mon-Fri. at 3:00 PM; Sat. at 7:30 AM

**Join us weekly for Sunday morning  
worship at 9:45 AM in person or via livestream.**

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

*Week of December 1-5*

Have you ever set a goal? Most people have. Some people set a lot of little goals. Some people set a few big goals.

Did you know that God has set many goals? How can we learn about God's goals? We can read the Bible. God has told us a lot about His goals in the Bible!

When it comes to our goals, we may or may not accomplish them. Lots of things can happen after we set a goal. We can run out of time. We can run out of energy. We can decide that our goals aren't wise goals and change them.

When it comes to God, He always accomplishes His goals. God has said, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose. ... I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it" (Isaiah 46:10-11).

How can God be so confident about accomplishing His goals? God can be so confident about accomplishing His goals because God is God, and there is nothing that is too hard for Him. God never runs out of time because He is perfectly orderly. God never runs out of energy because He is all-powerful. God never sets goals that are unwise because He is all-wise.

When we read the end of the Bible, we see that God has some pretty big goals. God intends to make a perfect creation in which righteousness dwells. This will be a perfect heavens and earth in which there will be no sin, no death, no darkness, and no chance that these things will come in and destroy what God has made.

God is a builder. God loves to make things. The things that God makes are good—very good!

God made Adam out of the dust of the earth. God breathed into Adam the breath of life. God walked with Adam in the Garden of Eden and taught him many things, but then one day, another voice came into the garden—the voice of a snake. The snake was a liar, but Adam didn't tell the snake to get lost. Instead, Adam obeyed the voice of the snake, and everything in this world began to fall apart. But, all of this was God's plan because God is not only a builder, He is also our Savior. This season we will talk about how God saves us and builds us up!

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**1 Thessalonians 5:11**

**Therefore encourage one another and build one another up.**

*Questions: What are some ways that you can encourage your friends, family, and teammates?*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# An End and a Beginning

*Week of December 8-12*

Years begin, and years end. Summer comes, and summer goes. Trees grow leaves and then those leaves fall off.

History is full of beginnings and endings. In the Bible, God made the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, the animals and the insects, and people. When God created the world, it was “very good.” But then, because of Adam and Eve’s decision to disobey God’s voice, the world fell into darkness, and about 1,656 years after creation, God destroyed the world with a flood because “the earth was filled with violence because all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” (Genesis 9:11-12).

God saved eight people through the flood. Who were those eight people? Noah, his wife, and Noah’s three sons and their wives. When the flood ended, Noah and his family were the beginning of a new post-flood world. However, sin wasn’t gone, and spiritual darkness was still at work in the world.

About 352 years after the flood, and two years after Noah died, a man named Abram was born. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham. What is Abraham famous for? Abraham is famous for his faith—Abraham believed God. Each one of us has a choice: We can imitate Adam and Eve, who turned away from God and went their own way, or we can imitate Abraham, who turned towards God and obeyed His voice.

Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac had a son named Jacob. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel and gave him twelve sons. Israel’s twelve sons had sons, and Israel grew into a great nation. At Mount Sinai, God created a special relationship with the nation of Israel called a covenant. In this covenant, God gave Israel the Ten Commandments and other instructions. If they obeyed, they would receive blessings. If they disobeyed, they would receive bad things. Sometimes, Israel and its kings obeyed. Often, Israel and its kings didn’t obey. Eventually their disobedience got so bad that God destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the house (that is, the temple) that King Solomon had built for Him in the city of Jerusalem.

The day that God destroyed the temple that King Solomon built was a sad day. It was the end of something wonderful. But something greater was coming. The temple would be rebuilt, and God’s own Son, Jesus, would be born into this world, and He would fill this temple with God’s glory!

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## **2 Corinthians 5:17**

**If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

*Questions: What are we celebrating at Christmas? Who is Jesus? How long ago was Jesus born? [If Jesus was born in 4 B.C., then Jesus was born 2,029 years ago!]*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# A Fresh Start! (Ezra 1)

*Week of January 2*

Before the Christmas break, we learned about how God destroyed His holy city, Jerusalem, and His holy house, the temple, in 586 B.C. (about 2,600 years ago). This was a very sad time for Israel! Their whole country had been destroyed, and they were no longer allowed to live in the land that God had given to them!

The prophet Jeremiah told the Israelites that for the next 70 years, they would have to live in the land of Babylon. He told them that they would need to settle down and “build houses and live in them” and “plant gardens and eat their produce” (Jeremiah 29:5). However, there was hope that God would return His people, Israel, to their land after those 70 years because God promised that, “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place (Jerusalem). For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:10-11).

God made a big promise to His people, Israel! How would He fulfill His promise? God would have to assemble a team of people who would work together to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and God’s temple.

Who was on this team? First, God chose a man named Cyrus to get the ball rolling. “In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:1-3).

Next, God picked men like Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Jeshua, and Zerubbabel to lead various parts of the effort to rebuild Jerusalem and God’s temple. They faced tough decisions and many other difficult things, but God was with them to help them, and they did great and mighty works! What great things does God want you to do?!

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## **2 Peter 3:13**

**According to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

*Questions: What are some of the things that God has promised us in the Bible?*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# God, Help! (Ezra 3-4)

*Week of January 5-9*

If you want to build a house, what are some of the things that you should do before you begin to build? First, you should check with God to see if building a house is something that He wants you to do. If God wants you to do it, He will be with you to help you as you work. He will be with you to give you wisdom, skill, protection, and strength. Next, you should make sure that you have permission from the government and the zoning commission to build the house. Next, you should make sure that you have all of the materials and funds that you need to build the house.

When it came to the job of rebuilding God's house in Jerusalem, God appointed two men—Jeshua and Zerubbabel—to oversee the project. Before Jeshua and Zerubbabel began the work of laying the foundations for the temple, they built the altar of God. Why did they build God's altar before they built God's temple? They did this because they knew that the worship of God is central to life. How could they do something so great as build God's temple if their hearts weren't focused 100% on God?

After God's altar was built, Jeshua directed the builders to lay the foundation of the temple of the LORD. Once this was done, the people of Israel gave thanks to God and sang, "'For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.' And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid" (Ezra 3:11).

"Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Lord, the God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, 'Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him.' But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses in Israel said to them, 'You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel.' Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose" (Ezra 4:1-5).

Building God's temple wasn't going to be easy! There were many enemies who didn't want the Israelites to build God's temple! What about us? What has God called us to do? God wants us to build each other up. He also wants us to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). This is no easy task! We must have God's help to do it!

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**Psalm 121:2**

**My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**

*Questions: Are you a good planner? Do you pray and ask God for wisdom when you are making a plan?*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# Jesus! (Invitation Week)

Week of January 12-16

It took King Solomon seven years to build the first temple. It took Jeshua and Zerubbabel about twenty years to build the second temple. Why did it take so much longer to build the second temple? It took so much longer to build the second temple because there were a lot of people who didn't want God's temple to be built and they were working very hard to stop the Israelites from rebuilding it.

After the foundation of the temple was built, God's enemies realized that they would have to work extra hard if they wanted to stop the rebuilding of the temple, so they wrote nasty letters about the Israelites to the king of Persia. They also said discouraging things to the Israelites who were working on building the temple. They also put up roadblocks to make building the temple harder. For a while these tactics worked, but God is greater than His enemies, and He sent prophets to remind His people to look to Him for help.

Haggai and Zechariah, God's prophets, reminded the people that "the LORD was with them" (Haggai 1:13) and to "Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not" (Haggai 2:4-5), and that they should "return to the LORD, and He would return to them" Zechariah 1:4). These words encouraged the people, and God stirred up "the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God" (Haggai 1:14).

God says many things about His Son, Jesus, but one very important thing to know about Jesus is that He is the one and only foundation: "For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

How can you build your life on Jesus Christ? First, you must acknowledge that sin is wrong. It is wrong to try to be like God. It is wrong to try to rule your own life. Then, you must believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin and that God raised Him from the dead on the third day, and then you must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

*\*\*\*Coaches, please present "The Gospel" devotion on the next page. If any players on your team respond by praying to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, have them sign their name in their own handwriting on the card provided. Please return signed cards to the equipment closet. When we follow up with players we will give them their signed card to take home. Thank you!*

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## **1 Corinthians 3:11**

**For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# The Gospel

*Invitation Week Continued (January 12-16)*

**What is the Gospel?** The Gospel is God's good news about His Son Jesus Christ.

**What is the good news?** The good news is that God sent Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners.

**How did we become sinners?** By disobeying God. Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Each one of us has also disobeyed God.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

**The bad news is that:**

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a).

**The good news is that:**

"the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23b).

**How do we receive God's free gift?**

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

**What does it mean to "believe in the Lord Jesus"?**

It means that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died to pay the penalty for our sins, that He was buried, and on the third day God raised Him from the dead. It means that we receive Christ as our Savior and surrender our lives to Him as our personal Lord and Master.

Jesus promised, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). Today, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

If you want to believe in Jesus and confess Him as your Savior and Lord today, please raise your hand. If you have raised your hand, please pray this prayer with me.

*Heavenly Father, today I believe in your Son, Jesus. I believe that He died to pay the penalty for my sins and that He was raised from the dead so that I could be justified and receive eternal life in His name. Today, I surrender my life to Jesus as my Lord and Master, and acknowledge Him before men. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me! Amen.*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**



# Nehemiah Weeps! (Nehemiah 1)

*Week of January 19-23*

It took about twenty years, but through many hardships and difficulties, the Israelites finished rebuilding God's temple. When they finished, there was great joy, and the children of Israel dedicated the temple to God.

What was Israel to do now? First, they needed to carefully study God's Word so that they wouldn't make the same mistakes that their fathers had made. Ezra began to teach the people the Law of God so that every Israelite would know God's will and do what He said was right.

One of the first things that Israel did after they finished rebuilding the temple was celebrate the Feast of Passover. The Feast of Passover was the time each year when Israel remembered how God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt so that they could serve the LORD their God. This year at Passover the hearts of the people were full of joy because God had not only delivered them from Egypt but had also brought them back from exile in Babylon and helped them rebuild the temple!

For the next seventy years, Israel followed the LORD and did many things right, but one thing they didn't do was rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Imagine building a house with no walls! What would happen? Your neighbor's cat might visit. Racoons might wander into your kitchen at night. Someone might borrow your bike without asking.

Nehemiah was an Israelite who worked for the king of Persia. One day, some men came to Nehemiah from Judah. "And Nehemiah asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to him, 'The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.' As soon as Nehemiah heard these words he sat down and wept and mourned for days" (Nehemiah 1:2-4).

Who was God going to call to oversee the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls? That's right! God was going to call Nehemiah to do this job. This task, like the rebuilding of the temple, would not be easy, but nothing is too hard for God! In our lives, we are called to do hard things like saying "no" to things that we know are wrong and saying "yes" to Jesus. Are you saying "yes" to Jesus?

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**Nehemiah 8:10**

**Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**

*Questions: How does God fill us with His joy? [He fills us with His Holy Spirit!]*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# God is With Us! (Nehemiah 2)

*Week of January 26-30*

The good hand of God was upon Nehemiah! The king of Persia had given him permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls! Not only that, but the king was going to help! The king had given letters to Nehemiah. One of the letters was for “Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he might give to Nehemiah timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that Nehemiah would occupy” (Nehemiah 2:8).

This was a big deal! Building projects are expensive! God was providing for the rebuilding of His city through the generosity of the king of Persia!

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he “arose in the night, he and a few men with him. And he told no one what his God had put into his heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with him but the one on which he rode. He went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire” (Neh. 2:12-13).

After this, Nehemiah said to the officials who were in Jerusalem, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision. And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’” (Neh. 2:17-18).

What do you think happened next? As soon as Nehemiah’s plan got out, the enemies of God rose up to try to stop Nehemiah from rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls. This time around, God’s enemies were Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem.

What did God’s enemies do to try to stop Nehemiah from rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls? First, they mocked him. Nehemiah tells us what happened: “They jeered at us and despised us and said, ‘What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?’ Then Nehemiah replied to them, ‘The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem’” (Nehemiah 2:19-20) What a good come back!

Sometimes, we will get mocked if we want to do what God tells us to do. People made fun of Jesus for doing what God told Him to do, but did that stop Jesus from doing what was right? No! Jesus lives to please God the Father, and we should too!

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**Romans 8:31**

**If God is for us, who can be against us?**

*Questions: Are you on God’s side? Has anyone ever made fun of you for doing what’s right?*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# A Big Job! (Nehemiah 3-4)

*Week of February 2-6*

How long do you think it would take one man to build one house by himself? It would probably take him about two years to build the house if he worked hard and he was highly skilled.

Nehemiah knew that rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem would be a big job! He needed help! So, Nehemiah came up with a plan.

First, Nehemiah recruited most of the people who lived in Jerusalem to help with the rebuilding of the walls. Next, he assigned groups of people to work on different sections of the wall at the same time. And third, in many cases, Nehemiah assigned the people who lived near a particular section of wall to repair that section of wall.

What a wise plan! If you were working on the section of wall near your house, not only would you have a short trip to work, but you would also want to do a great job in your work because that part of the wall provided immediate protection for your house!

As the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem really got going, Sanballat and Tobiah got very angry. Their first attempts to get the Jews to stop repairing the walls of Jerusalem by making fun of them hadn't worked. They needed a new plan!

Their new plan was much worse than their first plan. In their new plan, they—the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites—would come up and fight against Jerusalem and cause confusion in it. What do you think? Would their new plan be successful?

What did Nehemiah and the Israelites do when they heard about Sanballat and Tobiah's plan? "They prayed to their God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night" (Nehemiah 4:9). Then, Nehemiah said to the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight," but they did not need to fight because "God had frustrated Sanballat and Tobiah's plan" (Nehemiah 4:14-15).

With God on their side, and with swords at the ready, the Israelites continued to build the walls of Jerusalem from the break of dawn until the stars came out. They were sure that they were doing God's work, and they were sure that their God would fight for them whenever necessary!

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## **Colossians 3:17**

**And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

*Questions: What should we do when Satan tries to distract us from God's will for our lives? [Put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18). Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).]*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**

# Onward and Upward! (Nehemiah 5-13)

*Week of February 9-13*

Nehemiah was a good leader. He was generous, he feared God, and he cared for the people. Under his leadership, the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem went very well! In fact, it went so well that it only took 52 days!

When Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, and the rest of Israel's enemies heard that the wall was built (although the doors in the gates had not been set up yet), they came up with yet another plan to try to stop what God was doing in Israel. Sanballat and Geshem sent messengers to Nehemiah, saying, "Come and let us meet together," but Nehemiah knew that they intended to do him harm.

What do you think Nehemiah did? Did he go and meet with Sanballat and Geshem? No! Instead, Nehemiah sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" But, Sanballat and Geshem wouldn't give up, "And they sent to Nehemiah four times in this way, and he answered them in the same manner" (Nehemiah 6:3-4).

Frustrated, Sanballat sent word to Nehemiah a fifth time. This time, Sanballat made false accusations against Nehemiah and the Jews in Jerusalem, but Nehemiah answered Sanballat, saying, "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind" (Nehemiah 6:8). Nehemiah knew that Sanballat was trying to frighten the Jews and make them stop working. Instead of becoming distracted or discouraged by Sanballat's attacks, Nehemiah simply focused on the work that God had given him to do, and he prayed, "But now, O God, strengthen my hands." Sanballat and Tobiah continued to try to stop Nehemiah from faithfully serving the LORD, but Nehemiah continued to keep his eyes on the LORD!

With the walls of Jerusalem finished, things were going well for Israel! However, there were still many dangers that Israel would face! Laziness. Complacency. Forgetting God's laws. The trickery of God's enemies. Going back to trusting in self rather than trusting in the LORD...

We must be wise like Nehemiah! We must keep our eyes on Jesus! We must not get distracted from the things that God wants us to do! Will you keep your eyes on Jesus?!

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**Joshua 24:15**

**Choose this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**

*Questions: Have you chosen to serve the LORD? Will you seek the LORD with your whole heart (Psalm 119:2)?*

**Please remember to pray for your players and their families!**