

WEEK FIVE

Blessing Babylon



Ask a member of the family to read Jeremiah 29:4-7 aloud.

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” (NIV)

Reflecting on the passage, answer the following questions:

- What chores or jobs are you responsible for in your household?
- What are some of the responsibilities of other members of your family?
- How do you work together to get everything done?
- When God’s people were living in Babylon—far away from their homes—they weren’t planning their escape or sitting around until God brought them out of Babylon. Their goal was to go to work, bless their new neighbors in Babylon, and reflect the love, goodness, and hospitality of God. How can we show love, goodness, and hospitality when we help with chores around the house?
- How can we show love, goodness, and hospitality to our neighbors?

Group activity

Take time as a family to choose one way you can begin to help each other with “work” both in your home and outside your home.

Children’s prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for my family and the work we do together. Help me to show love, goodness, and hospitality to my family, my friends, and my neighbors.

Amen.

Optional questions for older children and adults

In *Embracing Exile*, Dr. Daniels writes, “The shocking thing about the word of the prophets to those in exile is that they don’t really encourage the people to look for, pray for, or try to discover a way out. Rather, the people are invited to settle down and work” (p. 80).

- Is there an area in your life that you feel you are just trying to get through as quickly as possible in order to reach the next season?
- How can you begin to “settle down and work” in this area of your life?
- What might God be doing in your heart during more challenging situations or seasons of life?
- Dr. Daniels talks about the ways we are all “ministers” in our various fields of work. Cabdrivers are ministers of transportation. Doctors are ministers of medicine. Your algebra teacher is a minister of math. What does it look like to be a minister where you are today?
- Reflect on people whom God has brought into your life and has asked you to bless. Who comes to mind? And what ways can you show them God’s love, goodness, and hospitality?

Copyright © 2017 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City

Scriptures marked NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*® (NIV®).

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.