

*written by Aaron Burns*



Burns Family Studios

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PRESENTS

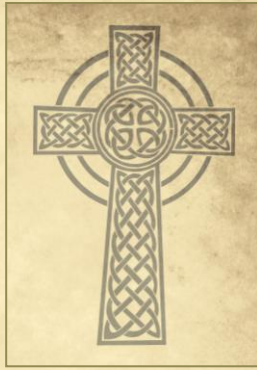
# PENDRAGON

SWORD OF HIS FATHER

[PendragonMovie.com](http://PendragonMovie.com)  
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**BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP STUDY GUIDE**





## Following God's Call

**After viewing the Pendragon movie, use these four lessons from the life of Nehemiah to review and apply the biblical principles of following God's call. Great for personal reading, family devotions, or small group discussions!**

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### **Ephesians 2:10**

*"We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."*

Dear Reader,

Throughout history, God has called men and women to accomplish incredible, world-changing tasks through His strength. People like *Joseph, Esther, Peter, Martin Luther, and Jim Elliot* are examples of true "heroes." However, the Bible teaches that God has a specific purpose for *each* of His children. Although the assignment is different for every individual, the essence of God's call is the same.

For our family, following God's call led to the production of a Christ-centered adventure film. Although set in a distant time and a far away place, *Pendragon's* story about what God desires to do through His children is relevant to our world today. As the hero, Artos, struggles to follow the vision God has for him, he learns that, "What God calls men to do, He gives them the grace to accomplish."

As our team worked to tell this story, God was working in our hearts, shaping us and guiding us down His path. He taught us that while following Him is never easy, it is always best!

Though frail, sinful, and worthless on our own, God has chosen to display His infinite worth by using *us* to accomplish His purposes here on earth! (1 Cor. 1:27) As we faithfully submit ourselves to the Lord each day, through His word and His Spirit He will lead us to His Master Plan.

These truths from Scripture have made a life-changing impact on our team and on me personally. I pray that this study guide will be an encouragement to you and your family as you pursue a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. May God bless you as you follow the vision He has laid out for your lives.

Sincerely,

Aaron Burns  
*Artos Pendragon*



# Listening for the Call

The book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament tells a story about an ordinary guy who God used to accomplish something extraordinary. Because Nehemiah had his focus on God, he was ready to step up to the challenge that God had for him.

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*“God has a purpose for your life – you have something to do here.”*

Read Nehemiah 1:1-10 before going on!

## **Key Verse 1**

*They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”*

**Nehemiah 1:3**

There is nothing mystical about God’s call. If we are living for Him, He is going to send awesome opportunities our way! For Nehemiah, God’s call came through a simple conversation with a brother. If you want to be used by God, look for opportunities that God might have placed before you.

What was Nehemiah’s first response to the distressing news from Jerusalem? He cried out to God! From Nehemiah’s prayer, it is clear that he knew God’s Word, loved God’s people, and had a passion for God’s reputation. As Nehemiah lived out this God-focused life, the Lord used him in big ways.

## **Key Verse 2**

*O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night.*

**Nehemiah 1:4-5**

## **Things to think about...**

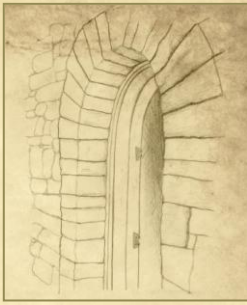
*“Produce a feature film!?”*

Ask anyone in our family – four years ago, we were not planning to enter the film industry! When we began the production of *Pendragon*, we never could have anticipated where God would lead us. However, as we look back, it is clear that He’d been preparing us for this very task. Because we were open to His call, He used us in ways we never could have imagined.

Through this journey, we have come to understand that while God’s way is not always the easiest, it is always the best. Keep that in mind the next time you are tempted to turn away from a difficult task or situation - and keep your eyes open for how the Lord is working! God might not call you to rebuild a city or fight to save your family from invaders, but as you study God’s Word and develop a love for Him and His people, you will be surprised at what He can accomplish through you! Be willing to pursue the awesome opportunities God will bring your way.

## **Application Questions**

- 1) Is my life characterized by a passion for God and a love for God’s people?
- 2) How does my response in difficult circumstances reflect my commitment to Jesus?
- 3) How can I be proactively looking for opportunities from God?
- 4) What opportunities are around me right now?



# Answering the Call

*In Nehemiah chapter 2, Nehemiah has a choice to make. He sees an opportunity from the Lord to go and serve the people of Jerusalem, but he is afraid! Through God's strength, he takes courage and presses on to answer God's call.*

*“God does not call men to Futility - those who follow him are part of a Master Plan.”*

Read Nehemiah 1:1-2:7 before going on!

## **Key Verse 1**

*“O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”*

**Nehemiah 1:11**

Nehemiah admits that he was “very much afraid,” but instead of giving up, he moves ahead. God is faithful, and grants Nehemiah’s request.

As the cupbearer for the King of Assyria, Nehemiah lived far from God’s people in Jerusalem. However, Nehemiah determined to use the position God had put him in to the greatest advantage. Nehemiah begged for God’s blessing, and then boldly acted on the call God had laid before him.

## **Key Verse 2**

*Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.”*

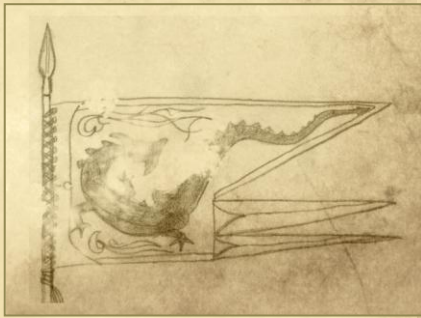
**Nehemiah 2:4-5**

## **Things to think about...**

We might be prepared to *listen* to God’s call, but if we are unwilling to *act* on it, our preparation was in vain! Sometimes getting started is the hardest part – especially on big tasks. Through the *Pendragon* Project, we learned over and over again that we are most happy when we shift our focus off of our insecurities and onto the Lord. When you are afraid, find your strength and purpose in God, and remember that following Him is always the best option.

## **Application Questions**

- 1) What things in my life have I allowed to restrain me from following God with my whole heart?
- 2) Do I rely on my all-powerful God for the courage and strength so follow His call?
- 3) What difficult, world-changing things is God calling me to do *today*?



# Living the Call

*Finally, Nehemiah makes it to Jerusalem, where he rallies God's people for the noble task at hand. But this is only the beginning of the journey. Following God is not a one-time action – it's a lifetime commitment! And usually, it involves struggles, conflict, and discouragement along the way.*

*“The One who gave the vision still calls.”*

Read Nehemiah 2:11-17 and 4:7-13 before going on!

## **Key Verse 1**

*“Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem...” I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work.*

**Nehemiah 2:17-18**

**R**ebuild the walls of an entire city? This task was way bigger than Nehemiah could have dreamed of doing alone! As Nehemiah shared his vision with the people of Jerusalem – giving all the credit to God – the people enthusiastically supported him. God provided all of His servant's needs.

Inevitably, as soon as something good gets started the opposition begins to mount against it! Consider for a moment Nehemiah's reply to the ridicule and the threats: “The God of Heaven will give us success.” His focus remains on God. Remember to keep your focus on God when trials come. What He calls you to do, He will give you the grace to accomplish. God never promises it will be easy, but He does promise that following Him is always the best option, no matter the circumstances.

## **Key Verse 2**

*But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.*

**Nehemiah 4:7-9**

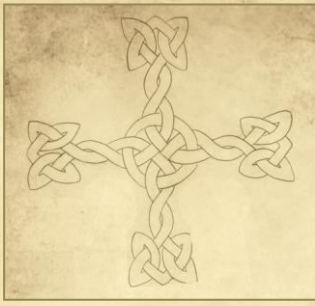
## **Things to think about...**

In Pendragon, Artos faces a myriad of struggles as he works to live out the task to which the Lord called him. Barbarians destroy his home and family, his closest friends betray him – he loses everything he holds most dear. Unfortunately, real life is sometimes the same way. As we worked on the Pendragon project, the moments of discouragement often seemed more numerous than the moments of triumph. Could it possibly be worth it?

No one ever promised that following God would be easy! However, God does promise to be faithful as we stay faithful to Him. As Artos came to understand in our story, we can't judge God's faithfulness by our changing circumstances. So often, when we are at our weakest, the Lord is looking for an opportunity to prove Himself strong. As you struggle daily to live out the vision God has given you, remember to keep your eyes on the big picture. Trust God to sustain you – in the exciting times as well in the dark times.

## **Application Questions**

- 1) Am I relying on God as the all-wise supplier of my needs?
- 2) How quickly do I give up when faced with opposition?
- 3) What specific situations in my life do I need to trust God with?



# Completing the Call

*Nehemiah names the builders of the wall in chapter 3 – godly men, who, with their families, were committed to God’s work. Nehemiah and his faithful workers endured persecution and hardships, but through their faith and their efforts, the Lord brought this incredible task to completion in just fifty-two days.*

*“What God calls us to do, He gives us the strength to accomplish”*

Read the Key Verses before going on!

## **Key Verse 1**

*So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.*

**Nehemiah 6:15-16**

**T**o everyone’s astonishment, Nehemiah and his team succeeded in the task that God had called them to. Through the Lord’s strength, and in spite of fierce opposition from without and within, they rebuilt the walls of an entire city in less than two months.

**D**oes it always end this happily? If I am faithful for 52 days, am I guaranteed this kind of success? No, not necessarily. Some tasks take generations to accomplish. Some endeavors, by human standards, are ‘failures.’ However, as the book of Hebrews points out, no matter the apparent outcome, following God is never futile. Why? Because when we live our lives for Him, His name is glorified among the nations!

**W**hen the Lord gives you an opportunity to serve Him, make sure that all of the credit goes back to Him. As proud humans, it is way too easy to reflect the glory back to ourselves. And don’t be afraid to tell others what God has done in your life and the lives of those around you!

## **Key Verse 2**

*Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.*

**Nehemiah 8:6**

## **Things to think about...**

For Justinian Pendragon, being faithful would mean giving his life. For Artos, it would mean seeing the vision fulfilled. In both cases, following the call through to the end would require tremendous sacrifice and complete reliance on God’s strength. It is always the same for us. Where ever God leads, we must be willing to follow.

God has a purpose for your life – get started on it today!

## **Application**

- 1) Earnestly pray that God would use your life for His glory.
- 2) Be willing to serve Him in all areas of your life – large and small.
- 3) Reflect the glory back to Him for everything accomplished.