

# PERSEVERANCE

W E E K 0 4







### 4 PROGRESS IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious. He mocked the Jews <sup>2</sup> before his colleagues and the powerful men of Samaria and said, “What are these pathetic Jews doing? Can they restore it by themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they ever finish it? Can they bring these burnt stones back to life from the mounds of rubble?” <sup>3</sup> Then Tobiah the Ammonite, who was beside him, said, “Indeed, even if a fox climbed up what they are building, he would break down their stone wall!”

<sup>4</sup> Listen, our God, for we are despised. Make their insults return on their own heads and let them be taken as plunder to a land of captivity. <sup>5</sup> Do not cover their guilt or let their sin be erased from your sight, because they have angered the builders.

<sup>6</sup> So we rebuilt the wall until the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had the will to keep working.

<sup>7</sup> When Sanballat, Tobiah, and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the repair to the walls of Jerusalem was progressing and that the gaps were being closed, they became furious. <sup>8</sup> They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw it into confusion. <sup>9</sup> So we prayed to our God and stationed a guard because of them day and night.

<sup>10</sup> In Judah, it was said:

The strength of the laborer fails,  
since there is so much rubble.  
We will never be able  
to rebuild the wall.

<sup>11</sup> And our enemies said, “They won’t realize it until we’re among them and can kill them and stop the work.” <sup>12</sup> When the Jews who lived nearby arrived, they said to us time and again, “Everywhere you turn, they attack us.” <sup>13</sup> So I stationed people behind the lowest sections of the wall, at the vulnerable areas. I stationed them by families with their swords, spears, and bows. <sup>14</sup> After I made an inspection, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the great and awe-inspiring Lord, and fight for your countrymen, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes.”

## SWORD AND TROWEL

<sup>15</sup> When our enemies heard that we knew their scheme and that God had frustrated it, every one of us returned to his own work on the wall. <sup>16</sup> From that day on, half of my men did the work while the other half held spears, shields, bows, and armor. The officers supported all the people of Judah, <sup>17</sup> who were rebuilding the wall. The laborers who carried the loads worked with one hand and held a weapon with the other. <sup>18</sup> Each of the builders had his sword strapped around his waist while he was building, and the one who sounded the ram's horn was beside me. <sup>19</sup> Then I said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, "The work is enormous and spread out, and we are separated far from one another along the wall. <sup>20</sup> Wherever you hear the sound of the ram's horn, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us!" <sup>21</sup> So we continued the work, while half of the men were holding spears from daybreak until the stars came out. <sup>22</sup> At that time, I also said to the people, "Let everyone and his servant spend the night inside Jerusalem, so that they can stand guard by night and work by day." <sup>23</sup> And I, my brothers, my servants, and the men of the guard with me never took off our clothes. Each carried his weapon, even when washing.

## 5 SOCIAL INJUSTICE

There was a widespread outcry from the people and their wives against their Jewish countrymen. <sup>2</sup> Some were saying, "We, our sons, and our daughters are numerous. Let us get grain so that we can eat and live." <sup>3</sup> Others were saying, "We are mortgaging our fields, vineyards, and homes to get grain during the famine." <sup>4</sup> Still others were saying, "We have borrowed money to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. <sup>5</sup> We and our children are just like our countrymen and their children, yet we are subjecting our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters are already enslaved, but we are powerless because our fields and vineyards belong to others."

<sup>6</sup> I became extremely angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints. <sup>7</sup> After seriously considering the matter, I accused the nobles and officials, saying to them, "Each of you is charging his countrymen interest." So I called a large assembly against them <sup>8</sup> and said, "We have done our best to buy back our Jewish countrymen who were sold to foreigners, but now you sell your own countrymen, and we have to buy them back." They remained silent and could not say a word. <sup>9</sup> Then I said, "What you are doing isn't right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God and not invite the reproach of our foreign

## NEHEMIAH 5

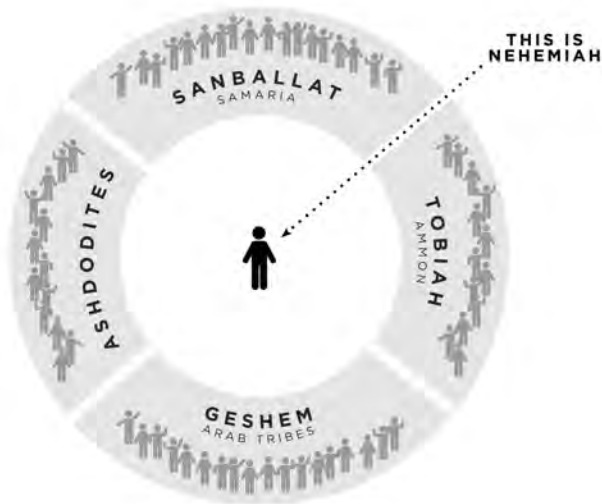
enemies? <sup>10</sup> Even I, as well as my brothers and my servants, have been lending them money and grain. Please, let's stop charging this interest. <sup>11</sup> Return their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses to them immediately, along with the percentage of the money, grain, new wine, and fresh oil that you have been assessing them."

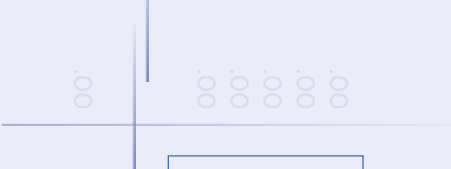
<sup>12</sup> They responded, "We will return these things and require nothing more from them. We will do as you say."

So I summoned the priests and made everyone take an oath to do this. <sup>13</sup> I also shook the folds of my robe and said, "May God likewise shake from his house and property everyone who doesn't keep this promise. May he be shaken out and have nothing!"

The whole assembly said, "Amen," and they praised the LORD. Then the people did as they had promised.

Dotted lines for sermon notes.





# LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

RHYTHM REMINDER



Share Your Story

**LEAN IN**

What's something in life that's been way harder than you thought but worth the perseverance? What makes it worth it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**LOOK DOWN**

What types of opposition did Nehemiah and the people face in chapters 4 and 5—both from enemies and from within their own community? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**LOOK OUT**

What would it look like for Christians to be known not just for fighting battles, but for trusting God to fight for them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**LOOK IN**

Where do you need to persevere right now—either in trusting God or confronting something difficult with grace and courage? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WEEK 4

# IF I HAD MORE TIME

WITH SPECIAL GUEST

**ROB PELINKA**



^  
**LISTEN TO  
THIS WEEK'S  
EPISODE  
HERE**



***Leadership  
is earned. It's  
not something  
that's given.***

**ROB PELINKA** is the President of Basketball Operations and General Manager of the Los Angeles Lakers. He gained prominence as a sports agent, representing top NBA talent, including Kobe Bryant, and founding the Landmark Sports Agency.





by Alexandra Lindenberg

# My Heavenly Father

This past spring, I was fortunate enough to study abroad in the beautiful city of Glasgow, Scotland. Surrounded by cathedrals that are hundreds of years old, and highlands rich in the country's bloody history for independence, God took me by the hand and walked with me into a wilderness season. Within this bittersweet solitude, God sat with me every morning as I cracked open my first study Bible and learned His Word, starting from the book of Genesis.

One early morning, I began to read the story of Isaac. In this specific chapter, Abraham sent his oldest servant to his homeland to find a wife for his son Isaac. At first, the servant was filled with doubt at this task, but Abraham promised that the Lord would send an angel ahead of the servant to help fulfill this calling. True to His word, the Lord was with the old servant and unveiled who Isaac's wife should be.

At his success, the servant worshiped the Lord and proclaimed "Praise the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham! The LORD has shown unfailing love and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master's relatives" (Genesis 24:27, NLT).

Like Abraham and Isaac, many Christians around me often testified to a calling on their life brought by God, but what was mine? Did I even have one?

Closing my eyes, I spoke aloud to the Lord, hungering to know what He wished from me.

*God* (because I couldn't stomach ever using the word "Father" again),

*Please show me what You are calling me to do this season* (because I was lost).

*Unveil how You wish for me to serve You.*

As my prayer ended, I felt my heart grow overwhelmed by a feeling I'd come to recognize—the warm and joyful moment when the Holy Spirit nestles deep into



*Our God Will Fight For Us*

Original Artwork by Ann Hu



my heart like a dove when its nest finally becomes home. Filled with the command to share God's Word, I picked up my phone and began texting my mother, sister, and family friends about how grateful I was for them—I began to share all that I'd learned that morning from Genesis 24. As I was exiting a specific text chain, my finger hovered over a single contact—a single word.

Pa—a nickname I'd produced for my father amidst a season of peace in our relationship.

Contempt crept into my heart.

I loved my father, the man whose connection to me went as deep as blood and DNA. The man who raised me and took care of me all my life. But, perhaps like some in the world, my father was also the reason my heart carried scars and childhood heartache lingered at harsh words and triggering statements.

Most of my childhood, all I could remember was competing for my father's conditional love, which was won only by things he considered acceptable. Most of the time, that love and praise were dished out sparingly when I laid down my own

happiness for his own. So, of course, in that moment, I could not help but hesitate—I could not help but let the vengeful part of myself think that my own father was undeserving of knowing the goodness I had found in Christ.

All at once, tears welled in my eyes as I felt something shift in my heart. I knew what God had called for me to do in this season. I'd heard His words so clearly in my heart.

I sensed Him saying, *"The reason your relationship with your earthly father is unstable is because you have not invited Me into it. Go and make this relationship anew with Me at the center. Go and make this relationship better, and do not worry about any injustices of the past, for I will stand beside you."*

I began to weep at my desk because God had heard, secretly, what my heart cried for when I was unable to produce the right words aloud in prayer.

Before God's conviction, I was unable to invite God into my relationship with my father because I felt there was no such thing as a "new beginning" for us—there



had been too many injustices that hadn't been answered and there were too many voices in my head (and all around me) that told me it would be better to sever ties with my father rather than rebuild them.

In the Bible, Nehemiah faced many external and internal conflicts as he completed the wall around Jerusalem. Many wished for his downfall and even his own people—the people of Judah—began to doubt their ability to finish it (Nehemiah 4). Instead of turning his gaze to the world, Nehemiah called upon the Lord. God answered, "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!" (Nehemiah 4:14, NLT).

Like Nehemiah, I began to bring my troubles to the Lord, calling upon Him for guidance as I began to fulfill that season's calling. And every time, at the sound of God's voice, any wound that had been left unsealed faded, and I let go of my anger. I knew He would fight for me. For so long, as I'd grown in my spiritual journey with God,

I struggled to understand why I needed to recognize Him as "Father"—how could I when my only experience with the word "father" had hurt me?

But, on that quiet morning in Scotland, God's words echoing in my heart washed away the childhood grief and sorrow I'd carried with me like a scar. His unconditional love and grace filled me and brought me to tears. He'd shown me His unwavering presence in the face of an abundance of trials that lie ahead, for God's calling would not be easy, nor would it be painless, but my Heavenly Father would fight for me.





by Wes Blake

# The Power of Perseverance

*Dedicated to my  
Re:Generation  
brothers*

*Re:Generation is a  
Bible-based care and  
recovery ministry  
that includes both  
daily curriculum and  
weekly group-based  
support. It's currently  
offered at our Irvine  
congregation and is  
launching soon at our  
other locations.*

Keep going all the way,  
even if the rugged road is hard.

Even when it gets rough,  
just keep going.

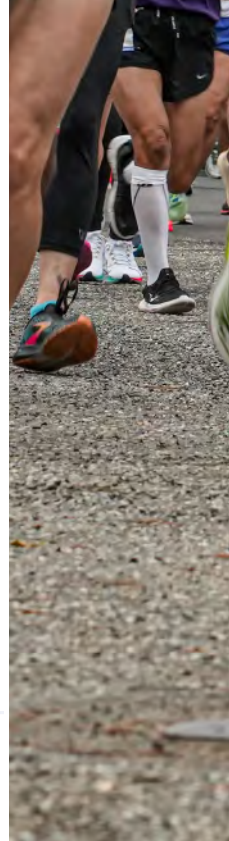
Don't give up hope now,  
you've gotten this far.

You've traveled down many paths  
and fallen so many times.

But you've always managed to  
pick yourself back up again and again.

So don't give up now,  
you will make it through.

The light is within your grasp,  
keep climbing up





over many jagged mountains  
that stand in the way

of where you're meant to be;  
don't lose your grip

and plummet to your undoing,  
you've made it up this high.

Keep on rising until  
you reach the indigo sky

and finally feel at peace,  
so don't lose faith.

You will keep rising higher and higher  
with the endurance hidden inside you.

Keep breaking free  
from the stubborn chains

that have held you down  
from all that you can be.

Keep breaking through the walls  
that stand in your way.

You have the strength  
even if you feel weak and unworthy.

You will keep going the distance  
and still rise above it all.

In God's eyes, you are more than enough,  
and you will keep on going

with the power of perseverance.





*Nehemiah 4:17-18*

*42*



*Building and Defending*  
Original Artwork by Jacqueline Lee

