

From Cupbearer to Leader: God Still Calls Builders

8-Week Small Group Study Guide

- Recommended Group Size: 6–12
- Session Length: 60–75 minutes
- Best Use: Life groups, men’s groups, leadership cohorts, gap-year programs
- Format: Scripture → Story → Discussion → Application
- 📖 Primary Text: From Cupbearer to Leader by Chris Welch



WEEK 1 — From Cupbearer to Calling: Leadership Begins with a Burden

- **Primary Focus:** Introduction + Nehemiah 1
- **Core Principle:** Vision begins with holy discomfort

Opening Question

- When was the last time something genuinely broke your heart?

Key Teaching Points

- Leadership does not start with a title—it starts with a burden
- God often awakens calling in quiet, unseen moments
- Obedience begins internally before it becomes visible

Scripture

- Nehemiah 1:1–4
- Nehemiah 1:11

Group Discussion

1. What stood out to you about how Nehemiah responded to the news of Jerusalem?
2. Why do we often ignore or rationalize burdens instead of leaning into them?
3. What is the difference between a good idea and a God-given burden?

Personal Reflection

- What situation, injustice, or need consistently weighs on your heart?
- Where might God be inviting you to say “yes” before you fully understand the outcome?

Action Step

- Write down one area of “holy discomfort” and pray over it daily.

WEEK 2 — Vision: Seeing the Need Before Others Do: Vision Clarified Through Prayer and Observation

- **Primary Focus:** Vision chapter
- **Core Principle:** Vision is clarified when we see what God sees

Key Teaching Points

- Vision requires patience, prayer, and presence
- Leaders observe before they speak
- Vision invites others into shared ownership

Scripture

- Nehemiah 2:11–18

Group Discussion

1. Why did Nehemiah inspect the walls privately before addressing the people?
2. What happens when leaders speak before they understand?
3. How does using “let us” language change how people respond?

Personal Reflection

- Where do you need to slow down and “walk the walls”?
- Who has God placed around you to help carry the vision?

Action Step

- Write a short vision statement using “we” instead of “I.”

WEEK 3 — Courage: Leading in the Face of Opposition: Faith Forward, Fear Acknowledged

- **Primary Focus:** Courage chapter
- **Core Principle:** Courage acts on conviction, not certainty

Key Teaching Points

- Fear is normal; obedience is a choice
- Criticism often confirms calling
- Courage in leaders stabilizes others

Scripture

- Nehemiah 2:19–20
- Nehemiah 4:14

Group Discussion

1. What forms of opposition did Nehemiah face?
2. How do fear and criticism show up in your leadership?
3. Why does courage in one person often strengthen many?

Personal Reflection

- What step of obedience have you delayed because of fear?
- Whose voice has been louder than God's lately?

Action Step

- Take one small but courageous step this week—despite fear.

WEEK 4 — Strategic Planning: Organizing for Success: Faith with Structure

- **Primary Focus:** Strategic Planning chapter
- **Core Principle:** Planning is faith in motion

Key Teaching Points

- God honors preparation, not chaos
- Segmentation, delegation, and ownership create momentum
- Strategy must be communicated clearly

Scripture

- Nehemiah 3
- Nehemiah 4:13–20

Group Discussion

1. Why did Nehemiah assign families to build near their homes?
2. What's the difference between delegation and dumping?
3. What is your "trumpet system" when crisis hits?

Personal Reflection

- Where do you need more structure in your leadership?
- Who do you need to empower instead of control?

Action Step

- Break one big responsibility into smaller, clear sections.

WEEK 5 — Perseverance: Finishing the Work: Grit + Grace

- **Primary Focus:** Perseverance chapter
- **Core Principle:** Finishing is leadership

Key Teaching Points

- Mid-wall fatigue is real
- Internal conflict can be more dangerous than external opposition
- Perseverance protects integrity, not just outcomes

Scripture

- Nehemiah 4:10–14
- Nehemiah 6:15–16

Group Discussion

1. Why is the halfway point often the hardest?
2. How did Nehemiah handle internal injustice?
3. What does perseverance look like when excitement fades?

Personal Reflection

- Where are you tempted to quit prematurely?
- What would finishing well look like for you?

Action Step

- Revisit why you started—and recommit.

WEEK 6 — Servant Leadership: Leading with Integrity: Authority Through Humility

- **Primary Focus:** Servant Leadership chapter
- **Core Principle:** Leadership is stewardship, not entitlement

Key Teaching Points

- Servant leadership costs something
- Integrity builds trust that position never can
- Leaders take responsibility before assigning blame

Scripture

- Nehemiah 5:14–19
- Matthew 20:26

Group Discussion

1. How did Nehemiah lead differently than previous governors?
2. Why is humility often misunderstood as weakness?
3. What does it look like to “take the hit” for your team?

Personal Reflection

- Where might God be asking you to lead more selflessly?
- How do you handle recognition or authority?

Action Step

- Serve someone quietly this week without seeking credit.

WEEK 7 — Living the Blueprint: From Inspiration to Implementation

- **Primary Focus:** “Living the Blueprint” chapter
- **Core Principle:** Leadership is lived daily, not occasionally

Key Teaching Points

- Vision must move to action
- Planning, perseverance, and service must work together
- Leadership is always “now,” not someday

Scripture

- Nehemiah 2:20

Group Discussion

1. Which of the five principles comes most naturally to you?
2. Which one challenges you most—and why?
3. What does your “great work” look like right now?

Action Step

- Write your personal 30-day Nehemiah Blueprint.

WEEK 8 — God Still Calls Builders: Building Beyond the Wall

- **Primary Focus:** Conclusion + Prayer
- **Core Principle:** God builds people, not just projects

Key Teaching Points

- Leadership is a lifelong journey
- God values faithfulness over visibility
- What we build should outlast us

Group Discussion

1. What has God revealed about your leadership through this study?
2. How has your understanding of servant leadership changed?
3. What will you intentionally rebuild moving forward?

Closing Activity

- Group prayer and commitment
- Optional sharing of personal blueprints