

“Let Us Rise Up and Rebuild”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from material created by Gary Henry)

Introduction:

A. Nehemiah 2:11-18

1. All of us admire one with strong faith, active in their work, happy and content, unshaken by trouble, eager to go to work.

a. Phil. 3:12-14; Gal. 2:20

B. But what does it take to become as interested in the Lord's work as Nehemiah and the apostle Paul?

1. The levels of interest, zeal, and dedication among Christians often varies widely.

a. Some are filled with zeal - 1Thes. 1:2-3; 2Thes. 1:3-4

- 1) Attending services regularly
- 2) Willing to make sacrifices
- 3) Studying the Bible diligently
- 4) Teaching and inviting others to the Lord

b. Others are marginal - Rev. 3:15-16

- 1) Attend services erratically, frequently making excuses
- 2) Give leftover time and offerings to the Lord
- 3) Neglect opportunities to read study
- 4) Do very little work, seldom involved in any activities, whether in services or in social gatherings

c. Some even become cold, forsaking the Lord - 2Tim. 4:10

- 1) Cease attending the services of the church
- 2) Secular and selfish with their time and money
- 3) Bible collects dust from lack of use
- 4) Embarrassed by the church and the gospel of Christ

2. What does it take to keep a high level of interest in the Lord's work over the long term?

a. Col. 1:9-10 - Paul prays for the Colossians, and mentions three things that contribute to interest, zeal, and dedication.

I. KNOWLEDGE

A. Knowledge increases interest

1. In sports, hunting, pottery, crafts; the more one knows, the more interested they become

B. Knowledge of God's will increases interest

1. The Colossians bore fruit in response to their understanding of God's grace - Col. 1:6

2. The more we learn of God's will, the more excited we will become
- a. Psalm 119:111,162,164

3. Obtaining the level of knowledge that stimulates interest requires diligence - Heb. 5:12

a. “How do I become interested without having an interest?”

b. You must start somewhere, as with anything worth while.

- c. To grow, we must hunger for the Word - 1Peter 2:1-2
- d. Psalm 119:15-16, 97-104

II. PARTICIPATION

- A. Participation increases interest
 - 1. This is true in many things
 - a. Sports - the difference between participants and spectators
 - b. Hobbies - fishing, playing golf, woodworking, sewing, etc.
 - 2. The more you participate, the more you want to participate
 - a. Watching others is no fun; having an opportunity to participate just makes you want to do it all the more
- B. Participation in God's work increases interest
 - 1. There is blessedness, a great sense of personal satisfaction in just doing of God's will - John 17:13; James 1:25
 - 2. Happiness comes to those who walk in the Lord - Psalm 119:1-2
 - 3. Certainly there is a comfortable, secure conscience and the satisfaction of knowing that you are a doer of the Word, and not a just hearer only
 - 4. When it comes to being a Christian, there are those who got game and those who talk a lot about the game they got. The measure of participation is what we do, not what we talk about doing or what we excuse ourselves for not doing
 - a. Matt. 7:24-27; James 1:22-24; 1Cor. 15:58

III. SUCCESS

- A. Success increases interest
 - 1. If we engage in activities without success, discouragement is the result
- B. Success in God's work increases interest - Col. 1:10
 - 1. Bible study - learning the meaning of a passage makes you want to learn more passages
 - 2. Personal work - seeing someone obey the gospel makes you want to convert more; until you experience it for yourself, there is no greater
 - 3. Personal edification - to see those you have taught growing in the Lord produces great joy - 3John 3-4
 - a. Watching the children go to class
 - b. Teaching the high school class
 - 4. Many lose interest in the Lord's work because they have never tasted the joys of success

Conclusion:

- A. If you are not interested in the Lord's work, or have lost interest, it is likely due to a lack of these three things: Knowledge, Participation, and Success
- B. For those willing to maintain interest in the Lord's work, consider:
 - 1. We will not be alone in our efforts; God will work with us
 - a. Col. 1:11; Phil. 2:12-13
 - 2. We can be thankful and confident that God has qualified us to receive the rewards to come - Col. 1:12