

(Nehemiah 10:1-13:31)

Introduction

A batch of concrete or a birthday cake will not turn out well unless the right ingredients are included and the wrong ingredients are excluded. Likewise, the Christian's service will be successful only if the right spiritual ingredients are included and spiritually harmful ingredients are excluded.

Outline and Comments

1. Some spiritual ingredients to include in the believer's life.

a. Willingness to live in God's place for us (11:1-6).

God knows the most strategic spot for each believer to live. It may be a place of danger and discomfort, but the believer is responsible to "stand in the gap" where the Lord desires to put him (cf. Ezek. 22:30). Many believers claim to be willing to go wherever God would send them (John 20:21); yet, they have never committed themselves to live wherever God chooses.

b. Willingness to work in God's position for us (11:7-24).

Notice in this passage that many different functions were performed by different servants of God. Each believer is a member in the body of Christ with a responsibility to perform in the body of Christ (Rom. 12:3-8). God has given each believer the spiritual gift or capacity to successfully serve in God's position for him (I Pet. 4:10-11). Be appreciative of your position of service (Ps. 84:10); be enthusiastic about your position of service (Rom. 11:13); and be joyful in your position of service (cf Phil. 4:4 (Neh. 8:10)).

c. Willingness to dedicate our accomplishments to God (12:27-47).

All that the believer possesses or accomplishes

Is from the Lord or by the Lord (Job 1:21; I Tim. 6:17). Therefore, all of our belongings and abilities should be put at the Lord's disposal. We are to desire that our children, talents, homes, automobiles, and other possessions be used only for purposes within the bounds of God's will. Anything less is not total Christian commitment. Make God the chief executor of all your earthly estate!

2. Some ingredients to exclude from the believer's life.

- a. Don't make alliances with the ungodly to do God's work (13:1-9).

A mixed multitude (mingling of believers and unbelievers in God's work) always brings divisions, discouragement, and eventually disaster to God's people and God's work. Separation from ungodly alliances is part of the necessary preparation for successful service to the Lord (cf. Neh. 13:23-31, II Cor. 6:14ff.; II Tim. 2:19-21).

- b. Don't neglect God's workers and God's work (13:10-14).

Such neglect is one of the first signs of broken fellowship (cf. Matt. 6:33); I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6).

- c. Don't neglect mutual fellowship and worship (13:15-22).

The believer is not an independent island, but is dependent upon other believers for mutual fellowship and worship (cf. Heb. 10:25).

Invitation to salvation

Not only does successful Christian service require the right ingredients, but also being saved in the first place requires the right ingredients. These ingredients are mentioned in Acts 16:31. Belief (the proper response) in Christ (the only Saviour) brings salvation (the greatest possession). Life just doesn't turn out the way that God intended for it to turn out unless your life includes these ingredients.