

WHAT'S YOUR PART?

Nehemiah 3

WE LIVE IN AN AGE OF SUPERSTARS—athletes, actors, and TV stars draw huge crowds and huge salaries. Out-of-date figures: **Arnold Schwarzenegger**—\$20 million in 6 weeks on a *Batman* movie!

Steelers QB **Ben Roethlisberger** earned \$28 million last year.

Product endorsements on top of that!

It has nothing to do with how much they're *worth*

—it's just that we live in a **world that idolizes superstars.**

That superstar mentality has gone to church.

Superstar pastors preside over megachurches.

But **God makes clear that from HIS perspective there are no superstars.**

God doesn't need superstars to get His work done.

God uses all kinds of people —who are totally committed to serving Him.

Francis Shaeffer made that point years ago in his book:
No Little People.

Woodrow Kroll emphasizes the opposite side of that truth in:
Little People, Big God.

God isn't impressed by superstars!

What HE cares about is whether we're using the talents He gave us for His glory, or for our own benefit.

He's seeking people totally committed to know His will and do it!
Nehemiah's that kind of person.

In Neh 1-3, he models that attitude:

3 MARKS OF A GODLY LEADER:

[Evident in Nehemiah's life]

1. PRAYER TO KNOW GOD'S WILL Neh. 1

Nehemiah won't do *anything* until he talks to God.

He wants to see God's will done on earth as it is in heaven.

2. COMMITMENT TO DO GOD'S WILL Neh. 2

Nehemiah is committed to *follow* God's plan.

He acknowledges that this is *God's* plan; not his.

2:12 *I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem.*

He's committed to *do God's will* and to *glorify God*.

2:18 *I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me...*

2:20 *I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. . . ."*

3. ORGANIZATION TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S WILL 3

PREPARATION FOR RECONSTRUCTION 1-2

PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION 3-6:14

Division of responsibilities 3

[Starts at north (12:00); moves counterclockwise around city]

From Sheep Gate to Fish Gate 3:1-2

[just want to give flavor of ch. 3]

3:1 *Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. 2 The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zaccur son of Imri built next to them. . . .*

From Fish Gate to Old Gate 3:3-5

The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. 4 Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. 5 The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.... [That's how ch. 3 goes!]

It'd be easy to bypass chapter: just a list of names and places!

Between lines are principles about doing God's work.

Nehemiah applies 4 KEY PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP:

1. PRINCIPLE OF ORGANIZATION:

Organize so everyone participates.

Every person has to know his place and carry out his role.

"next to him . . . next to them . . . after him . . ." etc.

Once they know their place, the people need supervision and adequate resources.

THREE STEPS IN ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS:

- **DIVISION:**

Divide work into manageable pieces.

- **PRIORITIZATION:**

Prioritize tasks to accomplish.

First things first! Know what's most important.

"Keep the main thing, the main thing!"

- **REALIZATION:**

Tackle one thing at a time.

Do one job at a time. Finish what you start.

**Druckers: Effective people do first things first,
and they do one thing at a time.**

2. ***PRINCIPLE OF DELEGATION (Mobilization)***

Get everyone involved in the process.

Greatest strength of the "Fulfilling Our Vision" campaign:

Almost everyone was involved doing *something*
(over 100 on the leadership teams).

God's work requires all kinds of people.

Every occupation and social class

Diverse, gifted people *work together*.

Men and women of all ages and skills participate.

Families work together **3:12** *Shallum son of Hallohesh,
ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next
section with the help of his daughters.*

**God's work must be done by dedicated people
–people committed to do God's will.**

Some work alone–some in lonely places

Some have difficult jobs–some have simple ones

Too often the church is like a football game:

22 players on the field, badly in need of rest,
watched by ... 60,000 spectators in stands,
badly in need of exercise!

God's work is never a total success. 3:5 *The next
section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but **their***

nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.

What about "nobles" of Tekoa?

Why do they refuse to work?

Not willing to "put their shoulders to the work"

i.e., don't like hard work? or . . .

Not willing to work "under their supervisors"—dislike leaders?

What happens to them?

They go in record as non-workers!

How does it affect God's program?

It doesn't—task is finished!

God does a great work, *without them!*

They're on the outside looking in! They're left out!

3. ***PRINCIPLE OF COORDINATION***

Coordinate the effort—fit the pieces together so the job gets done. no gaps; one picks up where another leaves off.

God's work is a cooperative effort.

The project is a success because everyone works together.

Assignment by residence. *"the end of his house . . . in front of their house . . . beside his house", etc.*

They're motivated; it's convenient

In case of attack they defend their home

The whole family can participate.

Commuters—People outside town assigned less populated areas

Work location also assigned by vocation.

Priests assigned to sheep gate, where animals enter for sacrifice (and other key locations)

Use of skills in specific areas of need?

4. ***PRINCIPLE OF RECOGNITION*** (Commendation)

Recognize accomplishments of each worker.

He knows people by name,

Knows what they accomplished and recognizes their efforts

God honors those who serve Him.

Compare v. 5 with 20

In contrast to the “nobles” of Tekoa who won’t help,

Baruch **zealously** repairs his assigned section!

Special recognition for special effort

We don't know how, but he stands out
and Nehemiah recognizes it.

Tom Landry's commendation of Roger Staubach:

"He always puts forth that extra effort."

Nehemiah never blows *his own* horn!

Nehemiah goes unnamed—his name’s missing from list!

What do you suppose he’s doing while everyone else is working?

He’s more interested in encouraging others.

We shouldn’t get involved *in order to* get credit!

Moody: No limit to what God can accomplish

when people don’t care who gets the credit!

Yet, God does honor those who serve Him!

QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES ABOUT THESE PRINCIPLES:

1. *When we start a project, do we organize it to do the best possible job for God's glory?*
Do we break it down into small pieces?
Do we prioritize it?
Do we tackle one item at a time until we finish it?
2. *Are we content to work alone on a project?*
Or, do we give others the privilege of working with us
—taking part in action? [Ex. My puzzle]
3. *Do we plan projects so all parts are covered by someone?*
Do we make it convenient for helpers to do their job
and meet their own needs?
4. *Do we recognize those who help us?*
Do we encourage those who minister to us?
How many people do you know by name in this church?
Do we let people know that we appreciate them?

MAIN ORGANIZATIONAL IDEA OF THIS CHAPTER:

Everyone pitches in to accomplish God's will!

Everyone helps!

Different people do different jobs;

But everyone has an important part!

Everyone can do something to help out—even children!

WHAT'S OUR PART?

Everyone does his part: In Tucson, a pastor handed out dimes to children, suggesting they should decide *how* they would use it to help build up God's church.

Children's offering that morning was \$6.00!

What if some argued about where they wanted to work?

Or, refused, because *they're merchants, NOT construction workers?!!*

Our society is raising generation that hates work
–that's willing to let someone else do it!

Parents feel guilty about making children do serious work.

To ask children to take responsibility to clear the table, load the dishwasher, scrub pots and pans, wipe counters, take out trash, or mow lawn, borders on ***child abuse!***

Christian who spent many years in Soviet work camps,
experiencing work at its most brutal, most degrading and dehumanizing, took pride in his work and worked to limit of his strength each day, because he saw it as a gift from God.

He reminds us that Jesus did not make benches, roof beams, and plow handles by means of *miracles*, but with a *saw* and an *axe!*

What attitude are we teaching our children about serving the Lord?

Do they see us serving Him with cheerful spirit?

***God has different plans for each of us,
but we're ALL part of HIS plan!***

God is building a holy temple;

Paul tells us we're all "*being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.*"

God wants to use all of us in His construction project

1 Cor 3:5-10 *What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.⁸ The man who plants*

and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.

If we want to "*Build up to reach out!* . . .

If we want to "*Build PEOPLE God's way*" . . .

*then, **WE ALL** have to take part in the construction project.*

How are we going to reach our world for Christ?

Did you know that many people-groups don't know the God of the Bible?

One of those people-groups is the **5th-largest mission field in the world**, based on number of unbelievers.

Most of this people-group believe there's no right or wrong.

There's no sin or judgment;

therefore, there's no need of salvation or of Jesus Christ.

Comfort is their supreme pursuit.

*Who are they? **OUR NEIGHBORS! They're Americans!***

Who will reach that people-group with the good news of Jesus?

To what extent are WE involved—doing our part

—utilizing our talents and resources to reach our own people?

Their task was completed

because everyone worked together!

Cargill: How much we intensify program when everyone's involved.

Paul's concept of the body with many members

What's your place on the wall? Workers needed.

What does this suggest about our involvement in God's work?