

"The biggest human temptation is to settle for too little." – Thomas Merton

"...give me the grace to follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered too long."
– A.W. Tozer

"...because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth."
– Jesus (Revelation 3:16)

Consecration

Nehemiah 12:27-30

27 At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres. 28 The singers also were brought together from the region around Jerusalem...for the singers had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem. 30 When the priests and Levites had purified themselves ceremonially, they purified the people, the gates and the wall.

purify = taher = to remove contamination, to cleanse, to set apart as sacred

The wall is rebuilt, the gates are restored, the villages are filled with people, the markets are reopened for business— but they can't settle for that—they have to complete the work by consecrating their lives to the Lord.

"Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me." – St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)

Celebration

Nehemiah 12:31-32

31 I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks. One was to proceed on top of the wall to the right, toward the Dung Gate. 32 Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah followed them.

Nehemiah 12:38-40

38 The second choir proceeded in the opposite direction. I followed them on top of the wall, together with half the people—past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall ...40 The two choirs that gave thanks then took their places in the house of God; so did I, together with half the officials, 41 as well as the priests...

Worship recalibrates the heart and rightly-orders the loves.

God you are our *first* love, you hold the place of ultimate value and worth in our heart.

Stewardship

Nehemiah 12:44,46

44 At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, firstfruits and tithes. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites...46 So in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all Israel contributed the daily portions for the singers and gatekeepers. They also set aside the portion for the other Levites, and the Levites set aside the portion for the descendants of Aaron.



"There was a time when all those commands of God for us to thank and praise Him seemed to me to be a little odd. Did he need them to feel better about himself? Was he like the kid I knew in junior high who stood around with his hands in his pockets fishing for compliments? No, God doesn't need our praise—we need to give it. For to praise God is to sharpen our soul's vision of his greatness and goodness, and thus to increase our soul's greatness and goodness. God doesn't need our thanks and praise to feel better about himself, we need to thank and praise him to be better ourselves. It is a gift to us to give God thanks and praise." – Ben Patterson

This week...

- Where have I sensed the pull to settle for less than God's best in my life these days?
- Where have I found myself wandering around in the misty lowlands?
- Where have things gotten *lukewarm* in my walk with God?
- What decisions do I need to make that furthers God's deepening life in me?