

Excellence

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 August 2012

[0 : 00] The Bible speaks of excellence. We see that of Daniel in chapter 6 verse 3.

! Daniel 6 verse 3 it says, What is it saying?

Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because a substandard spirit was in him. Is that what it says? No, it says an excellent spirit.

An excellent spirit was found in Daniel. Now the verb to excel occurs over 70 times in God's word.

God commands excellence.

Excellence. Even the world around us esteems that which is excellence. It's a great character quality. A character trait that we as God's people should have evident in our lives.

[1 : 12] Let excellence be your standard. We know even down at the fast food chains they've got excellence, haven't they? I know we've got a fast food expert cook here in our midst today.

They set a standard. And the standard is a high standard. For every burger that comes out of that fast food chain. There's an excellence. There's a standard that is set that the employees have to attain.

Excellence. The world understands it. What about us as God's people? Number one, a definition. What is excellence? A definition. What is excellence?

Excellence. It means going beyond expectations. Excellence means going beyond the norm. Going beyond the standard. It means to exceed the average, the ordinary, the normal.

Excellence. It means to be first rate. To be first class. To be A1. You know, in the health sector they talk about the gold standard.

[2 : 16] It means to be top grade. It means to be outstanding. Superb. To be exceptional. To be top quality. Excellence. Excellence. It's something to aspire to.

It's commended by God. Excellence. It means being even better tomorrow than you were yesterday. Today. Excellence. It means being your best. Being excellent.

It means not settling for second best. For second rate. But aiming to do better. To do better. The next time. Every time. To finish well.

Excellence. And as a church, we want to aspire to be an excellent church. A church that is excellent. That aspires in the quality of what we do.

And we've got to start with that excellence. The Lord Jesus is that excellence. He is the one to whom we can aspire. The Lord Jesus is that example of the excellent spirit.

[3 : 11] And friends, we want to care about excellence today. We want to care about excellence in the quality of our work. We don't want to settle for second best. We want to go beyond just doing the average. Now, friends.

What is the opposite? The opposite of excellence. The opposite of excellence is mediocrity. It means, like a lot of people these days, mediocre.

And mediocre people. Mediocre people, they have no commitment. They have no responsibility. They have no accountability. The mediocre will aim to please themselves or others more than God. The mediocre means they're just kind of coasting. They show some measure of spiritual interest, but not enough to be Christ-like. The mediocre. The mediocre will be sloppy.

The mediocre will not make the effort. The mediocre will be stagnant. They won't make any real progress in godliness. The mediocre will be slothful and lazy, not diligent.

[4 : 12] They seek a faith without faithfulness. The mediocre will seek Jesus as Saviour, but not Jesus as Lord. And many people these days settle for sloppy.

They settle for sloppy in the church. They settle for sloppy with their Christianity. They want the lukewarm, the lax, the careless, the slack.

It's a shame. It's a dishonour to our Lord. In Proverbs 10.4 it says, The soul of a lazy man desires and has nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

There's much to commend diligence. There's much to commend excellence. The person who is average and mediocre says, when there's a job to do, oh, that's not my job. That's not my responsibility. Somebody else can do that. Let's not settle for just doing the bare minimum. Let's aspire to being that excellent standard. The gold standard is Christ.

[5 : 11] It's Christ, our model. It's he who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us unto himself from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

Titus 2, verse 14. God's desire for you, brother, God's desire for you, sister, is that you be a people zealous of good works, a peculiar people.

Excellence or sloppy? Now, friends, I've got to make a confession this morning. Have a look inside my car and you'll see what sloppy is.

I've got a car out there and it's got a car detailer sticker on it. It's not a very good example for that business at the moment because if anyone wants a job to do after the service, the carpets in my car are full of dust and grime and muck and bits of paper and rubbish and leaves.

It's an example of sloppy. Sloppy. What about you with your Christian life? What is your Christian life like? Are you settling for sloppy? It's a shame and dishonour to our Lord.

[6 : 28] We've seen the what? We've seen the what? The definition. The definition of excellence. Excellence. And now, the why. Number two, the why. Why should we be excellent? The motivation. Our motivation for excellence. Our motivation. Why? Why should we aim for excellence? We aim for excellence because of who we serve.

Because of whose we are. Because of who we represent. There is no higher realm. There is no higher authority.

There is no higher reward than to be His and to be in His service. We care about excellence because we belong to our Lord and Master.

We care about the excellence of what we do because God wants our spiritual growth. He wants us to grow. He wants us to give. To give unto God our best.

[7 : 26] To give so that He gets all the praise. So that He deserves the best. Not some half-hearted effort. You know, in the Old Testament, they didn't bring the Lamb that was half-able.

They brought the Lamb that was the best. They brought the Lamb that was the best. They gave their best. They gave what was excellent when they gave. And what about us? As far as our excellence goes, why should we aim for excellence?

What did He give for us? He gave His very best. He gave His very Son. Why should we settle for second best as a Christian? Why aim for excellence?

Because God commands wholeheartedness. Wholeheartedness. It's a command. In Matthew 22, verse 37, Elsewhere it says, With all thy strength.

Commit your heart. Your heart. Guard your heart. Why aim for excellence? Because one day, as a believer, you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

[8 : 44] And you will receive back for what you have done in this life. We aim for excellence because we are called to abound. We are called to excel in our Christian character.

Ecclesiastes 9.10, it says, Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Do that which God has given to you to do, your responsibility in life. Do it well.

Do it excellently. Whether it's in the workplace. Whether it's in the school place. Whether it's in the home place. Aim for excellence. Aim to be excellent. Because the Christian life is meant to be a questful character.

It's meant to be an aspiring for more of God's glory. To be evident through us and by us. Why be excellent? Because we want to be the best we can be for our Lord.

We want to be doing all to the glory of God. I know it's something that Julie's always telling me, to function in excellence. Of course, Julie's the perfect example of that.

[9 : 44] But, no, we can all learn from Julie. To function in excellence. She's such an excellent wife. Amen? Amen. I know she is. I can say that. But, we know all the ladies here are excellent wives, I'm sure.

And all the men are excellent husbands. Why be excellent? Because Jesus is our standard. Because the Lord Jesus wants us to be excellent. So, we've seen the what?

We've seen the why. Thirdly, the how. The action. How. How are we to aim for excellence? Back to Daniel. Back to Daniel in the good book. Back to Daniel.

Daniel had a substandard spirit. Is that what it says? No, sir. He had an excellent spirit. An excellent spirit. The spirit of God was in Daniel.

There was a spirit of excellence about this man. He had an excellent spirit. He was excellent in the wisdom of his life. In spiritual discernment. Daniel 5 verse 12 tells us of that.

[10 : 42] He was excellent in prophecy. He was a prophet. The prophet Daniel. He was excellent in prophecy. In other words, he knew and he declared the word of the Lord.

He was excellent in prophecy. He was excellent in prayer. So much so that he prayed at the risk of his very life. He was excellent in prayer. And he was excellent in purity.

He was excellent in the purity of his life. He resolved not to defile himself. He wanted to maintain his purity. So we see the excellence of Daniel in so many aspects of his life.

We see the excellence of Daniel in his faithfulness. He stood firm and true. No matter what. We see the excellence of Daniel in his prayerfulness.

We see the excellence of Daniel in the fellowship that he chose. He chose to spend his time with the godly friends. He did not defile himself. And Daniel had an unbending desire to obey the word of God without reservation.

[11 : 45] He was a man of lasting integrity. Here's a quote from someone describing Daniel. Daniel served in high positions of the pagan government for more than 60 years of his life.

This was an incredible achievement for a Jew. In the ancient times a new king would kill all the advisors of the previous king. So that there would be no possible upheavals or revolts.

In spite of that, Daniel was chosen to serve four successive kings. The Bible even recorded that at least three of these four kings promoted Daniel to one of the highest positions of trust and authority.

Why? Because Daniel had an excellent spirit. Daniel had excellence that showed in every department of his life. As Daniel grew older, the quote goes on, When he did not become useless and ineffective, he maintained his cutting edge by renewing his mind in the spirit and not conforming to the worldly standards.

His thoughts and ideas were not obsolete and outdated. He remained faithful to God. There was no error or fault in him. When his bosses wanted something done, they could count on Daniel to deliver the goods.

[13 : 01] Daniel did all things with excellence. Not a trace of sloppiness could be found in any of his works. He had lasting quality. As he grew older, he maintained his excellence.

Now I don't often praise people in this church, but there's one that I can praise. In fact, two I can praise. My mum and dad. They've got an excellence that they've maintained and it's got sharper and sharper as they've gone by.

When I want something done, I know I can still pester my dad. Or ask my dad. There's some people that you know, they've got an excellence about them. And I commend my mum and dad for that.

I thank God for them. For the excellence they've been an example to me of in my life. And friends, as we get older, we should get more excellent.

Not sloppy and sloppier. As we get older in our walk with God, we should be more and more abounding. Abounding. More and more and more.

[13 : 59] Friends, be exhorted today. Let's be as the people that Daniel writes of in Daniel 11 verse 32. He says, The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.

That's the people that God wants you to be. People who can be strong and do exploits. Of course, we get older and less able. Naturally, there's limitations we all have.

There's limitations we younger people may have. I still think I'm young. But we know that there's still an excellence we can aspire to and we ought to have.

In Daniel 6 verse 4, we read of the character of the man Daniel. Daniel 6 verse 4, Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel. They wanted to trip him up.

They wanted to find some fault. They wanted to scrutinize the minutiae of his life and find some muck that they could rake up about Daniel. It says in Daniel 6 verse 4, But they could find none occasion nor fault.

[15 : 00] For as much as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Could that be said of us? I pray that it can be. That when, and I've got enemies, when they've got people, we've got people out to attack us and pull us down and backstab and maliciously accuse us or whatever it might be, that we will stand excellent.

Excellent. The mud won't stick. They could find no corruption about Daniel. He was trustworthy. He was not corrupt or careless. He was dependable. Why?

Because he had an excellent spirit. What he did for God, whatever he did, he did it with excellence. It's something we can aspire to, isn't it? I know.

We lack that. Certainly I do. We lack that excellence sometimes. We settle for slopping. If the king of kings was here, and he is, shouldn't we aspire to more than slopping?

I think we should. I think we must. Not to big note ourselves, not to claim credit for ourselves, but because we want him to have our best.

[16:14] Our best. As a church, we want to reach for that excellence, that high standard. And that could be in all areas. We could think even of the practical things of our cleaning.

We want it to be excellent. For our gardens, we want them to be excellent. Our air conditioning, our furnishings, much more our preaching, our ministries, our biblical emphasis.

We want it to be excellent. Excellent. Now what a church often gets judged by is much more than the preacher, the program, the praise.

It's the people. It's the people. It's you and me. It's the people. That people look at. And if you represent this church, even if you're a visitor and someone thinks you're part of the furniture, they're going to judge this church by you.

By how you dress. By what you say. By your attitude. By your nature. By your nature. By your nature.

[17:19] By your nature. And if you're a person. I've mentioned it before. By your nature. By your nature. By your nature. past and in the ground now, she wore a funny hat. And when a baby was crying, she used to, if I was looking at the back of her, you could see my bald spot.

She didn't have a bald spot, she had a hat on. But she was sat there, and she used to, when a baby was crying, she used to go, like that. Scowl. Maybe she didn't mean to scowl, but people were put off by that.

Mums with crying babies were put off by that lady. And they never came back. And when I followed them up, they said, oh, you've got so-and-so who scowls at people. I said, well, she's passed away now.

People judge a church by the people. You are a picture, you are a living letter, you are an example of this church. Even if you only come now and again.

People look at you, they judge this church, they say this church isn't friendly. Because you had a bit of a bad hair day. And you didn't smile at them enough.

[18:19] Now, there's some visitors here, maybe we'll get them to give us an audit. An audit of the church. An audit of how many people smiled at you today, Luke. How many people shook your hand today, Luke.

Everyone's going to come up to Luke after the service today. And how many people were friendly to you, Luke? How many people introduced themselves to you, Luke?

It's the people, isn't it? Amen. And people can come and visit this church and never come again because someone didn't smile at them or didn't say hello. Or they just misunderstood or they didn't, whatever it can be.

We want to be excellent. So that every one of us, every one of us is aiming for excellence. To be workers, not circus. To not be drifting. To not be lukewarm. To not be shallow.

But to be aspiring for excellence. Excellence. Excellence. Abounding more and more and more. To be a people of excellence who won't settle for just what is expected of us.

[19:20] To not just settle to do the bare minimum. To just make that hamburger, as it were, with just a little bit of the sauce on it. But to make that hamburger such that it is reaching and going beyond the hamburger chain standard.

What is the standard for the Church of God? Glorious. Spotless. Without wrinkle or any such thing. Glorious. Glorious. An extraordinary church.

An outstanding church. An excellent church. That's what we want to be. Even the world has that.

Where we work. In the workplace. In my workplace. They've got standards. National standards that have to be, you've just got to at least get that.

But wouldn't it be good to get above the standard? What about God's standard? Do we just settle for the bare minimum? I'm not talking about works today. As such as works to get rewards.

But I'm talking about wanting to please our God. Our Lord. Our Master. To get that best service possible. To go the extra mile.

[20 : 25] And again. And again. And again. The excellent people will want to be in church. They won't be able to get enough of it.

They'll want to go the extra mile. Let's not hold back. Let's not limit ourselves. The Lord is coming soon. Are you going to be excellent? Or sloppy? People today.

Don't be sloppy. Don't be sloppy. Don't hold yourself back. But rather abound. Abound. There's much scripture about abounding. 2 Corinthians 8 verse 7. Paul writes.

As ye abound. Or excel. In everything. In faith. And utterance. And knowledge. And in all diligence. And in your love to us.

See that ye abound. Or excel. In this grace also. 1 Thessalonians 3 verse 12. It says. And the Lord. Make you to increase and abound.

[21 : 20] Abound. In love. One towards another. And towards all men. God wants his people to abound. To excel. Even in the workplace. You that have a job.

We want to be such that we abound. Abound. And excel. So when our supervisor's not hanging his head over our shoulder. It won't matter.

The quality of our work will be excellent. All the time. It'll show in what we are. In what we do. We'll do our best. We'll be our best.

What about fruit Henry? The fruit of the Holy Spirit. Is exactly the point. The fruit of the Holy Spirit will flow out of our lives. Love. Joy. Long suffering.

Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Meekness. Temperance. Excellence. In all of those nine fruit of the Spirit. God wants us to accomplish that. Which he's designed us to be. And to do.

[22 : 17] To pursue that excellence. To pursue it in our daily walk. In our day by day. Think of the Apostle Paul. Paul showed that same desire for excellence. He was committed to it.

As we read in Colossians 1. Verse 29. He gave his all. He said. The labor. The labor. Striving according to his working. Which worketh in me. Mightily. He didn't work in him.

Sloppily. The Spirit of God was working in him. Mightily. Paul was earnest in his Christian life. As we read in Philippians 3. Verse 13. In part it says. This one thing I do.

This one thing I do. Forgetting those things which are behind. Reaching forth to those things. Before I press toward the mark. For the prize of the high calling God.

In Christ Jesus. Friends. Like a runner. He pushed himself to the limit. He didn't settle for sloppy. He strained every nerve and muscle. Like a runner. In a race.

[23 : 15] He had that direction. People will judge this church by you. They will judge this church by your sloppiness. Or your excellence. What will it be? What will it be?

Paul was a man of a single purpose. This one thing I do. I do. His goal was to press towards the mark. For the prize of the high calling of God. In Christ Jesus.

His commitment was to excellence. And like that too. It should be for us. It should be for every man and woman of God. Think of David Livingstone. David Livingstone. One of the greatest missionaries.

Who ever lived in the 1800s. He married in 1845. And he and his wife. They never stopped pursuing excellence. For the kingdom of God. Dr Livingstone was asked one day.

There were some people thinking about missions. They were thinking about going to go and send some men. To help him in his efforts to reach Africa. And they wrote David Livingstone a letter. And they said to Livingstone.

[24 : 14] Have you found a good road? To where you are. If so we want to know. How to send some other men to come and join you. And Livingstone wrote back. He said.

If you have men who will come. Only if there is a good road. I don't want them. I want men who will come. If there is no road.

At all. Excellence. Excellence is what we should aspire to. To be that church. That is diligent. That is faithful. Growing in godliness.

Aspiring to excellence. In Psalm 8 verse 9 it says. Oh Lord. Our Lord. How excellent is thy name in all the earth.

Oh Lord. Our Lord. How excellent is thy name in all the earth. He is an excellent God. He is excellent.

[25 : 11] It is one of his names. And we must be excellent. Who are bearers of his name. These are days that call for people to move beyond the average. To not settle for second rate.

To not settle for second best. To not be moved. To always be abounding. Abounding. Abounding. Abounding. As Daniel. He knew. And he declared the word of God.

He was a prophet. He prayed. No matter what. No matter what the cost. Even if it meant the lion's den. Daniel prayed. Do we? Do we pray with excellence?

Do we have that excellent spirit. That Daniel had. And he had purity too. He purposed. To not defile himself. We are living in a dirty world.

People. It is dirty. And it is getting dirtier. I was. I was. Encouraged to hear that someone. I know. Has decided to. To get rid of their TV set. I am not preaching that this morning.

[26 : 11] But. They were convicted. Because. They didn't want the dirtiness. Coming into their house. You know. And this. This dear couple. They have got a beautiful carpet. In their home. They have got a beautiful carpet.

In their home. And they. Sometimes. They. They don't mention it. But they like people to take their shoes off. They don't want the dirt in their home. They don't want the dirt in their home. They don't want the dirt in their home.

We've got to be careful about dirt coming into our homes. We want to. Choose not to defile ourselves. Amen. Amen. Daniel did. Daniel did. He had an excellent spirit.

Friends. Let's be encouraged today. These are days that call for people to be excellent. It means resolute. It means firm. We will not be moved. We will always be outstanding.

1 Corinthians 15.58 to wrap up. Therefore, my beloved brethren. Be ye steadfast. Unmovable. Always. Abounding. In other words, always.

[27 : 09] Excelling. Excelling. Doing over and above. Abounding. Abounding. Abounding. The work of the Lord. For as much as you know that.

The. Your labour. Is not in vain. In the Lord. Friends. I. I just want to leave you with this thought. Will you settle for sloppy?

Or will you aim for excellence? Doesn't mean you have to necessarily walk around. With a bow tie on. And. And. Shiny shoes. That'd be nice. There's some.

I know Dennis looks good in a bow tie. Aim for excellence. When I drive past the Mormons. When I drive past the Jehovah's Witnesses. We don't see sloppy there. They're going to hell.

The gospel they preach. So called gospel. We don't see people out there. Out the front of the Mormons. The Jehovah's Witnesses. Sloppy.

[28 : 08] Sloppy. Sloppy. It stinks. It stinks in the face of God. What are we to have better than that? Do we want to be sloppy? Second rate?

Or do we want to aspire to an excellent spirit? Let's. Seek that. Seek that brother. Seek that sister. Don't settle for sloppy. Let us pray. Lord we thank you for your word.

We thank you for Daniel. The testimony in his life of Paul. As he ran that race. Let us strive to. Not of our own. Energy. But as your Holy Spirit.

Energizes us. Lord let it be. That excellent spirit. That fills us. That shapes us. That moves us. That draws us. That drives us. Lord help us to be driven.

By your spirit. To do that which you want us to do. For your glory. In Jesus name. Amen. In Jesus name.