

“Why does GOD call for His People to be Excellent?”

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KEYNOTE SCRIPTURE

Philippians 1, “9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ”

Excellence is superior, radiant, gloriously arrayed, or mighty.
It denotes that which stands out above the rest.

But, for what cause?

- To show forth the character and substance of something or someone
- To display a standard of beauty for or by which all things and persons can desire
- To be distinguished from that which is less than the intention of the creator

The excellence of GOD is found throughout the Scriptures:

THE OLD TESTAMENT

- He is declared as excellent in power
 - Job 37, “23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.”
 - The Hebrew *sag-ghee* denotes something or someone great and praiseworthy
- His name is called most excellent—above any in the earth
 - Psalms 8, “1 O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.”
 - The Hebrew *ad-deer*, that which is magnificently honorable in beauty and vastness
- His lovingkindness is excellent
 - Psalms 36, “7 How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore, the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”
 - The Hebrew is *yaw-kawr*, an adjective which speaks of His high-esteemed value, worth, and splendor
- His works are excellent
 - Isaiah 12, “5 Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.”
 - The Hebrew is *ge-uth*, a beauty and majesty that’s seemingly rises up where one must take notice in awe
- His counsel and works are excellent
 - Isaiah 28, “29 This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”
 - The Hebrew word *gadal*, an incremental series of works which increasingly become powerful and magnificent

THE NEW TESTAMENT

- The way of the LORD is orderly and thereby a more excellent way
 - 1 Corinthians 12, “30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”
 - The Greek word *hyperbole*, means to surpass or go far beyond the common mark or measure
- Excellence approved was a test to ensure that one’s witness bore the true meaning of following Christ
 - Philippians 1, “9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”
 - The Greek word *diaphero*, means to carry something through to prove its perceived value (to be excellent or surpass what it appears to be worth)
- Excellence is the standard of which Christ’s Ministry was judged
 - Hebrews 8, “6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”
 - The Greek word *diaphoros*, an adjective denoting something or someone surpassing to a degree that it or the person is markedly different
- Excellence is giving GOD what He asks for, exactly, which always surpasses and is distinguished from any other thing done in the earth
 - Hebrews 11, “4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”
 - The Greek word *pleion*, an adjective denoting something or someone that is superior in quantity and quality
- Excellence is the person, character, action(s), and reflection of GOD and His will
 - 2 Peter 1, “16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”
 - The Greek word *megaloprepes*, an adjective which refers to a perfect glory, or a magnificence and greatness befitting for a role or space

HOW CAN GOD's PEOPLE BE EXCELLENT (since we're not GOD)?

By being partakers of His Divine Nature

- 2 Peter 1, "3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

By being sharers in His Holiness

- Hebrews 12, "9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness."

By being bearers of His Image

- Romans 8, "28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

EXCELLENCE IS OUR WITNESS IN THE EARTH

- It shows forth the hand of GOD at work in our lives (our standard of living is QUALITATIVELY higher and different than the world in all we do)
- It gives witness to the character of GOD having transformed our life (our ethical conduct is MARKEDLY surpassing that of the world in our convictions)
- It demonstrates the Kingdom of GOD in the Church altogether (our purpose and focus for living is SUPREMELY more meaningful and substantive than that of the world)

HOW DOES A CHURCH GO FROM MERELY EXISTING OR BEING AVERAGE TO BIBLICAL EXCELLENCE?

1. Resolve that our walk with Jesus Christ should reflect His image and likeness, and not our own (and make that resolve non-negotiable).
2. Turn away (immediately) from and abandon all thoughts, behaviors, things, and environments which impede excellence.
3. Meditate upon and practice modeling excellent traits in all things pertaining to our natural and Spiritual life.
4. Be open to and receive accountability from the people of GOD to live a life that reflects GOD's glory.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO CONSIDER:

- Get into prayer and ask GOD for help, strength, and wisdom to be excellent
- With the Word of GOD as your guide, begin taking judicial notice of anything in your life that doesn't reflect GOD's BEST AND HIGHEST; fix it, reorder it, or get rid of it
- Stay in the company of GOD's excellent people because persecution always accompanies those who depart with mediocrity and lazy
- Change unto excellence IS the will of GOD and once it becomes a habit it becomes a normal, you'll never retard from
- Remember this: everyone in Scripture who had an excellent spirit always did GREAT THINGS in the earth for the Glory of GOD.