

## CORE VALUE THREE-EXCELLENCE

'Excellence' is a very common word; people throw it around everyday promoting products and services. Excellence itself, however, is not so common. All too often there is great disparity between promotional promises and the reality of true excellence in products and service.

- Excellence is easy to talk and hard to walk
- Excellence is a popular concept but a rare commodity
- Excellence is highly sought after but rarely acquired

### God is excellence personified.

**Psalm 150** - *Praise the LORD? Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and flute's Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!*

**Psalm 8: 1** - *O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth. Who set Your glory above the heavens!*

**Job 37:23-24** - *As for the Almighty, He is excellent in power, in judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress. Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart.*

### God's children have a calling to excellence

**Psalm 16:2-3** - *O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You. "As for the saints who are on the earth "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. "*

### Defining excellence

Excellence is quite a slippery subject because the specific outworking of excellence in any given circumstance is always relative to the parameter's of the circumstance.

Having said this 'excellence' by its very nature begs comparison.

The word 'excel' literally means:

- To do or be better than; surpass
- To show superiority', surpass others

The Aramaic word translated as 'excellent' in the book of Daniel is **yattiyr (yat-teer')** which literally means preeminent, superior to or notable above all others, outstanding.

Whilst competing and comparing are the devil's business, a true spirit of excellence will always strive to raise every standard, from a pure motive of love and genuine service.

This means that although we do not compete with others and compare ourselves from a view point of self-worth, we work hard to be on the cutting edge of excellence for the sake of those we lead and the glory of the Lord.

### **Excellence prioritized without compartmentalizing**

Some things in life are more and important than others, pure and simple!

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:3

*Eagerly desire the greater gifts And now I will show you the most excellent way. if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

Excellence in one area may not mean that the most vital areas of excellence are being attended to. Every leader must learn to prioritize the things that matter most in their world.

A store may sell loads of product and make a great profit for the owner. The store itself may be dirty and poorly presented, the staff may be slow and rude, however, the business exists to make money and thus at a core level it is an excellent business.

However, the true spirit of excellence will always spill over from one area to the next in order of priority. No individual who carries the spirit of excellence can be satisfied with compartmentalized excellence. It is a pervasive attribute.

A single mum may have a clear vision to send her kids to a private school in order to give them the opportunities she never had. She may work longer hours and forego personal luxuries in order to fulfill that vision. In this regard, it could be argued that she is an excellent mum. However, if that same mum yells abuse at her kids constantly, smokes in the house and lets them come and go as they please without supervision, it could also be argued that she is a very average mum.

True excellence spills over into every area and with God's help even into those areas that do not come naturally.

Daniel 5:10-12

*The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. 1 1 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father--your father the king-made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.*

12 *Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation"*

Daniel 6:3-5

*Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him: and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.*

*4 So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault. because he was faithful.. nor was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God."*

### **Excellence does not want to be placated**

Given the relative nature of excellence many people like to sum it up as:

*"Doing the best you can with what you've got"*

Excellence itself, however, just cannot be satisfied by such an easygoing and comforting definition, Excellence does not want to be comforted, it wants to do it better, As long as there is someone out there doing "it" better (regardless of what "it" is) the spirit of excellence inside of a person will leave them restless. This is a very dangerous thing if the person attaches their sense of self-worth to these feelings, yet those with a pure motive and a spirit of excellence know the productive agony of discontentment.

This kind of frustration is the genesis of genius and catalyst of creativity. There is an old saying: "Necessity is the mother of all invention. " Well, the spirit of excellence is often the mother of necessity. In other words, excellence makes people need something and they will find a way to do it, even if it requires more than what they have got.

Excellence itself wants to be out there on the cutting edge of pre-eminence, pushing back the boundaries and redefining the standards. It cannot go to bed at night resting in the knowledge that it 'did the best it could with what it had'. Excellence is insatiable, it must excel, it will excel.

### **Excellence is ownership**

Leaders who carry a spirit of excellence on their lives take the job personally. This is the difference between hirelings and shepherds. A shepherd is not doing a job: 'his life is tied up in the work', if it suffers he suffers. A hireling has the luxury of detachment. No-one with the spirit of excellence can detach themselves from the work.

John 10:7-18

*7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life. and that they may have it more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.*

12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees.. and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.  
13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.  
14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. 17 Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

True leaders who carry the spirit of excellence are those who carry the spirit of Christ. No one forces them to 'care', but oh how they 'care'. No one forces them to sacrifice their lives for the cause, but they are so willing to lay them down voluntarily.

If ever there was a spirit transfer needed, it is in this area. There are many hirelings around, but there are few true shepherds.

### **Ownership for God's house!**

There is a passion for excellence that burns in the heart of Jesus: it is His church. He gave His life for the church. He has committed Himself to build His church, to purify His church and to present His church to the Father like a perfect bride on her wedding day.

Ephesians 5:25-32

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word. 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself 29 After all, no one ever hated His own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church- 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. " 32 This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

### **Throughout history God has placed a passion for His house inside His leaders**

Nehemiah 2:17

Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.

2 Samuel 7:1-2

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."

Psalms 69:1-8

Save me, O God for the waters have come up to my neck, 2 I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. 3 I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God.

4 *Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head', many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal. 5 You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you.*

6 *May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me, O Lord, the LORD Almighty', may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me, O God of Israel. 7 For I endure scorn for your sake. and shame covers my face. 8 I am a stranger to my brothers an alien to my own mother's sons', 9 for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.*

A spirit of excellence means taking it personally when God's house is compromised. Jesus was violently protective of the house of the Lord and would not stand for selfish agendas operating within its walls.

John 2:13-22 *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple **those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business.** 15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. 16 And He said to those who sold doves, **"Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"** 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, **"Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."** 18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" " 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the words which Jesus had said.*

Here we see the motive of the great shepherd: the hireling sees what is good for himself, the shepherd seeks what is good for the house.

A good motto for EASTSIDE should be: **"Whatever is good for the house!"**