

Excel Still More

“Good enough for government work.” This statement has become synonymous with mediocrity and doing enough to get by. Should disciples have this mindset when it comes to kingdom work?

The Apostle Paul says, “No.” Instead of settling for mediocrity and a mindset of “good enough,” disciples are to strive for excellence in their service to God. They should “excel still more” (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

Consider four areas where we are admonished to excel for the Lord.

Holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8)

- Paul begins his discussion about holiness in the previous chapter (1 Thessalonians 3:13).
 - To be holy means to be sanctified and set apart. It means to be separate so God can use us.
 - The Thessalonians needed to be reminded of the need to be holy because they lived in gross and wicked society. Their culture was immersed in all kinds of sexual temptations and immorality.
- God also expects us to be holy as we live in a wicked society!
 - This requires we be sold on what the Scriptures teach about holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).
 - This requires guarding our marriages and being faithful to our spouses (Hebrews 13:4).
 - This requires guarding our eyes and minds (Job 31:1; Proverbs 4:23).
 - This requires covering up our bodies and being modest (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

In Brotherly Love (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)

- The Thessalonians were practicing love for the brethren, but they needed to continue excelling. They didn’t need to be satisfied with what they were doing.
- We also must continue excelling in brotherly love.
 - There is always room to be kinder and more affectionate (Ephesians 4:32).
 - There is always room to grow in controlling our anger and rage (Ephesians 4:26-27).
 - There is always room to become more peaceable, helpful, and active in restoring erring brethren (Galatians 6:1).

In Influence (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)

- What should be our ambition?
 - We must live a quiet life.
 - We must attend to our own business.
 - We must get a job and work with our hands.
- Being committed to things will enhance our influence with outsiders.
 - Shining our light and being a positive example is the first step to effective evangelism (Matthew 5:16).
 - The Lord expects us to stick out, be different, and reflect His glory in the world.

In Gratitude (1 Thessalonians 1:2-10)

- Paul expresses thanksgiving for so many different things throughout this letter.
 - He is thankful for the faithfulness of these brethren.
 - He is thankful for their love for the Lord and one another.
 - He is thankful for their evangelistic work.
 - He is thankful that they were setting a positive example throughout the world.
 - The theme of thankfulness weaves its ways throughout the Thessalonian letters (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:3).

- Instead of solely focusing on our problems, we must constantly challenge ourselves to see our blessings. We must express thanksgiving for the spiritual blessings around us all the time.

Conclusion:

We serve an excellent God who gave His best to save us from our sins (John 3:16)! Let us always strive to excel and grow in our service to Him.

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