

Quotations about Excellence

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." – Aristotle -

"I do the very best I know how, the very best I can, and I mean to keep on doing so until the end." - Abraham Lincoln -

Reminders

Business meeting: today, November 10 at 2:00 p.m.; if you have an item for the agenda, give to Jim.

Ladies' Bible class: today, November 10 at 4:00 p.m.

November Birthdays

1 Maria Morales	16 Alessandro Lomeli
6 Ashley Tanner	17 Maureen Nichols
10 Daniel Brown	18 Carlos Pena
10 Felix Perezchica	30 Karen Nichols
16 Alessandro Lomeli	

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher
Carlos Peña

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Excellence...doing our very best

Excellence

Allen Webster

In athletics, we applaud it. In academics, we award it. In character, we admire it. In craftsmanship, we pay extra for it. In entertainment, we flock to it. In business, we promote it. In death, we eulogize it. In Christianity, we strive for it.

God delights in excellent ('*addiyar*, gallant, noble) saints (Psalm 16:3). One of these days He will award excellence. In the presence of everybody we've ever met, and everybody we've never met, we shall have praise of God (1 Corinthians 4:5). What will God be looking for? It is seen in what He will say: *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"* (Matthew 25:21).

A Person Who Excels Must

Do.

He will not say, Well said, Well thought, Well supervised, or, Well criticized. He will say, Well done. The Bible is a Book about doing. (Do, deed, deeds and done occur in the New Testament 589 times - more than twice per chapter.) James wrote, *"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"* (James 1:25). The Chinese say, "Be first in the field and the last to the couch" and a clockmaker philosophized, "Take a lesson from the clock; it passes the time by keeping its hands busy". Even a mosquito doesn't get a slap on the back until he starts working.

A person that desires to excel in God's eyes must find something to do. What? Two considerations need attention: (1) What needs to be done? and, (2) What am I capable of doing?

Look around the congregation. Is there something that needs fixing? Is there something, or someone, being neglected? (Neglected widows were one of the first church problems, Acts 6). Does a missionary need supporting or a structure building? Does a class need a teacher? Do young people need someone to plan activities? Is there a song leader? Enough deacons and elders? Preachers? Is there a resource room, pantry, and clothes closet organized and well kept? Does a bulletin board need changing or a bathroom wallpapering? Does a tract rack need filling up or a closet cleaning out? Is there someone who needs encouraging or two who need reconciling? Is there a lost soul that needs teaching or a wayward soul that needs admonishing? Are there correspondence courses that need grading or bulletins that need labeling? It's easy to see that there is work on every hand and I can find something to do if I'm interested.

The second question is, What am I capable of doing? No one is qualified to do everything - either in ability or opportunity. (Even the most gifted man did not receive all eight talents.) The best way to determine what I can do is to attempt the things that need doing. If I give, say, leading a song or teaching a class my best shot, and feel I am not cut out for that, then I can try working with young people. The main thing is to have a desire to do for God and the "what" will work itself out. *"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not"* (2 Corinthians 8:12).

Do Well.

The verb is modified by an adverb. This indicates that whatever we do, we should do well. Andrew Carnegie ventured, "The average person puts only 25 percent of his energy and ability into his work". It is easy to half-heartedly fulfill an assignment, but it takes diligence to do our very best. God deserves that whatever we do for Him - from preaching a sermon to changing a light bulb - be done well. In fact, He will not accept less. Solomon commanded, *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"*, (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Jeremiah wrote, *"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD negligently, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood"* (Jeremiah 48:10, ASV). The verse does not say, "Cursed be he that does wickedness", or, even, "Cursed be he that does not the work of the Lord". It curses the one who does the work of the Lord negligently - in a hit-and-miss fashion. God rejected the people of Malachi's day, not because they did not offer

sacrifices, but because they gave Him less than their best (Malachi 1:8).

When God finished His work, it was *"very good"* (Genesis 1:31) and Jesus did all things well (Mark 7:37). Christ commanded us to go the second mile (Matthew 5:41) and God instructed us to *"love Him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength"* (Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:30). This covers every way we serve Him - devotionally, worshipfully, mentally, and physically. So - whether I'm praying in my closet, singing Amazing Grace Sunday morning, doing my daily Bible reading, or mowing the churchyard - I should give it my all.

The woman in Bethany hath done what she could (Mark 14:8); Paul vowed that he would preach *"as much as in me is"* (Romans 1:15); and the Apostle trusted that Philemon would *"do more than I say"* (Philemon 21). Harry S Truman said, "I found that the men and women who got to the top were those who did the jobs they had in hand, with everything they had of energy and enthusiasm and hard work." No one ever attains very eminent success by simply doing what is required of him; it is the amount and excellence of what is over and above the required that determines the greatness of ultimate distinction.

Be Good.

"Well done, thou good servant". The word translated "good" (*agathos*) is found 106 times in the New Testament. It is found, for instance, in the Parable of the Sower, which gives us some indication of what Jesus means by the word. *"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience"* (Luke 8:15). Mary chose *"the good part"* (Luke 10:42), which included interest in spiritual sustenance over physical service. It is also the word used in Matthew 19:17, where Jesus says, *"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments"*. From this we may infer that to be good is to be godly. (They are derivatives in English, of course, of the same word). To be like God is to be a loving person (1 John 4:8). This is, after all, the *"more excellent way"* (1 Corinthians 12:31). To be like God is to be holy (1 Peter 1:16, *hagios*, sacred, pure, blameless, consecrated). Since Jesus promised, *"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"*, a wise person strives to be good.