

Excellence

I. The Lesson

Have you ever walked into a worship service (maybe at your church, perhaps at another church or conference) and were so blown away by the band, lighting, music, sound, and/or media elements that it drew you into a place of worship like a magnet? It has been demonstrated throughout the Bible and history how excellence in what we do creates an atmosphere of worship that is irresistible to worshipers and to God.

Excellence has been a hotly debated issue in the church, especially in recent years as more technology has enabled the local church to do more during services. In this lesson, we will look at what God thinks/feels about excellence as well as our response to the call to excellence.

Somewhere along the line, some churchgoers got it in their minds that great musicianship or vocal ability, video screens, moving lights, well-planned and executed sound reinforcement, and well-planned song lists were not only not necessary but they were distractions that have no place in church. While the above mentioned items can be carried out in a way that could be distracting and might not be done for the right reasons, excellence in the House of God is nothing new.

Excellence throughout the Bible

Lev. 1:3, 9 "Let him offer a male **without blemish**... And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a **sweet aroma to the LORD.**"

The Lord commanded Moses to tell the people of God that their worship (offerings) should be excellent. This excellent offering was a sign of people giving their _____ to God. It was the people giving the best they could of what they had. They could not bring the lame, maimed, or diseased sheep or goat that would die anyway. Who would want that? Their excellent offering was a pleasing sacrifice to God. Likewise, when we bring our best to God in worship (musically, technically, attitudes, etc.), it is a pleasing aroma to God.

2 Chr. 2:13-14 "And now I have sent a **skillful** man, **endowed with understanding**... **skilled** to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to accomplish any plan which may be given to him, with your **skillful men** and with the **skillful men** of my lord David your father."

Even the preparation of the House of God was carried out with excellence in the Old Testament. The above reference was during the building of Solomon's temple. The temple was so amazing in its completion that kings and queens would come from far off just to see it. Later, in 2 Chronicles 5, after the entire

temple had been built with excellence, God's presence came so heavily, no one could stand under the weight of it! One of the primary factors in the Lord's coming was the excellence that was offered in the project.

Notice that it was said that the skillful worker could "accomplish any plan which may be given to him." When we work toward bringing excellence "to the table," we can be used for any plan given to us. When our skill is limited, so is our usability. **We should strive for excellence so that we may be ready "to accomplish any plan" which God may have for us.**

Psalm 33:3 "Sing to Him a new song; **Play skillfully** with a shout of joy."
Psalm 47:7 "For God is the King of all the earth; **Sing praises with a skillful psalm.**"

As if the examples weren't proof enough, over and over we are _____ in the Word to offer God a skillful/excellent offering. Does God accept a musician/singer who maybe isn't the most talented person in the world? Of course. However, an offering that is excellent, "Without defect" brings honor and glory to God. Essentially, we are saying, "Lord, You are worthy of the very *best* I can bring You."

When we operate in excellence, we are reflecting the nature and characteristics of the God Who does everything with excellence.

Excellence Leads To...

1) _____ in Worship

Let's face it, there is nothing easy about worshipping with horrible music. When the music and presentation are done with excellence, it provides an unparalleled freedom in worship for the congregation.

2) Increased _____ in Worship

When we bring an excellent "offering" as worship musicians/singers, there are more "tools" we have to use in worship to respond to where God is leading us. Excellence allows us to better respond during spontaneous moments in worship and to better execute more difficult songs which may be a different genre than what we are used to.

3) _____ Within the Worship Team

Musical unity is a result of each musician and singer bringing musical excellence in what they do. Ask any secular band. There is synergy that is created when the musicians are in unity. That only happens through excellence.

4) People Being _____ to Worship

Refer to the opening illustration of this lesson. Excellence draws people into the presence of God. People want to be a part of something excellent. Add the fact that God loves to be a part of something excellent, and you have an *electric* atmosphere in your church!

Psalm 66:2 “Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious.”

II. Discussion

- 1) What keeps you from going after excellence with your instrument/voice personally?
- 2) What happens in a church when all areas of ministry are carried out with excellence?
- 3) What happens if only a few members of the worship team go after excellence, but not all?
- 4) How can we, as a worship team, work toward bringing an excellent offering, week after week?
- 5) What are some potential traps we could fall into in our pursuit of excellence?

III. Prayer Points

- 1) Pray that God would forgive us for ever thinking we are “good enough” to be on the worship team. He is worthy of the best we can bring Him.
- 2) Pray that God would give us the grace to go after excellence every week.
- 3) Pray for the congregation, that they would experience the byproducts of excellence and learn to embrace it in all areas of their lives.
- 4) Pray that God would continually reveal areas to us where we need to “step it up” in our level of commitment and our diligence to bring an excellent offering.