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WORKSHOP

6a ADVANCING IN CAREER
AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

INTRODUCTION

Deu 28:12. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

Deu 28:13. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them

Psalms 16:3. How excellent are the LORD's faithful people! My greatest pleasure is to be with them.

Excellence is defined as the quality of being outstanding or extremely good. It is performance measure of surpassing ordinary standard. Excellence is native to all God's work from the beginning (*Gen 1:4, Eccl 3:11, Gen 1:31*) and He has designed and desired His seed to be excellent in all ramifications. Not being excellent is inconsistent with God's nature and expectation. It is noteworthy to know that our Career and Profession is a platform where we spend close to 50% of our productive life from 25 to 65 or perhaps 70; what we do and make out of it will significantly define our life, hence, the reason it pleases God to make us prosper(excel) in the field He positions us.

The world needs men of integrity and competence. The nations and communities cry for solution providers and many times unbelievers who show up bring poison inside their offerings because they have excellent head but dubious, SELF ruled hearts. Whereas a Child of God has in him/her the SEED that wins/excel, if it is not made manifest to the hungry world, the world cannot come to receive their help from such a life. God wants to raise excellent young people who will confront the world and shapes it in righteousness through our career and professional engagements. An initial attraction point for the people is excellent advancement they can see and identify with, it is thereafter they will be challenged to receive the Source of this excellence, Christ. As God expects us to be excellent in character and in Spirit so also does He desire we excel in our career and profession (*1 Tim 4:12*), He wants us to have pure heart, sound mind and productive hands (Heart, Head and hand engagement - *2 Tim 1:7*). It is our prayer that Excellence will become a nature to us in all our profession or career and we would bring the nations to Jesus the virtue of our continuous outstanding performance

1. THE NEED FOR EXCELLENCE

A. It is the nature of God, it is the life of Christ, and it is the joy of the LORD: *Psalms 16:3, Deut. 28:13-14.* God delights to see His children, His ambassadors on earth to be excellent in all they do. *1Peter 2:9* ... to declare praises of Him... to showcase the solution He produces

B. The world is groping in darkness, not only in darkness of sin and moral failure but darkness of productivity somersault, darkness of inferior and counterfeit products, darkness of inequitable wealth distribution, poverty, hunger, poor infrastructure and so many ills. The world awaits helpers/saviours in many areas of human endeavour, they need men and women of with clean hearts, clear heads and cleaving hands. *Rom 8:19*

C. Light on the candle stick. *Matthew 5:14-16.* It is a platform for God to be glorified. Many of the breakthroughs in scientific advancement in scientific research and humanities from Medicine, agriculture to education were done by devoted Christians. And these became missionary tools they use to evangelise the unreached places in Africa, Asia, South America, China and Arabs. Excellent men/women attract! we need to attract men to God

D. It is the strategic means of God to pull the heathen to worship Yahweh... *Isaiah 2:2-3.* God wants to showcase His works. He blesses the tribes of Israel so the world around them will be amazed and come to know God. Excellence results become an attraction to bring some to the LORD. We know the Greek (analogy of the unbelieving learned free thinkers) will always seek wisdom, while the Jews (analogy of religious but Christless souls) seek signs; Christ is both the wisdom (that showcases excellence in all technicality and philosophy) as

well power of God (that produces all signs and wonders)

2. THE PROMISES OF GOD FOR EXCELLENCE ARE NUMEROUS:

A. Abraham's seed was promised to be excellent in all they do for as long as they walk in obedience: Deuteronomy 28:1-14, Gal 3:13-15. We see this reflected in the field (career), in their home, in their barn (warehouse), in all their engagements.

B. God's desire for us is to be excellent according to the measure of our gifts – *Mathew 25*.

C Read more promises: *1 Peter 2:9, 2 Pet 1:4, Phil 3:14, Rom 8:30*.

3. EXAMPLES OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO WERE EXCELLENT IN THEIR CAREER AND PROFESSION IN THE BIBLE

A. ESTHER: *Esther 1-8*. Esther was a Jewish lady who carries a seed that wins; she submitted for training under Mordecai; she excelled to become a queen; she gave herself to prayer and fasting in the moment of challenge; who dared to intervene for God's people by faith (courage); she was industrious and wise in feast making and catering management; through her the whole Nation of Israel was saved God's promise for Abraham Seed was preserved.

B. DANIEL: Daniel graduated from university of Babylon and was posted to serve as a king advisers. He kept advancing until he became a prime minister in Babylon and served the king and the kingdom selflessly... And yet He was a man of prayer whose heart was not on personal gains but how Israel will return from captivity.

C. JOSEPH: Joseph training and obedience prepared him for a career life of excellence. He administered the economy of Egypt which was the most prosperous in the then world

D. LYDIA AND DORCAS: these ladies were disciples of the Lord who had a successful career and used it to serve the LORD... *Acts 16:11-15, 40, Acts 9:36-40*.

E. LUKE: Bro Luke was a medical doctor and his life for excellence prepared him to be a suitable channel of God to write the gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles. Others include Bezaleel and Oholiab who were blessed with excellent spirit in their craftsmanship. They were multiskilled in design, acoustic, and interior décor : *Exodus 29*.

4. ADVANCING IN EXCELLENCE: KEY INGREDIENTS FOR PROGRESSIVE EXCELLENCE

A. The Seed: It starts with a seed that wins (*Esther 3:16*)... true excellence that lasts and that continues attract God's approval begins with the correct seed. *1 Cor 2:9*. It is a life that is born again, that has the nature of Christ that can have sustainable seed of Excellence

B. Faith: Persons of Excellence believe what God has said and done for them, it is through Christ I can and will win – *Phil 4:13*.

C. Clear guidance of your field: the field you occupy should be what the Master gives you to labour. You should be using your talent in the location He leads you. Your talent goes along with your God given capability, assignment and geography (*Matt 25:14-30*). If you are in Moab while you are meant to be in Bethlehem you may miss God. Your allocation will come to the locations assigned to you. See the difference between Elimelech (*Ruth 1,2*), and Isaac (*Gen 26:1-13*).

D. Diligent devotion and commitment to your assignment: *Prov 22:29, Col 3:22-25, 17, Rom 12:11*.

E. See your career as a platform primarily to glorify the LORD and not to make ends meet. See it as channel of ministry where you have to produce a solution that will bring others to Christ. *Colossians 3:17*. See brother Joseph. Consider your profession as a calling of God to make an impact among the people you serve: customers, Colleagues, suppliers, shareholders, operating environment. *Mk 10:43-44*.

F. Aim to the top of that career. The space at the top is yours. Heaven mindedness does not mean hiding in failure and obscurity. The right person to be in the lead of professional career is the person of righteousness. *Matthew 5:16*

G. Never stop developing yourself in knowledge, competency and requisite skills to advance your career. When you stop learning, you will start decaying. Phil 3:10. Don't settle with yesterday's achievement, rather thank God for it, put it behind you and park the ashes so you can seek for fresh breakthrough (Lev 6:10-14). There will be new problems to solve with new opportunities to bring sinner.

H. Right partnership: the Partnership of like minds and spirit help accelerate your focus and development. See Daniel and his three friends ...

I. Perspective of life should be eternity centric. All accolades and glories, all success and trophies, all stars and favours should be for the SUPPLIER, the LORD's glory. Col 3:17.

J. Perseverance in pursuit: Eccl 10.

k. Prayers without ceasing, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood: Eph. 6:10-17, 1 Thess. 5:17

5. HINDRANCE TO EXCELLENCE: Ecclesiastes 11, Proverbs 6:6-11.

A. Sin: All iniquities hinder true excellence. And if anyone advances through unrighteous means, his work will not last and his soul will not be at ease. Rid of all forms of falsehood, lies, vain competition, bribery and self-centeredness. 1 Peter 2:

B. Laziness and procrastination

C. Shortcut Mind-set: this is seeking success in a cheap and quick way. Everything that lasts grows deep and then high. Shortcut is a deception that heights can be attained fast and easy usually by manipulating due process, being a friend with meddlers and boycotting God laid down principles.

D. Mediocrity sense: being too satisfied with little success leads attaining far less than the best. Self-limiting mindedness

E. Fear of failure.

F. Fear of starting. Inertia of starting.

G. Seeking vain glory: office politicking can be cantankerous

6. GO AND EXCEL – Heb 6:1-2.

A. Set new goals as God inspires your heart: What are the goals in your career that can be achieved in the next one year, 3 years and 5 years. List them prayerfully. The goals must be SMAT(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, and Time bound)

B. Write down the How (strategy) to achieve the goals

C. Be accountable to a godly tutor for guidance and prayers. This is one of the benefits of discipleship

D. Commence personal developmental process to acquire relevant skills, technology and exposure in your field

E. Seek internship and learning opportunities to improve your exposure

F. Be ready to serve and work for free. Seek to solve problems again and again. Sustainable Rewards come to those who solve problem

CONCLUSION

As a faithful follower of Christ, Excellence is both a right by promise; It is a disposition to make us serve the Master and solve human problems. It is high time we collected the children's bread and use it to feed the nations. Are you struggling with your career, seek for a direction from the LORD; are you making progress, do not settle until you get to the very top; are you at the top of your profession already, let that stage be a new beginning of another advancement, there is yet more laurels to win for the LORD; are Whether confused where you, seek His face and speak to godly counsellor; God has space for all His disciples at the very top. We must advance to please the LORD and save the world. Sinners' advancement only cheat the world and spite God.

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