[Worship Ministries: A Call To Excellence]

by Mark Cole

What is excellence in music ministry? What role does excellence have in our service to God? Is excellence a standard that it used in the Bible? I have been mulling these issues over in my mind for the last few days.



When I think about well-known Biblical figures like Joseph, Daniel, Jesus and Paul; I think of excellence.

Joseph was such an excellent young man, that even though he was a slave, Potiphar put him in charge of his whole household. Joseph was so excellent in his character, work ethic and favor with God, that later when he was a prisoner, he was put in charge of all the details of the prison he was incarcerated at (Genesis 39). Joseph also showed such wisdom that later he became second-in-command of all of Egypt.

Daniel was also a slave but because of his excellent spirit and wisdom from God, he went from slavery to ruling over the province of Babylon. It was said that "Whenever the king consulted them (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom." (Daniel 1:19-20) That is excellence!

Jesus! What can I say that thousands of books haven't said already? Jesus is arguably the most successful leader of all times. In only three and half years, He gathered a small group of followers together and changed the world. Today, Jesus has billions of followers who are doing His work in every corner of the earth. No other leader compares to His success. Jesus is the embodiment of excellence.

Paul started out as a hater of Christians. He was even at the execution of the evangelist, Stephen. But his zeal for the persecution of Christians changed when he had a supernatural encounter with Jesus. Jesus changed everything. When you have your eyes fixed on Jesus you can persevere through any trial or obstacle.

Paul showed excellence in his determination to serve God in-spite of the hardships he faced:

He wrote*: I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have*

faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.
Yet in spite of all Paul's difficulties, he went on to be one of Jesus' greatest disciples. Paul's life, writings and dedication to his mission are beacons of excellence.

I have seen excellence in God's kingdom all around the world. I am a student of great churches and ministries. I spent ten years of my life travelling and I have been privileged to visit and/or minister in many of the mega-churches (those with weekly attendance of over 2000) and ministries all over the world.
I have been in great churches and ministries in Korea, Philippines, India, Uganda, Argentina, South Africa, Nigeria, Australia, Sweden, Norway, and England. In the U.S. and Canada I have visited and/or played in over a dozen mega-churches (churches in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Dallas, Houston, Seattle, Portland, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton).
When I visit these great churches and ministries, I am amazed at their level of excellence. Their facilities, music, leadership and staff are all excellent and their preaching is world-class. God is using amazing people to do great things all over the world.
So '**Do I believe that excellence has a place in the world-wide Christian Church?**' Yes, of course, I do!

What is excellence? Excellence is the 'quality of being outstanding or extremely good.'

I was reading about the life of David this week. David was described in this way: 'one of Jesse's sons from Bethlehem is a talented harp player. Not only that—he is a brave warrior, a man of war, and has good judgment. He is also a fine-looking young man, and the Lord is with him.'
This servant of the king was describing a young man of excellence: a talented musician, a brave warrior, a person with good judgement, a good-looking young man who had the blessing of God with him (I Samuel 16:20 NLT).

How do people describe you?

- Do they describe you as a talented musician, singer, writer, tech person, sound-man, lighting person, or support person?
- Do people describe you as a person of good judgement? Are you asked for your advice? Are you making good decisions?
- Are you doing your best with your personal grooming? How is your haircut, clothes and personal style?
- Do people recognize that God is with you? Are you spending time with God on a regular basis? Did you read your Bible and pray today?

I believe God wants us to be excellent. He wants us to be excellent in the big things and also in the small things.

- When you walk down the hallway of your church, do you stop to pick up stray garbage?

- Do you go the 2nd mile to make sure things are done well?
- Do you show up on-time and even early for the events that you attend and are responsible for?
- Are you better this year than last year in the areas that God has called you to serve in?

Here's my personal prayer this morning:

Lord, I look to You. You are the source of all the good things in my life. Thank-You! You are so good! Lord, please help me to do my best for you today. Help me not to be complacent or lazy. Help me to be excellent in all the areas that you give me responsibility.

Lord, help me to be an excellent husband, father, musician and man of God. You have been so generous to me; I give my life back to You: to love, honor and serve You.

Lord I ask for Your touch on all the people who are reading these words. May Your Spirit be at work in their lives, families, churches and communities. May they be challenged to be excellent for You! May they be known as great men and woman of God. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

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The article above and many additional insights may be found on Mark's blog at http://markcole.ca/

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