

SPIRITUAL GROWTH MARKERS

"Excellence: God's Alternative to Success"

Today our culture is all about success and the perks it brings our way.
The huge problem with success is that not everyone can be successful.

1. God's Call to Excellence

● God is Excellent

"By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence."
- 2 Peter 1:3

● God calls us to _____ His Excellence

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."
- 1 Corinthians 10:31

"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."
- Philippians 4:8

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is excellent and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ."
- Philippians 1:9-10

2. Excellence Defined: The quality of being _____

_____ As Christ followers, excellence is loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

3. Evaluating Excellence: In 1 Corinthians 12:31 we are introduced to the measure God uses when He calls us to excellence: _____ (_____ love as demonstrated by the love of God for humankind).

- See 1 Corinthians 12:7-13a, 14-22; 24-13:8a,13 (NIV)

Unless the "most excellent way" (agape love) is applied to the body of Christ, the various parts will begin to self-destruct.

"If I speak in the languages of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails...."¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13

4. Obstacles to Excellence

- I use God's unconditional love to _____ instead of God.
- I have to _____.
- _____
- _____
- _____ love: focus on _____ definition and _____ others

5. Two Christ - Demonstrations of Excellence

● The _____: (_____)



"While we were still sinners, Jesus went to the cross for us."
- Romans 5:8

"I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship."
- Romans 12:1

● The _____: (_____)

"I did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many."
- Matthew 20:28

Serving with Excellence

- ◆ I choose _____
"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves." - Romans 12:10
- ◆ I refuse to _____
- ◆ I accept _____
Those who set the pace in serving others are resented by some because they produce guilt in those who realize they want to be served and refuse to serve
- ◆ I _____ methods

6. The Journey of Excellence

- _____: Genuine sorrow for sin, asking God to forgive, an about-face. Accepting His forgiveness.
- _____: Surrendering my will to God's will.
- _____: Mindset of growth in all circumstances.

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else..."
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12

Sermon in a Sentence:

Spiritual maturity is identified by my level of commitment to Love God and others with Excellence.