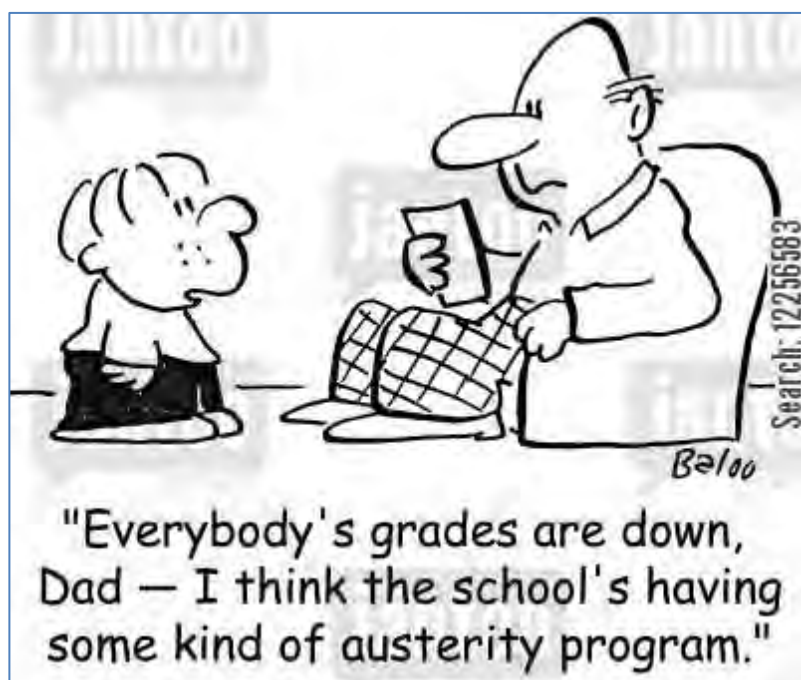


A Life Lived for God's Glory

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Sermon Notes



INTRODUCTION:

How often do you go to bed with a sense of deep peace in your heart? That is what I hope you will experience this week.

Damon's report good, well compared to what I ever got ... very good, Len looked at it, and said 'mine won't be that good' ... told himself not to compare with his brother, he has his own strengths and qualities.

Len's arrived and it was also good.

I sat there for a while thinking: from a father's point of view, even more important than the grades is

the sense that they have really just done their very best, because that is what will shape who they become.

Do you remember when you did really well? And How you felt? We feel like:

'I have stepped forward. I have grown. We have a positive and hopeful sense of what the future may now hold for us'

Spiritual growth and maturity is a biblical goal. It is God's divine principle: to be fruitful.

But Spiritual maturity is a quest for character for which there will be little progress without the pursuit of excellence in what we do.

(It is not about being a perfectionist.)

In fact, without pursuing excellence, life will remain bland, lukewarm at best.

Revelation 3: 15-16

15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! **16** So, because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

The quest for excellence fuels our fire and keeps us from just drifting downstream gathering debris.

Excellence is one of the **keys to finding our identity**. To feeling connected to God's love. When we do well, we feel confident, and sure of ourselves. When we offer our best work and our best efforts up to God we are at peace.

What leads one to want to excel? need a deep sense of purpose/ driving force inside. profound sense of God's calling for our life normally helps along w/ self discipline, and commitment and consistency

Jesus summed it up when he was asked about what is the essence of 'the law'.

'Love the Lord your God with *all your* heart, with *all your* soul, and with *all your* mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.'

I just want to ask, **if we were to look at our selves**, at our church and our movement today, would you say we were pursuing excellence in what we do?

It is important to remember that excellence starts on the inside of us. And then as we cultivate our character and heart and mind, then we start to see the fruits manifested in what we do, what we say, the

way in which we execute our responsibilities. What is excellent in our heart becomes substantial and tangible in our organization, our community, and our movement.

So, we should not make excuses or convenient reasons to explain away our movement's lack of growth.

President Carter's core life lesson:

A famous American, Admiral Hyman G. Rickover and his interviews were legendary. One of the reasons why they were well known is he always wanted to cut through the glib and rehearsed answers to get a look at the person underneath. He especially wanted to know how candidates would act under stress.

On occasion he had them sit in a chair with the front legs sawed off an inch or two shorter than the back, to keep them off-balance. In his autobiography, 'Why Not the Best?' President Jimmy Carter tells about his Rickover interview:

"The admiral asked how he had stood in his class at the Naval Academy. "I swelled my chest with pride and answered, 'Sir, I stood 59th in a class of 820!' I sat back to wait for the congratulations. Instead came the question: 'Did you do your best?' I started to say, 'Yes, sir,' but I remembered who this was. I gulped and admitted, 'No, sir, I didn't always do my best.' He looked at me for a long time, and then asked one final question, which I have never been able to forget—or to answer. He said, 'Why not?'" "

None of us purposefully become mediocre, it is something we can very easily run into accidentally. It is as if we end up there subconsciously.

An inevitable consequence of being in a mid way position

But to do our best and fulfill the potential we are given by God requires a strong sense of purpose.

True Father: notable quality was his desire to excel. In all environments & circumstances. (concentration camp, fishing for tuna, in the Arts – little angels,).

Born out of a deep and intimate love for God.

It was not only a way through which he could worship God, but a way to point others *to* God.

In his public talks it was a constant theme; challenging people to be their very best.

As people of faith we need to be IN this world and shine our light. As Jesus said we need to be like salt, and help make life taste good.

Daniel 6:3

3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Excellence does not necessarily mean the absence of mistakes, but it does mean the presence of faith and determination.

To be excellent at whatever God has called you to do, you must first ask for His strength to accomplish the task and then, secondly, His endurance to complete it.

True Father faced so many obstacles, and many things did not turn out as he had hoped and expected. He even spoke about how he would have done things differently with hindsight. But he was human, a man, like you and me.

Where we can catch his essence is in just those last few words of prayer before he was taken to hospital before he died.

They were **breathless last words**, but he said to God, as a child says to his parent, "everything is finished, I did my responsibility." From when he experienced rebirth through his calling that he received from Jesus, to the moment before his body gave up in old age he was completely preoccupied with completing what God had asked of him.

He understood that his identity, his significance, his potential is ultimately to be found in being able to say those words to God.

Conclusion – call to action

So when we think of what we offer to God and how we want it to be good, we can each day strive for excellence in all things, our relationships, the way we treat people, go beyond the norm, or the known, and do all this in faith and knowledge that there is an infinite world out there to discover that was created by a loving god for us to experience our full creative ability.

There are many things we perhaps are not confident in, or do not have a natural ability in. But we can all live our life in the pursuit of excellence. Some of the most successful people I know are not particularly intellectually brilliant, or not the most sophisticated in their interpersonal skills, but they are able to excel and get to the top of their game and field. They are driven and work hard.

We can all do this, whether like me you are not good at many things, or you are someone who just seems to be blessed with many natural abilities.

We can all step into our day to do our very best for God. We can all finish our day having done two things:

Pointed people towards God's Glory through our culture.

Made a good offering to God, be able to say: 'it's done' 'this day is done'... and

Go to sleep with peace in our heart. Priceless, because you can't buy God's peace.