

Cultivating an Excellent Spirit

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: 10 X

Text: Daniel 5:12

People who have an excellent spirit and a spirit of excellence are that way because they took time to **develop** that in their lives. The Bible talks about some remarkable people in the word of God. These were men and women that stood out from the crowd. They stood out from both worldly people and God's people to the point that they caught the attention of God. Daniel was someone like that. The Bible tells us that he was a man with an excellent spirit.

Those who have an excellent spirit are **fruitful** with their lives in every area. They are spiritually fruitful, and they are fruitful relationally and professionally. It is important to remember that God never called us to be successful, He called us to be obedient, **faithful** and fruitful. Spiritually that is success and is a vastly different definition from the world. You can always be fruitful if you are never put in the position to be successful. **John 15:16**

Everyone has a **spirit**. Some people have a bad spirit, a prideful spirit, a selfish spirit, a devious spirit. Others have a humble and obedient spirit and others embody an excellent spirit.

1 Peter 3:3-4 In our culture we spend a great deal of time cultivating our image and our appearance. The truth is if we would spend our time cultivating our character all the other things would take care of themselves. An excellent spirit will cause you to overcome, and a weak spirit will cause you to surrender, crumble under pressure and shrink.

There are two distinct times in life that reveal what is in us and whether we have an excellent spirit or not:

- 1) When we are on **top** in life
- 2) When we hit rock bottom.

There are several people in the Bible that stood out to God just like Daniel. All of these people were consistent in their spirit whether they were riding high or going through a trial. They got the attention of God. The people who get the attention of God do the right things in the **correct** way with the right attitude. They are producing fruit that will last. This cannot be faked because it deals with the condition of your spirit and your heart.

- Abraham had a spirit that got the attention of God because he was a man of **faith** and action. **James 2:21-24**

People with an excellent spirit believe God. It is one thing to believe God in your head and quite another to believe God and take action with your life.

Abraham trusted God in everything even to the point of being willing to sacrifice his only son. This is why Abraham is called a **friend** of God. The Bible says that his faith and obedience were accounted to him as righteousness.

The truth is that all people who have an excellent spirit are people of righteousness. We often think of righteous people as those who are living with a lower level of ongoing sin in their lives, but it is far more than that. Righteous people want to be a friend of God and believe that it is **possible**.

There is nowhere else in the Bible that God calls someone a friend until Jesus talks about how He sees those of us who serve the Lord. **John 15:15-16**.

- Moses was a man that God could use because he had cultivated a humble spirit. **Numbers 12:3** God **resists** the proud and gives **grace** to the humble. In the natural, our flesh always fights to be first, to be noticed, to be seen and to be heard. Today everyone is supposed to be “great” when God has called us to be a servant. Moses took all kinds of persuading and convincing to step into the role God had for him. Moses spent forty years in the desert tending sheep. While Moses was tending sheep, he was also **cultivating** his character. Moses wasn’t always humble he was pampered in the Pharaoh’s palace and even killed a man. Forty years in exile has a way of humbling you.

It was out of this cultivated humility that Moses could have a unique relationship with God.

Numbers 12:6-8

Humility is all about character and laying down our pride for the joy of knowing God. Moses walked with boldness and authority, but God was able to work through him because he did so from a place of humility. Humility is not something that grows naturally. In the cultivation process, humility is all about **pruning**. It is knowing that you desire to be faithful and that to increase in productivity you must cut yourself back. He must increase and we must decrease. Pruning almost seems counterintuitive. We reason if there is more then there will be more fruit. Humility realizes that apart from Jesus there is no fruitfulness. Pruning makes room for more of Jesus. Pruning can be very **painful** to our flesh. Because Moses lived from a place of humility, he spoke face to face with God. He was able to lead a country out of captivity and through the wilderness right to the steps of the Promised Land. Those with an excellent spirit have a profound affect in the lives of the people around them.

Those that have cultivated an excellent spirit have **refused** to defile themselves with the things of this world. **Daniel 1:8** Character always starts with keeping yourself from becoming defiled or made unclean from the world. The Bible tells us that we are in the world but not of the world. There are many people who allow the spirit of the world to get them instead of allowing the Spirit of God to rule over them.

Staying clean is something that you must take great care to do in a sinful world. Daniel refused to defile himself, this was in his spirit. It was an intentional thing to do.

Remember **Job** had the attention of God, but not because of all the wealth that he had accumulated or the empire he had built. What got the attention of God was Job’s character and integrity. **Job 1:8** Just like Daniel, there were three things that attracted the attention of God, Job was blameless, upright and feared God.

The same is true for **Noah**. He is the only man that God could find in his generations that was blameless and walked in integrity. **Genesis 6:9** Many people miss the significance of the last part of Genesis 6:9- Noah walked with God.

This is said of one other person. Noah's great-grandfather, **Enoch**. Who you choose to walk with is noticed by God. An excellent Spirit produces others in your family with the same excellent spirit. Excellence produces **excellence**. **Proverbs 13:20-21**

Those with an excellent spirit are careful to **develop** their talents and skills. God gives all of us gifts, talents and skills. It is up to us to grow and hone them. Jesus blessed the good and faithful servants who went and multiplied their talents and had some real warnings for those who refused to develop and increase in their talents.

One of the things that set Daniel apart from everyone else is that as a person he was not only growing and developing spiritually he was growing as a person and walking in wisdom.

Daniel 5:12 (NLT)

Just like faith, we are all given a measure of things, it is up to us to **expand** and increase.

If you really pay attention to the men and women that God uses, they are consistently developing their abilities.

~ Under three different kings Daniel always rose out of obscurity and was placed in positions of authority because of his abilities.

~ Job was blessed by God because he was spiritually sound, but he was also a great businessman.

~ Jacob tended to his father-in-laws' flocks and his own and doubled them.

~ Joseph heard from God and went from prison to being the second in command of the Kingdom of Egypt. Everywhere Joseph went, things **prospered**, he helped run his master's house. In jail he was found so capable that even there his jailers let him run things. This and his spiritual acumen brought him to the place where he was put in charge of ensuring that an entire nation and the surrounding region would not suffer during a drought and famine for 7 years.

People who have an excellent spirit develop themselves so that they are excellent at what they do. **Proverbs 22:29**

One of the best ways to see if a person has an excellent spirit is to watch their attitude as they **work**. Work is a four-letter word that many people treat as a curse instead of a blessing. One word that never describes an excellent spirit is the word **lazy**. All of these men did honorable work even when they did not immediately see the **return** for it. They still did their best and did their all and God blessed them. **Galatians 6:9**

Those with a cultivated spirit are willing to **stick out** from everyone else. Most people are just fine with average and with blending in and going with the flow. Those with a cultivated spirit will often cut against the grain of the norm.

Numbers 14:24 When Moses sent the 10 spies to check out the Promised Land, only two men came back with a good report **Caleb** and Joshua.

Caleb had a different spirit or another spirit. He stood out from everyone else. First, he had the Holy Spirit in him. Second, he had a different attitude about him, he was **willing** to follow God fully even if people around him were not. He was not willing to make any compromises even though everyone around him was.

Caleb had a whole different **perspective** on things. He was going to do things God's way. He refused to let people pressure him or persuade him of anything other than God's way. He couldn't be persuaded because he already was persuaded just like the Apostle Paul.

Romans 8:38-39

Caleb wasn't scared of the giants in the land, he knew that God was bigger than them. Forty years later when he was an old man, he was still ready to go after the giants. While most men his age were ready to retire and let the young guys do the fighting, he was ready to go. All his life, Caleb never lost his **enthusiasm** for the promises of God or for staying fully obedient to God. He also never lost his appetite to defeat the giants that stood in the way of God's promises.

Joshua 14:7-12 Through many battles, life challenges, and forty years in the desert Caleb never lost his perspective and always kept his eye on the objective. He never lost his desire to fully follow God.

In many ways Caleb had the same heart as **David**. **Acts 13:22**- **And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**

A man after God's own heart is a man of a **different** spirit. No matter what it takes or how long it takes they are willing to do **all** of God's will.