

Our Responsibility to Excellence

By Pastor Nkechi Ene (Mrs.)

[Part 1]



9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:9-10 [NKJV]

“Approve” means *to test, to prove, to scrutinize, to examine, to discern, to allow so as to decide.*

“Excellence” means *something better, to make matter, that is, to make a difference; something worth something; to be of more value, to carry or bear through any place.*

If something is excellent, it will carry through any circumstance, situation and place. An excellent thing is something of more value; it is something that matters; it is worth something.

Excellence is doing the right thing at the right time, in the right way and in the right place.

The Valuer Approves

The Bible says that we are to approve things that are excellent. The context of the word “approve” is in reference to the people who value and test metals like gold and silver to determine their worth or authenticity. You may take your gold to a valuer and he passes it through the furnace to see the kind of metal it is, and says, “This gold is 18 carat,” or “This gold is 24 carat.” He may also test it and say, “This is not gold; it is silver.” In the same way, when the Bible says to each one of us that we should approve things that are excellent it means that each one of us is a valuer. Each one of us is somebody who not only has the ability but also has the responsibility to check out the value of anything in any area of life.

Stretch your mind to any area of your life. The Word of God has given you the responsibility to approve things that are excellent. One of the meanings of “approve” is *to allow*. This means you can allow things that are excellent or you

can stop things that are not excellent from getting to you. That sounds like a very big responsibility. But that is the kind of responsibility the Church has been given and if the Church does not know that that responsibility is hers, then there is no valuer around to approve excellent things. Then you would have all manner of things all over the place. People would sell anything in the name of gold. When there is a valuer in the area of metal, that person will check and ensure that nobody is cheating. That person is there to check and ensure that if somebody says he is selling twenty-four carat gold, then it is twenty-four carat gold that is sold at twenty four carat gold price. The valuer is a reference. I want that to sink into you.

God says you are the one to approve what is excellent. So in your work place, family, and in your department, you are the one to ensure that excellence is adhered to. It sounds like a very big responsibility and a lot of us in the Church have been asleep to that responsibility.

The Big Responsibility

8 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 16:18-19 [NKJV]

Stop and think about what Jesus meant when He said He will give to us the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What did He mean? After all, we don't live in heaven! When you got born again if God wanted you to go to heaven, He would just have given you the keys and you would go home. But you got born again and He gave you the keys of heaven while you are here on earth. Think of it: when you have the keys to something, it means you can open that thing and have access to everything in it. So in giving to the Church the keys to the kingdom of heaven, it means He has opened heaven up to you but it is not for you to come home.

Then why did He give you the keys?

If you look at creation, you will find out that there is something very special about God and us. God sees us as parallel between heaven and earth. Heaven is where He is reigning while the earth is where we are supposed to be reigning. Things are supposed to be excellent here on earth, just as they are in heaven. Matthew 18:18 says, "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." How will you know what to bind or loose on earth if you do not have a reference? He says, "Whatever you bind or loose." That is your responsibility. When we get born again we are given a very big responsibility. We don't just get born again, come to Church clap our hands and get excited, or be happy and then we go home. That is part of it; but it is not all about that. We are being given a major job responsibility to bring the standard of heaven here on earth in our environment.

You are to bring the standard of heaven to your marriage, to the way you work, to your finances, and to whatever it is that you have control over. That is why when you got saved He gave you the keys to the kingdom of heaven so that you could be a valuer here on earth. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say, "...Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" [Matthew 6:10]. It is through the Church that His will is to be done here on the earth.

It hurts when you realize that the Church has been sleeping for too long. The Church has been clapping hands and being happy for too long. The Church has been surrounded by things that are far from excellence because the Church has not realized this part of her responsibility. But that is changing. Amen. You are to approve things that are excellent. You are the reference.

Let's go back to the valuer who tests things to know the value. I want you to bring these things home to yourself in the context of you approving things that are excellent around you.

The Right Procedure And Training



The first thing about approving excellence to the valuer is that he has the right procedure that he sticks to. Chemists know what it means if one substance is added to another and it turns into a certain colour. So also do

Goldsmiths know what to do to ascertain the difference between eighteen and twenty-four carat gold. Think about this: if the Bible says we are to approve things that are excellent, it means any of these four things: you can approve things that are excellent; or you can disapprove things that are not excellent; or you can approve things that are not excellent and pretend that you think they are excellent; or you can disapprove things that are excellent. But only one of these is the right procedure. You may already be thinking that disapproving things that are not excellent is equal to approving things that are excellent. Mathematically, minus + minus is plus. But in this context it is not like that. Disapproving things that are not excellent does not necessarily mean you approve excellence. So let me tell you, the right procedure is approving things

that are excellent. The difference between approving things that are excellent and disapproving things that are not excellent is that you may just talk and complain: "This is not right, I don't like it. This is not the way it should be." There is nothing wrong with disapproving things that are not excellent but the right approach is to approve things that are excellent.

- 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light
- 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
- 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

Ephesians 5: 8-10 [NKJV]

How do you approve what is acceptable unto the Lord? It is when by your lifestyle, you walk after the light. That lifestyle of excellence will tell a testimony of you. When you wake up in the morning, let excellence be seen in your life style. Let your lifestyle be according to the light, like children of light. Do the things you say you approve of. Let excellence be seen in your marriage. Let excellence be seen in your relationships through love. Let excellence be seen in your finances. Let excellence be seen in the way you relate with your boss, and if you are an employer, let it be seen in the way you relate with your employees. Let excellence be seen in your approach to the work of the ministry. That way, you are approving what is excellent. That way your testimony will go ahead of you and you will no longer just be complaining.

The problem we have in the Body of Christ is that too many preachers talk about excellence but they know nothing about it. Too many preachers and people say things that sound like excellence. Too many preachers even preach excellence but their lifestyles show the opposite. To such people, excellence is theoretical and they are not making any impact. As a Christian if you sit down and murmur and complain and your lifestyle is far from what you are complaining about, you cannot be a valuer. But when you are quietly following after excellence and walking in the light, unknown to you, people will be watching you and seeing the impact in your life. One day, someone may come to you and ask you, "What do you think about this?" And because in your life you have been approving things that are excellent, you will boldly tell them what you think, because they have seen how you have been approving what is acceptable to the Lord by your walk with Him.

The other day as my husband was coming from the Airport, he was counting the number of Churches and he asked a simple question: "If there are so many Churches in Port Harcourt, why are we not seeing the impact?" Have you ever thought about it? There are so many Christians. I am not even talking about whether they are real or fake Churches because there are so many real Churches as well. There are enough Churches with people whom we will see in heaven [if that is the reference for real Churches]. But why are we not seeing the impact? Why are we not seeing "twenty four carat gold" in our lives? Because, Christians are just complaining and not showing examples of excellence.

Ask yourself if you are living the life style of excellence. Are you a worthy valuer? Can somebody watch you from a distance and have the boldness to come to you and ask you something in the Word of God? It is a big responsibility walking as the children of light and approving what is acceptable unto the Lord. I know God is raising people who will be references in different spheres of life. And I am not talking only in terms of spiritual things but in secular things as well.

Watch out for part 2