Average people are filled with excuses. A life of excellence will set you apart and should be a defining characteristic for those who are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. But most people will be unwilling to strive for and pay the price for excellence. They do enough to get by, but they don’t do enough to be excellent.

What is Excellence? In history “Excellence” has been used as a title of honor. It comes from the word “excel” which means “to go beyond average.”

Excellence is the _________________ of the ability that you have. This message is about being a “second mile” Christian. The second mile is going beyond what is _________________ for minimum approval to what will result in maximum achievement.

When I give more than is _________________, then I will get more than I _________________.

Michael J. Fox said, “I am careful not to confuse excellence with perfection. Excellence, I can reach for; perfection is God’s business.”

What does a Biblical life of excellence look like?

I. Excellence Means ________________ Farther Than ________________

Matthew 5:41, “If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”

BACKGROUND: When Jesus wrote these words, Israel was in occupied territory by the Romans. The Roman system of government owned everything and everybody. Therefore the Roman government had passed a law that if you were a Roman soldier carrying a sword, a shield, or a backpack and you saw a Jew – you could force that Jewish man to drop what he was doing and they were to carry everything for exactly one mile. Nothing else embittered the Jewish people against the Roman government than this law. It was the ultimate humiliation because you became that soldier’s slave for one mile. Many Jewish fathers would even take their sons and walk off one mile on the road so that their children would memorize exactly how far they had to go. They were trained just to do the minimum and get by.

Most Christians live their lives the same way – just to do enough to get by. They will only follow the manual, the requirements, and the rules. Most people go to work concerned only about punching the time card and getting the paycheck. Most people have a “how-little-can-I-get-by-with” mentality.

Jesus’ teaching about being a “second-mile” Christian was mind-blowing to the ancient Jewish culture. Jesus said, “I don’t want you to do your duty—I want you to do double your duty. I don’t want you to go as far as you’re required to go, I want you to go further than you’re required to go.

Why was the second mile so important to Jesus? The first mile is always the ________________ mile; the second mile is always the ________________ mile. If you want to go through life and never make an impact on anything or anybody, then only go the first mile. But if you want to be the kind of person who makes a difference – you must go the extra mile.

The first mile is where the ________________ is. The second mile is where the ________________ is. People don’t notice those who walk the first mile; they only notice those who walk the second.

Zig Ziglar said, “There is no traffic jam on the second mile.” It’s crowded at the bottom, but there is a lot of room at the top.

When it comes to serving God, many of us are doing what we ________________ to be doing, but not many of us are doing what we ________________ be doing. If you want to be noticed, rewarded and blessed, you have to go farther than you are required.

II. Excellence Means ________________ More Than Is ________________

Read Matthew 5:38-42.

Vs. 38-39 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

In the first century, there were two things you could do to a Jew that would be the worst and most humiliating insult: to spit in their face or to slap them on the cheek. Everyone lives life on one of three levels: 1.) The HELLISH Level (turn evil for good), 2.) The HUMAN Level (return evil for evil
and good for good), 3.) The HEAVENLY Level (return good for evil).

Vs. 40, “And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.”

In this day, if you were sued in court and you did not have the funds to pay back what was owed—under Roman law, they could take your tunic (shirt) but could not take your coat (cloak). The teaching of Jesus was to go above and beyond the law to make things right.

Vs. 42, “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.” If a person has a legitimate need and they want to borrow something from you—your attitude should be, “No, I won’t loan it to you—I’ll give it to you.”

Jesus taught that a “second-miler” always gives more than is deserved and more than is demanded. Pat Riley said, “Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better.

III. Excellence is ____________ More Than is ________________

What are the benefits of being a “second-miler”?

Your ______________ will be completely different. You will go into your day with a different approach. “Work is more than an occupation. Work is more than an obligation. Work is an opportunity to reveal the excellency of God.”

Going the second mile will build your ________________. The first mile, you do it as a slave; the second mile, you do it as the master. The first mile, you do it because you had to; the second mile, you do because you wanted to. The first mile is the slave mile; the second mile is the smile mile.

The first mile, you’re being controlled; the second mile, you’re in control!

It will maximize your chance to be ________________ in life. Nobody watches first milers—they’re a dime a dozen! Clock watchers never climb above the clock. If you do the minimum, you’ll get the minimum—you will reap what you sow!

Five Keys to Building Excellence Into Your Life

1. Find Your ________________. People of excellence love what it is they are doing. Find that passion and keep it. If you’re struggling to find your passion, do an inventory of what you enjoy. What energizes you and makes you feel alive? Take inventory of the things that drain you. Try exchanging one de-energizing task for another that brings you energy is victory. 1 Corinthians 15:58, “So then, dear brothers and sisters, be firm. Do not be moved! Always be outstanding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Excellence can be obtained if you care more than what others think is wise; If you risk more than what others think is safe; If you expect more than what others think is possible; And if you work more than what others think is necessary.

2. Pay Attention to ________________. 1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” People of excellence understand the importance of everything. They have an appreciation for the big picture, but they also have a big appreciation for the little and minute things. The only difference between “here” and “there” is 1 letter: (t). Remember the small things in life. Helen Keller, “My ambition for life is to do great and noble things but my chief duty is to do small things as if they were great and noble.”

3. Be ________________. Booker T. Washington, said, “Excellence is doing a common thing in an uncommon way.” When you have an attitude of excellence, you’re saying, “God I want your character to be revealed through what I do.” People forget how fast you do a job but they remember how well you did it.

4. Never Stop ________________. Colossians 1:28-29. “Be all that you can be.” Never cease to grow in the talents and abilities the Lord has given you.

5. Always give __________%. “The very quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to the commitment to excellence.” – Vince Lombardi

The Bottom Line: Always give more than what people __________ to __________ to you.
Average people are filled with excuses. A life of excellence will set you apart and should be a defining characteristic for those who are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. But most people will be unwilling to strive for and pay the price for excellence. They do enough to get by, but they don’t do enough to be excellent.

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II. Excellence Means ___Giving___ More Than Is ___Deserved___

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