

(Psalms 75:6 TPT) (6-7) This I know: the favor that brings promotion and power doesn't come from anywhere on earth, for no one exalts a person but God, the true judge of all. He alone determines where favor rests. He anoints one for greatness and brings another down to his knees.

✓ Promotion comes from **God**.

God is not the One who determines whether you are promoted or not.

God created each of us for success! Each of us were made for more!

(Psalms 139:14 NKJV) I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

It does not matter how much money you make, where you live, who your parents are, or the color of your skin. It doesn't matter how we've failed in the past or what talents or education we may think we are missing. We all have the potential for greatness – if for no other reason than because the Spirit of Christ dwells within us.

However, potential is not enough.

Myles Monroe once said, "The wealthiest place on the planet is just down the road. It is the cemetery. There lie buried companies that were never started, inventions that were never made, bestselling books that were never written, and masterpieces that were never painted. In the cemetery is buried the greatest treasure of untapped potential."

Potential isn't enough to guarantee promotion, we must discover the missing ingredient – the secret sauce.

I once heard it said that "experience is the best teacher." This saying is not true. The best teacher is to learn from someone else's experiences.

(1 Corinthians 10:11 NET) These things happened to them as examples and were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

We can look to the life stories of the Old Testament saints – both the good and the bad – and learn how to avoid some of the pain that comes when learning through trial and error.

In captivity by an evil, ungodly society, the Hebrew people were viewed by the Babylonians as the lowest class of society. Yet in the middle of all that, Daniel and his three friends grew in favor and influence with four kings in two different world systems to become powerful rulers and advisors. How as this possible in these less-than-ideal circumstances?

(Daniel 6:3 NKJV) Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, **because an excellent spirit was in him**; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

We see this same thing in Moses, David, and others. Because they had a spirit of excellence, they were all promoted.

- ✓ The circumstances around you do not have to be **ideal** for God to promote you!

An excellent spirit will cause you to be promoted in business, in ministry, or at home with your family.

God delights in excellence, but excellence starts in the heart.

- ✓ A spirit of excellence is a **heart** attitude.

If you aren't being promoted, if it seems like everyone else is prospering while you struggle to make ends meet, or if you feel like you've been passed over for a promotion, it may be that you don't have the right heart attitude.

- ✓ If you are going to see promotion, you must maintain a good attitude, regardless of what other people do to you and regardless of the **circumstances**.

Your heart attitude could be hindering you from living out God's best for your life.

Excellence (Online Definition) - consistent in good character, attitude, quality, and standards.

Perfectionism (Online Definition) the tendency to demand of others or of oneself an extremely high or even flawless level of performance, more than what is required by the situation. (It is associated with depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and other mental health problems.)

For three years, Daniel and his friends were groomed to serve King Nebuchadnezzar as Chaldean (Babylonian) wise men. Since Babylon was conquering nations and growing so quickly, there weren't enough educated men to run the government. So the king began taking young, handsome men from countries he invaded and taught them the history and laws of Babylon that "they might stand before the king" and advise him. Daniel and his friends were chosen because of their youth, appearance, and aptitude.

But to serve the king, they were expected to discard their former identity and adopt the pagan identity of Babylon.

Everything about these men reflected their heritage and their relationship with God—even their names.

According to Strong's Concordance:

- **Daniel** means "judge of God"
- **Hananiah** means "Jah has favored"
- **Mishael's** name asks "Who (is) what God (is)?"
- **Azariah's** name declares "Jah has helped."

The king's official was given a very specific job. He was to strip these men of their Jewish identity and refashion them into Babylonians, starting with their names:

(Daniel 1:6-7 NKJV) Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (7) To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

Daniel and his friends refused to conform to the customs and behaviors of the world around them. They knew who they were. Their God-identity protected them through the trials and temptations of Babylon.

- ✓ A spirit of excellence is found in our **identity**.

Identity (Webster's Dictionary) the distinguishing character or personality of an individual; sameness of essential or generic character in different instances

We often think that our identity is what makes us unique but the definition of identity states that it is the thing that makes us the same as someone else.

Originally, we were created in the image of (the same as) God—a spirit. Through Adam and Eve's disobedience, we lost that identity. But when we were born again, we were made brand new!

- ✓ We are more than what we can see or feel. We are the children of God! We have a **new** identity!

But this new identity can sit dormant within us if we don't find out and acknowledge who we are in Christ.

- ✓ Your identity is the **first** place that the devil is going to challenge you.

(Luke 3:21-22) NKJV When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. (22) And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

(Luke 4:3 NKJV) And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

Satan's goal was to get Jesus to doubt who God said He was.

Satan had used that same trick on Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. When the serpent told Eve that if she ate of the forbidden fruit

she would be like God, he was trying to get her to doubt who God said she was (Gen. 3:5). Eve was already like God (Gen. 1:26) because she was created in His image.

The first Adam sinned because he didn't know his identity. The last Adam, Jesus, didn't sin because He knew His identity. That's powerful! What you don't know can hurt you.

- ✓ If you want to begin rising to the top, discover your identity in Christ and begin living out of that **place** and an excellent spirit will rise out of you too!