

# “The Prizefighter”

## 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2



### I. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Excelling (4:1)

*“Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you...that you excel still more.*

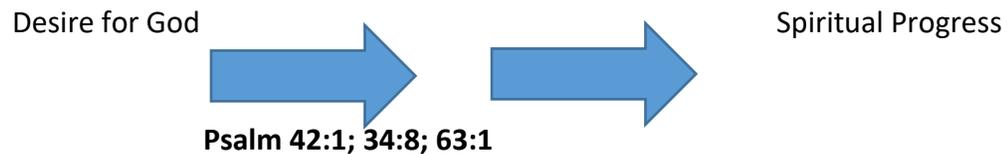
- A. “excel” – to \_\_\_\_\_, to be abundantly supplied, to \_\_\_\_\_, to exist in full quantity, to be over and above, to be \_\_\_\_\_; extraordinary or surpassing; **1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:10; 1 Corinthians 14:12; Philippians 1:9.**

Paul’s desire was for these Christians (and us) to become \_\_\_\_\_  
***extraordinary, excelling at a higher degree.***

### II. The \_\_\_\_\_ for Excelling (4:1)

*“...in the Lord Jesus...”*

- A. The Apostle Paul’s priority for believers: ***spiritual progress motivated by a***  
\_\_\_\_\_ ***to*** \_\_\_\_\_ ***God.***



For ALL believers, the pursuit of knowing God is the basic component of spiritual growth: **Jeremiah 9:23-24; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 8:7; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 3:7-10; Colossians 1:9-10; 2:2; 3:10; 2 Peter 1:2-9; Psalm 25:10; 71:15-16; 138:2; Hebrews 10:36.**

If gaining more \_\_\_\_\_ about the Bible and \_\_\_\_\_ in spiritual activities such as praying, Bible study, church, serving, and witnessing, are not linked to the desire to know God better, they will not bring spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ to those who profess faith in Christ; they will merely become empty, hollow, meaningless activities to the BELIEVER. See **Hosea 6:6; Matthew 6:1-18; John 15:4-5; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Philippians 2:13; Colossians 3:17.**

The power to excel in spiritual growth and pursuits does not lie within one’s self, but *“in the Lord Jesus” – applied to “you,” “request,” and “exhort.”*

1. Only the born again, regenerate who are “in Christ” have the spiritual power and insight to accomplish all the objectives of spiritual growth (1 Corinthians 2:14).
2. The power to excel comes from the power of the \_\_\_\_\_ Christ (John 17:23; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17; 4:15-16; 1 John 5:20).

### III. The \_\_\_\_\_ for Excelling (4:1)

*“...you received instruction from us on how to live your life and please God...”*

- A. The power for excelling in spiritual progress only occurs according to time-tested, God-approved, Scripturally-defined principles. Paul had instructed the Thessalonians on how they ought to live (Acts 17:2-4; Romans 12:9-21; Galatians 5:16-26; 6:6-10; Ephesians 4:25-5:21; 6:10-18; Colossians 3:12-4:6).
- B. They already knew the fundamentals. To please God, they needed to:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ their sins regularly (Psalm 32:5; 1 John 1:9);
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ continually (Psalm 27:8; Philippians 4:6; James 1:6);
  3. Be \_\_\_\_\_ in all things (Matthew 20:26-28; Ephesians 4:1-2);
  4. Be \_\_\_\_\_ with God’s will (Psalm 37:16; Hebrews 13:5);
  5. Seek God’s will in God’s \_\_\_\_\_ (Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17);
  6. Be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ’s Name (Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:12);
  7. \_\_\_\_\_ the lost (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:20);
  8. \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord’s Supper – Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-28);
  9. \_\_\_\_\_ for each other (Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:3-4);
  10. \_\_\_\_\_ God in marriage and family (Colossians 3:18-21; Titus 2:1-8);
  11. Be diligent in \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 3:8; Ephesians 2:10).

### IV. The \_\_\_\_\_ to Progress in Excelling (4:1-2)

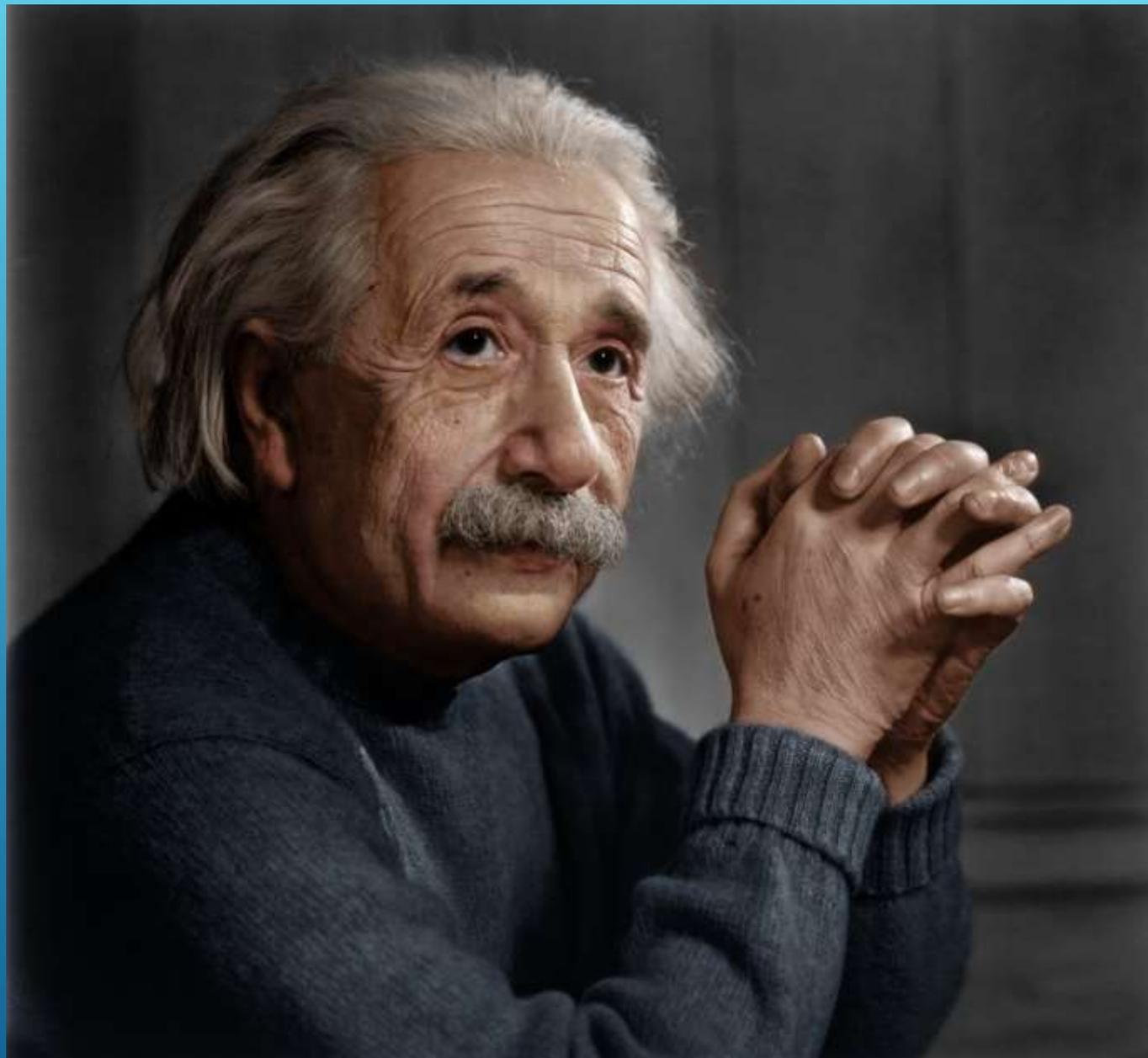
*“For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.”*

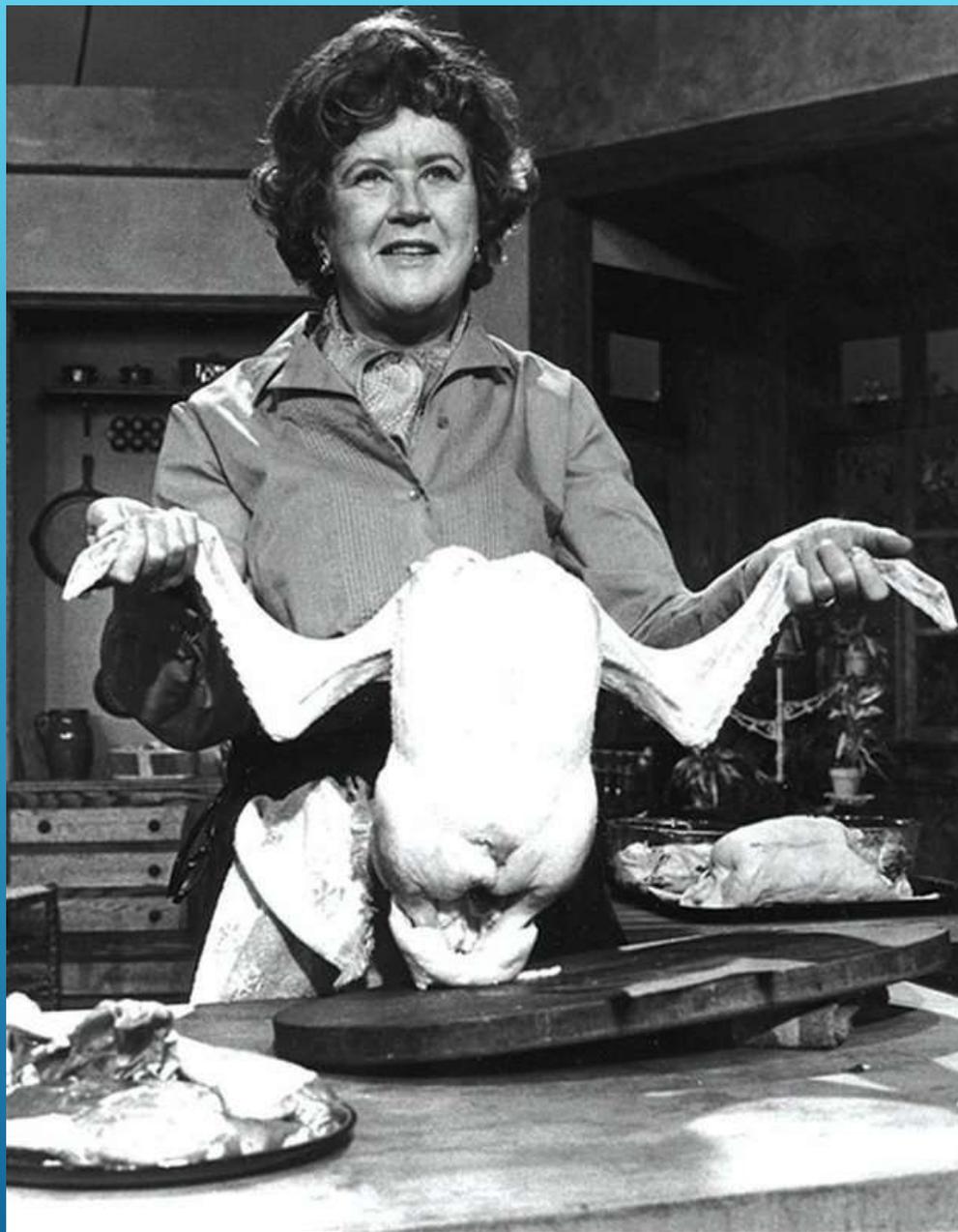
- A. Spiritual growth is not \_\_\_\_\_; it is a lifelong process.  
1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Hebrews 12:1-2
- B. Obedience to Scripture is \_\_\_\_\_ for Christians.  
*“Commandments” = “strong, authoritative directives delivered by commander to subordinates”*
- C. When the Apostle Paul speaks, he is authorized by Jesus Christ the Lord.  
Matthew 7:21; John 15:14-17; 1 John 2:3-5

## **2 Corinthians 3:18**

Knowing Christ by seeing Him in Scripture produces constant spiritual growth.



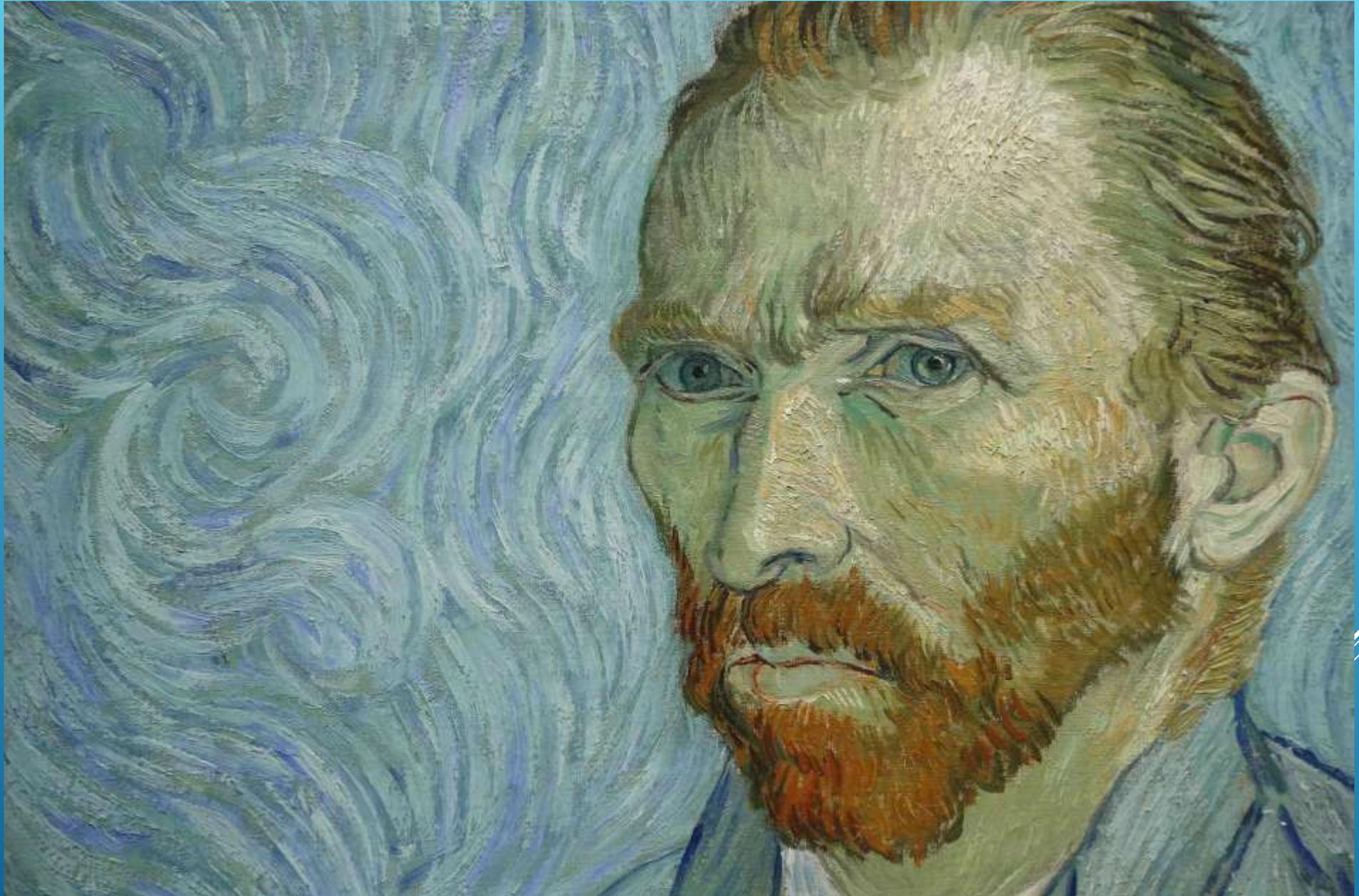


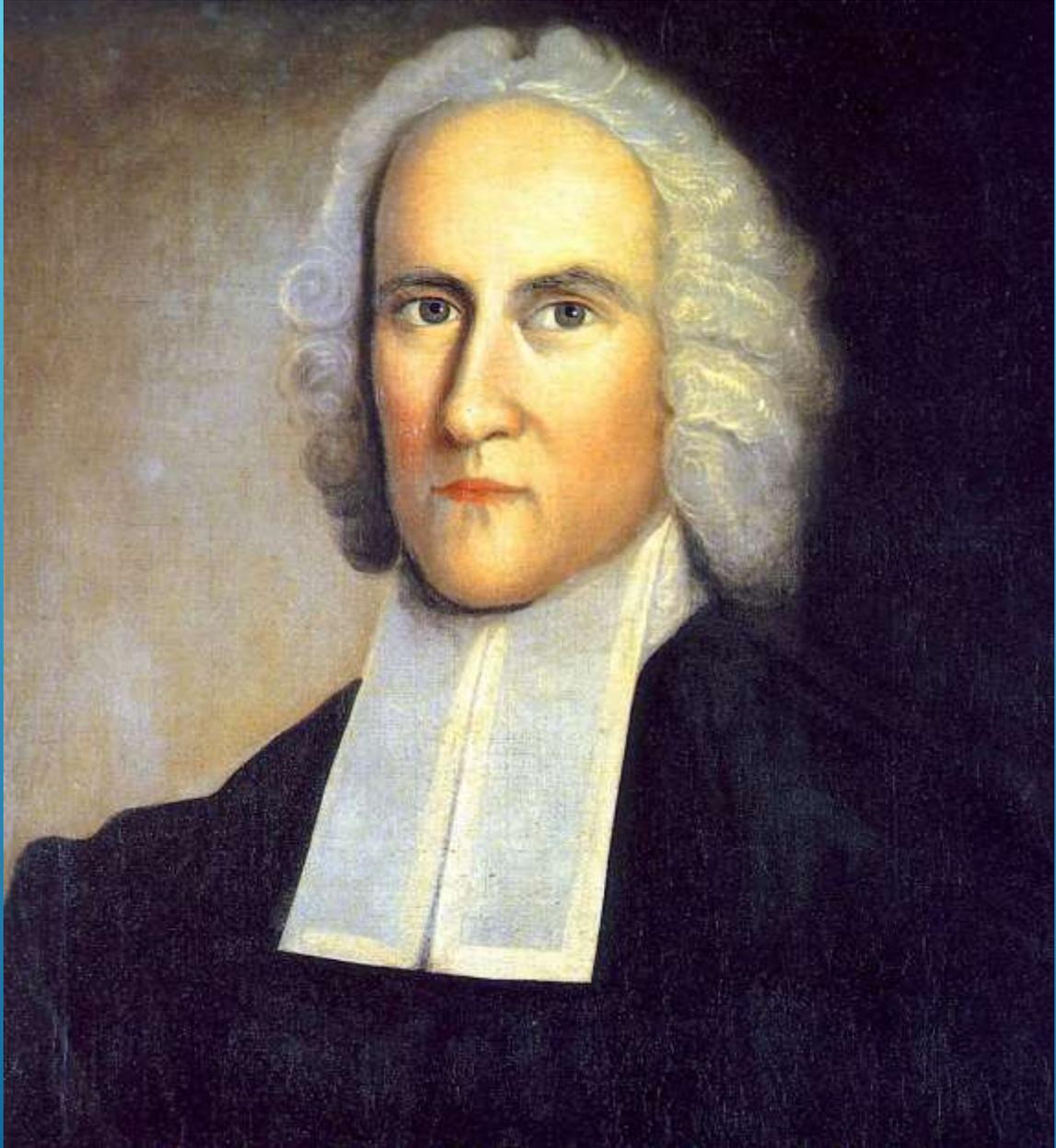




STEVE POWELL/AGENCY IMAGES/RETNA







# THE PRIZEFIGHTER

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

To excel means to “**abound**, to be abundantly supplied, to **overflow**, exist in full quantity, to be **advanced**; extraordinary or surpassing.”

**PRIORITY** OF EXCELLING

For Christians to become  
*spiritually* extraordinary,  
excelling at a higher degree!

APOSTLE PAUL'S DESIRE

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Spiritual progress motivated by  
*desire* to *know* God.

**POWER** FOR EXCELLING



*“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul longs for You O God. My soul thirsts for God, the Living God. When shall I come and see God?”*

PSALM 42:1

*“O taste and see that the  
LORD is good; how blessed is  
the man who takes refuge in  
Him.”*

PSALM 34:8

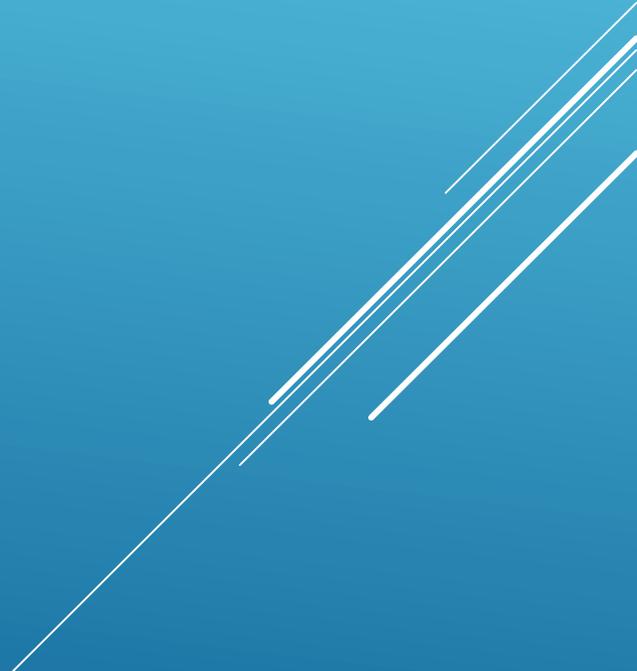
*“O God, You are my God; I shall seek you early; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh faints for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”*

PSALM 63:1

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For all Jesus followers, the pursuit of knowing God is the basic component of spiritual growth.

FUNDAMENTAL

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More **information** about the Bible  
and **participating** in spiritual  
activities...not linked to the  
desire to know God better...will  
not bring spiritual **growth**.

CAUTION

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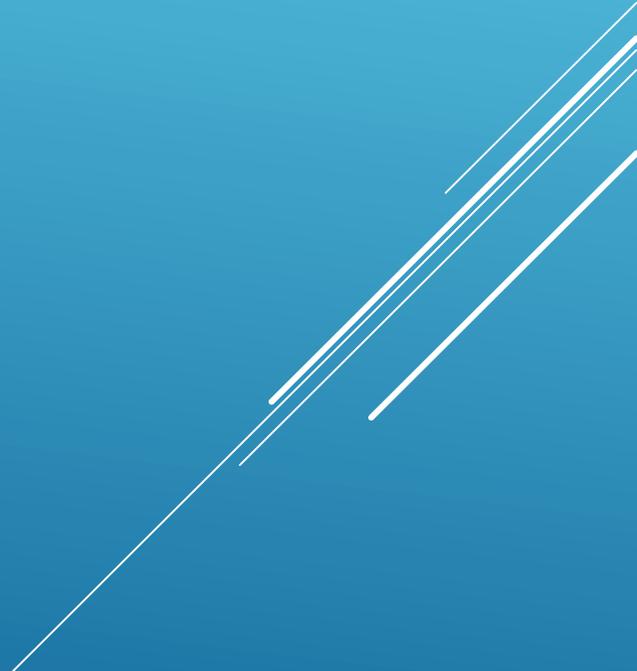
The power to spiritually excel  
does not come from self, but  
from the power of the  
*indwelling* Christ.

POWER TO EXCEL

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*“I in them and You in Me,  
Father, that they may be  
perfected (matured).”*

JOHN 17:23

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*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

**GALATIANS 2:20**

*“And we know that the Son of God has come and given us understanding so that we may know Him who is True; and we are in Him who is True, in His Son Jesus Christ.”*

1 JOHN 5:20

**Confess** sins regularly;

**Pray** continually;

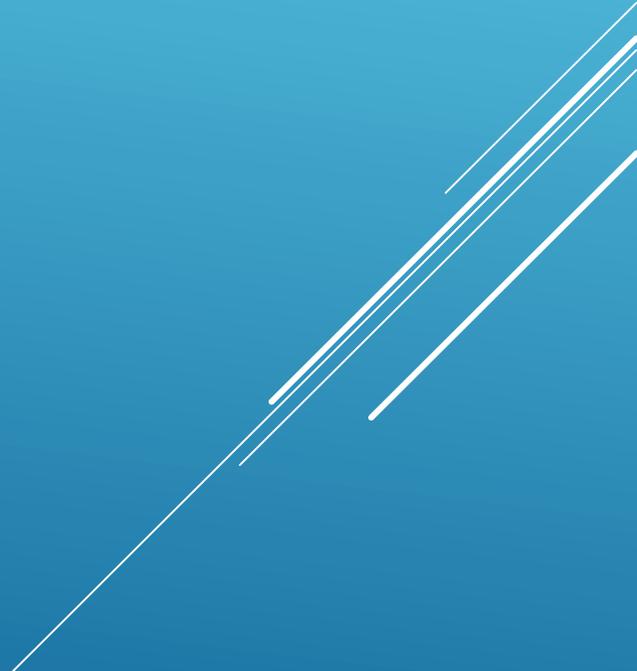
Be **humble** in all things;

Be **content** with God's will;

**PRINCIPLES** FOR EXCELLING

Seek God's will in His **Word**;  
Be willing to **suffer** for Christ;  
**Evangelize** the lost;  
**Celebrate** Lord's Supper;

FUNDAMENTALS

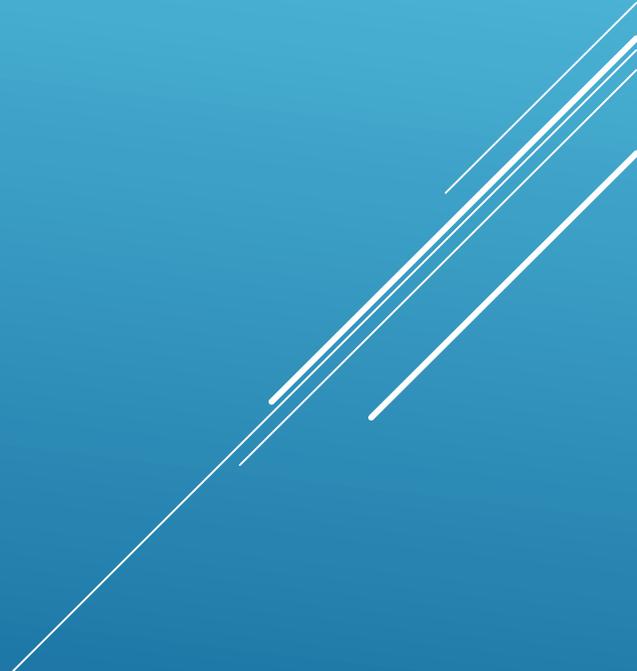
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Care for each other;  
Honor marriage & family;  
Be diligent in service.

FUNDAMENTALS

Spiritual growth is not *instantaneous* or automatic; it is a lifelong process.

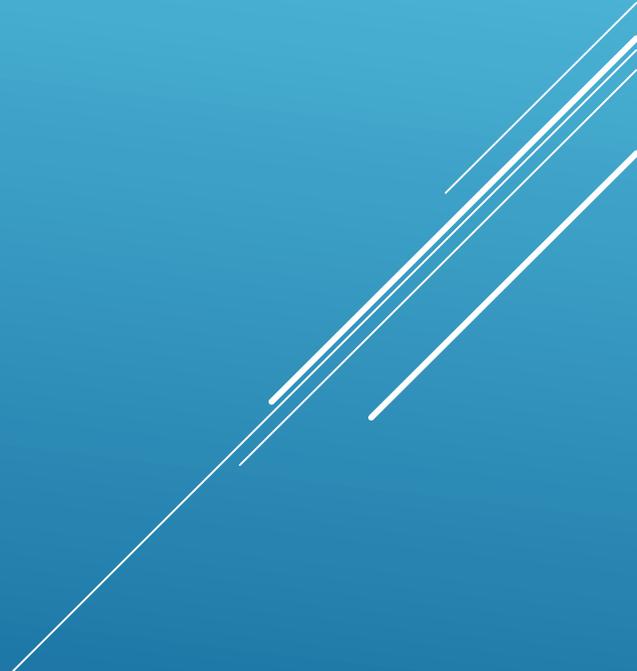
PRESSURE TO PROGRESS

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Obedience to Scripture is  
**mandatory** for Christians.

Christ – Paul – Scripture  
=AUTHORITY

UNDER PRESSURE

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Knowing Christ by seeing Him  
in Scripture produces constant  
spiritual growth.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

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