

Title: Excel Still More

The church in Thessalonica was a great congregation, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3. As the apostle Paul wrote to them, he reminded them of their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in the Lord.

- This congregation believed the words of the apostle as being the word of God, 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Paul wrote, *“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”*
- They had turned away from following idols to following the true and living God, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10. Paul said, *“For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”*
- They continued in the faith even though they had difficulties as a result of obeying the gospel, Acts 17:1-9.

When you read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, you will see that these Christians continued to grow. Paul wrote, *“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.”*

There’s much more that we could say concerning this local church. I think most Christians would have thoroughly loved being a part of this church. Yet, whenever I read Thessalonians, I’m always intrigued by what Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4:1. He said, *“Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.”* Did you notice how Paul said, “...abound more and more?” Some translations say, “...Excel still more.” Isn’t that amazing? While this congregation was on the right

track, Paul said that they still had room to grow. They were to continue to abound in their walk with the Lord.

The same can be said about the church at West Main. We are extremely blessed at this congregation. Yet there is still room to grow. The reality is every congregation and every Christian should abound more and more in Christ. As a congregation we should never become satisfied with where we are. As Christians, we continue to grow. Christians grow. That's what we do. The apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 3:18, "...But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." We continue to excel still more. We strive to become even more like our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

As we begin a new month, let's abound more and more. As we labor together as a family, let's strive to excel still more.

In all the things we do, let us always remember that we do it to give God the glory.