

Paul's Ponderings

As we dig into the word excellent, or excellence I thought it best to begin with the dictionary, which defines it as; extremely good, outstanding, or used to indicate approval. It's from a Latin word that means being preeminent. I find it interesting that the use of the word in the English language has decreased significantly over time, and I wonder why.



Paul Stasi
Executive Director

Excellent

If we look at the Bible, the Hebrew word for excellent used in Proverbs means bright, clear, honorable, precious, reputation, whereas the Hebrew word used in Daniel is closer to our English definition which means exceeding.

Daniel 5:12 says that Daniel had "an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems." Later in Daniel 6:3, it says that Daniel became "distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him." It was because of that that the king set him over the whole kingdom.


The Bible also mentions an excellent spirit in Proverbs 17:27 which says that "a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit."

Some say that the spirit of excellence is meant to point people to God. When someone has an excellent spirit, their life will speak for them, and they won't need to say anything.

An excellent spirit is a heart attitude that can lead to success, favor, and fulfillment in life. It's a spirit that's anchored in God and can help people get through trials and tribulations. Looking at the New Testament, Galatians 5:25 says that we live by the spirit, so let's keep in step with the spirit. Romans 8:14 says to be led by the spirit. As we let Holy Spirit lead us, we walk in an excellent spirit.

At CRM, we teach those in our programs about the spirit of excellence in their recovery personal process. This leads to life transformation and recovery.

This is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit and your gifts and offerings.

Thank you for being a part of changed lives. 

The Antidote for When You're at Odds

Studies show that gratitude has a positive effect on our mental and physical wellbeing. That's good news as we head into a season focused on giving thanks.



But challenging things accompany this season too. As friends and families gather, passions run deep, emotions run strong, and common ground can feel shaky. Practicing gratitude together may just be the antidote for hard feelings and harsh words. Here's how you can focus on giving thanks and pursuing peace:

Count your blessings. Tell stories of joy, the kindness of others, and help received along the way. This puts the spotlight on giving thanks together, not differences of opinion.

Make your gratitude active. Set extra places at your Thanksgiving table and invite college students who can't make it home for the holiday. Volunteer together at a local nonprofit.

Think forward. Leaving a gift in your will or estate plan to City Rescue Mission is a lasting expression of gratitude. The holidays provide a wonderful opportunity to talk about this with your family, reflect together with thankfulness, and move forward in peace and unity.

For the full version of this article, request a FREE copy by contacting Angela A. Washington at (904) 421-5147 or awashington@crmjax.org - Visit crmjax.legacywill.org to bless your family with an up-to-date will.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

City Rescue Mission is in need of the following:

- (6) AEDS \$1,500 each
- ECG Machine \$5,000
- Homes of Hope Roof \$15,000
- (1) 5,000 BTU Window AC units with heat \$500 each
- Refrigerator New \$1,000
- Electric stove New \$800
- Bus passes
- Clothing, shoes, and accessories for men, women, and children for Thirft Store
- (6) Music Stands

Urgent Needs

Contact: Angela Washington
awashington@crmjax.org
(904) 421-5147



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New Life NEWS

NOVEMBER 2024

MARY "I WAS GIVEN ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY"

As a teen mom, Mary had the weight of the world thrust upon her shoulders. Overwhelmed and unprepared for the challenges of parenthood, Mary wandered down a dark path... her life crumbled around her... and she lost her will to live. At the Mission, through gifts and prayers from friends like you, Mary has been given a second chance to walk with God and is healing physically, spiritually and emotionally. We're so grateful for your continued partnership and generosity.

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MARY'S STORY

"I WAS GIVEN ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY"

Mary was forced to grow up way too soon... when she became a teenage mother.

She missed out on normal rites of passage like going to prom, playing sports and dreaming about what she would be someday. While her friends were going to football games, Mary was changing diapers and worrying about how to feed and care for her child... while still a child herself.

Lacking life skills and support to be the kind of parent her little one deserved, Mary's days were filled with conflict, turmoil and anxiety. Unaware of the potential consequences, she turned to alcohol to ease her despair, which began a spiral to addiction that further eroded her stability and self-esteem. Then, tragically, she lost her daughter... and hit rock bottom.

"I didn't care anymore. I went into a really dark, empty place. I lost all hope."

When she considered ending her life, she knew she had to get help.

"I had saved a little piece of myself, and I took that little piece and pulled myself up enough to reach out."

"I had lost my spirit and stopped believing in everything. I thought that God had gone away, so I went away as well."



Years earlier, Mary's brother had reclaimed his sobriety at the Mission, and he suggested our holistic LifeBuilders Program could help Mary, too. When she was greeted at our door with a smile, Mary knew she had come to the right place.

"I felt I was getting another opportunity at life."

Through faith-based counseling, Bible study and life-skills development, Mary is gaining the tools she needs to transform every aspect of her life. Most importantly, with a renewed sense of God's presence and grace, she's learning to forgive herself for past mistakes and transgressions.

"That has really made a difference in my life, because my heart was so hard."

Mary is grateful for the many opportunities the Mission offers – including workforce development and education assistance – and plans to return to school. As she's grown in her faith, she has also discovered her servant's heart and wants to help others through a career in nursing or home healthcare.

Yet after losing so much – her childhood innocence and precious daughter – Mary says she's especially thankful for everyday blessings like a home, a loving family and a Christ-filled church. As she prepares to leave our care, she looks forward to one day being a godly wife and

mother who will raise her children to know His love as she does.

"I used to see myself as a nobody. Now I see myself as a child of God. One of His precious, precious children."

PLEASE WELCOME...

JEREMIAH STOKES, CRM CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



Jeremiah Stokes, the new Chief Financial Officer at City Rescue Mission (CRM), brings over two decades of leadership experience to this vital role. Jeremiah's extensive operations background—especially in finance, strategic planning, and human resources—equips him well for CRM's mission-focused financial oversight.

Years ago, Jeremiah's heart was stirred through his involvement in a prison ministry, where he saw the struggles faced by those marginalized in society. "Jesus was very specific when he said in Matthew 25:40, 'Whatever you've done to the least of these you've also done to me.'" Jeremiah views CRM's work as a profound calling, one that aligns with his personal mission to support those seeking a hand up, not a handout.

As CFO, he is focused on strengthening CRM's financial transparency, stewardship, and donor engagement. Jeremiah emphasizes CRM's commitment to clear, accountable reporting and ongoing transparency to maintain high ratings with agencies like Charity Navigator.

Jeremiah acknowledges that our nation currently faces economic uncertainty. Nonetheless, he trusts the Lord's ability to touch hearts: "We are the most charitable nation on the planet, and I believe that people will continue to engage in charities they care about. Our job is to make sure we get the message out – we are so much more than a homeless shelter. We provide life care and soul care. We not only save people's futures here on earth; we help them build a foundation for eternity by establishing a relationship with Jesus Christ."

"I see my role as a "silent partner" to our frontline staff." His goal is to ensure that every dollar is allocated properly so that our program participants receive the best care possible and that staff facing our community have all the resources they need.

Beyond CRM, Jeremiah, a Marine Corps veteran, a husband and father of three, enjoys spending time outdoors and engaging in his church community. He has a special place in his heart for both veterans and financial literacy. Guided by his broad life experiences and strong commitment to service, Jeremiah is enthusiastic about contributing to CRM's impact on the Jacksonville community.

CONGRATULATIONS



LIFEBUILDERS GRADUATING CLASS OF FALL 2024



Shoebboxes of Love



Help City Rescue Mission spread **HOPE** and *JOY* this holiday season. CRM is now collecting shoeboxes filled with hygiene items to distribute during our annual Christmas Meal to our neighbors in need.

DRIVE DATES
OCT. 1 - DEC. 16



Please do not put money or gift cards in the box. If you wish to make a donation for us to purchase items, send it to the address below.

DROP OFF:
City Rescue Mission McDuff Campus
426 McDuff Ave. S., Jacksonville, FL 32254

CONTACT (904) 421-5147 or
Volunteers@crmjax.org

Join Our 2025 Difference Makers GALA COMMITTEE!

ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

WE INVITE YOU TO SERVE ON THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR OUR 2025 DIFFERENCE MAKER GALA! JOIN US AS WE WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENT THAT SUPPORTS CITY RESCUE MISSION'S VITAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN BEING PART OF THE PLANNING AND BRINGING YOUR UNIQUE VISION TO THIS YEAR'S GALA, PLEASE CONTACT **ANGELA WASHINGTON** AT 904-421-4157 OR **AWASHINGTON@CRMJAX.ORG** BY **NOVEMBER 29**.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO COLLABORATING WITH DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU TO MAKE THIS EVENT TRULY IMPACTFUL!

Please remember City Rescue Mission this **Giving Tuesday** December 3.

