

## MONDAY MANNA

20 April 2020

### SETTING THE BAR AT EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

By Robert J. Tamasy

When was the last time you did business with someone and were overwhelmed in a positive way? An experience that could only be described in words like “Wow!” or “Unbelievable”?

Perhaps it was a manufacturer’s representative that went far beyond what you requested to make certain that your needs were met. Or a retail store that went the extra mile to ensure that you were totally satisfied with your purchase? Maybe a restaurant where the food was exceptional, the atmosphere was outstanding, and the service you received – from the time you arrived until the moment you left – exceeded any expectations you might have had.

In today’s world, such experiences seem to be more the exception than the rule. Increasingly, it seems, in the name of making a profit, attempting to reduce costs, or in some cases, pure laziness, service beyond the norm is rare. Instead of being recipients of “the best,” we find ourselves forced to accept what is deemed to be only “good enough.”

Over the years, however, I have encountered a few enterprises that made exceptional service a part of their mission statements. I recall a transportation company that followed the motto, “Our goal is to exceed your expectations.” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if that were the common practice, rather than the rarity?

There are a number of passages in the Bible that speak to this virtue, underscoring how valuable an attitude of exceeding expectations can be. It all starts with God, our Creator, who desires to serve as our model for excellence in all we do. Here are some principles about *exceeding expectations* that we find in the Scriptures:

**Doing immeasurably more.** How would you like to expect service providers to do everything abundantly for you – in abundance? This is what the Bible promises God wants to do for us – and in us and through us: *“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly (immeasurably) beyond all that we ask of think, according to the power that works within us.”* (Ephesians 3:20).

**Remembering whom we are serving.** Typically, how we approach our work depends on how we view those we are serving. Sometimes we are tempted to do just enough to get by, but if we keep in mind who ultimately will evaluate our efforts, that will make a tremendous difference in the quality of our work and the attitudes that define our labours. *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving”* (Colossians 3:23-24).

**Exceeding expectations even with those we dislike.** In most cases, we are willing to do a little extra, beyond what is expected, for people we like, as well as individuals we hope will show us their favour. But what about people we do not like, those who seem to have made it their personal mission to make us miserable? Jesus gave us these radical commands: *“You have heard it 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. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles...”* (Matthew 5:38-41).

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### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

Can you think of an example of a time when someone you were doing business with – an individual or a company – exceeded any and all expectations you might have had? What was that like? What was its effect on you? How common, or rare, have you found experiences like that to be?

What about your own attitude toward your customers, employees, even your peers: Has the idea of “exceeding their expectations” been a part of your thinking? How often is that the case for you? Explain your answer.

Why is it so easy – and so common – to settle for less than the very best, to take the approach of producing what is “just good enough” and nothing beyond that?

In both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, we are told to “love your neighbour as yourself.” Leviticus 19:18 is one such passage, Matthew 12:31 and James 2:8 are others. In what ways should this principle inform one's commitment to exceed expectations?

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:*

Exodus 20:1-17  
Matthew 7:12  
John 13:34-35  
Romans 13:8-10  
1 Peter 1:22