

October 10, 2021 The Heart of Freedom Fellowship Series: Servant Leadership
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The success of competition is sometimes how we measure greatness in individuals. How do you define "greatness"? Where does it come from? The question of greatness was on the disciples' hearts. Who was the greatest? We all desire greatness. Nobody wants to be average.

Mark 9:33-37 *They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."*

Jesus was with His 12 disciples and goes off to the mountain taking 3 of them with Him. The transfiguration happens as these 3 watch. Jesus explains it as they come down from the mountain and then tells the 3 not to tell anyone. Peter, James, and John then begin to discuss who is the greatest. The disciples were already a select group of Jesus' closest friends but they desired to be first. Jesus asked them the question... "What were you talking about?" They were silent but Jesus knew what they had been discussing and gives them the instruction on being great.

Jesus was telling them that their approach to greatness was wrong, but not the desire. The enemy tries to destroy what God has created. This happens with "greatness." The Kingdom of God needs great leaders to operate in what He has called us to. Greatness gets the emphasis wrongly placed on the physical instead of the spiritual. Greatness is found in the spiritual truths of what's inside of us.

We tend to get into the comparison game. The world will tell you to be cutthroat, to be at the front of the line... Jesus tells us to be willing to put ourselves in the position of last if we want to be first. Willingly. God wants to change our direction to match His.

Acts 4:32-35 *And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.*

This makes us uncomfortable as we see the outcome but not the process. It's like being excited about a destination but not the process to get there. The result of this passage is that they gave all to meet others' needs. What we don't see as the motivator is their love for each other - their willingness to serve one another - one heart and one soul.

We can go in circles trying to see who is better and look at why we are better than others - only looking at the external things. This first church was unified in their heart and their love for one another. Greatness comes when we are willing to move ourselves to the back and serve others. The church in Acts was growing greatly, not because they were giving up possessions (external), but because they had a love for others (internal).

Mark 9:36 *Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."* We serve our children without a lot of gratitude in return but it's joyful to us. The child is there to pour into. Jesus wanted us to learn how to serve in this way without receiving a return. The greatest serve without expectation of return.

Jesus talks about abiding in **John 15**. and in verse 5... *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.* Abide means to wait with expectation. We live in a limited world, can't meet all needs, and then we get disappointed... in marriages, friendships, relationships with kids, relationships with parents. Jesus says we will bear much fruit when abiding. The fruit will come from inside me. **Galatians 5:22-23** *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* Are we lacking in one of these areas? We tend to look for external things to meet spiritual problems. The abiding results in over-flowing that others can pick abundantly from it. It will be His provision and there will be enough.

Philippians 4:19 *And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* This frees me up to meet others' needs - to serve without expectation. Then greatness happens. First, we must know the source!

How do you define "greatness"?

How can approaching greatness be wrong but not the desire to be great?

What role does abiding play in desiring greatness?