

**General Topics :: Do you want to be great in the kingdom???****Do you want to be great in the kingdom???** - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/11/15 11:16

As I was reading some posts, I was reminded of what it truly means to be great in the kingdom of God. There are many in the kingdom that I long to meet and allow them to impart to me even some of what God has given them. Most of these people are unknown by name to the world, but well known in heaven.

Do You Want to be Great in the Kingdom of God?

Have you ever felt a desire in your heart to be great? Do you see yourself now or in the future as a leader? Maybe you have very clear dreams and visions of what God has called you to, or perhaps you just have a feeling deep within that says, "I know I am meant for more than this." Have you ever felt frustration at leadership opportunities that never seem to come? If so, join the club. You are not alone in those feelings. Every one of us has a desire inside of us to be great, and part of this desire to be great is the desire to lead. Did you know that this desire to lead and to be great is a Godly one? God has as His desire and purpose for each and every one of us greatness in His kingdom.

Revelation 1: 5-6 says, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The term king is the Greek word *basileus* and means a leader of the people, a sovereign, or a prince. God intends for us to be great in His kingdom, and He has placed in every one of us the call of leadership. 1 Timothy 3:1 says if any man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good thing. A bishop is an overseer in the body of Christ. He has placed upon him a great responsibility which he is charged to fulfill faithfully in the office he holds. There is not one of us who is not called to lead in some capacity, and to make a substantive impact for the kingdom of God. Some are called to the responsibility of full time oversight of or ministry to the body of Christ such as elders or five fold equipping ministries. Others are called to lead in business as they help fund the day to day workings of ministry. Others are called to lead as they win men and women to Christ and then disciple them to maturity.

Many of us think that a desire to be great comes from pride or arrogance. We think it would be presumptuous and prideful of us to recognize and embrace a desire for greatness, and a leadership role in the body of Christ. Others see leadership as something that is far beyond our reach. We have such a negative self image that we cannot imagine ourselves doing anything great, for the kingdom of God, or anywhere else for that matter. Others see greatness and leadership as the ultimate goal to be gained at any price, and go after it through self-exaltation and self-ambition. They follow after a desire for greatness and leadership that has been perverted from that which God legitimately intends.

What is God's plan for greatness in His kingdom? Mark 9:33-35. And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

James and John, the two sons of Zebedee came to Jesus and asked Him to grant them a request. Jesus asked them what they wanted Him to do. They asked Him to grant that they could sit one on His right hand and one on His left in His coming kingdom. They were acting on the assumption that His kingdom was to be a worldly one, and they wanted to be great in that kingdom. Jesus gave them this response recorded in Mark 10:42-45. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus highlighted the difference in two distinct and opposing leadership models. The first we will call the *archo* model. Jesus said that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. The Greek word for rule is the word *archo*. It means to be first in political rank or power or to be chief. The word for lordship is *katakuriuo*, and means to bring someone under your power, to subdue them, or to bring them into subjection. When we were children, we often played a game called king of the hill. In this game, we found a small pile of dirt, sand, or snow with steep

sides, and tried to be the one who could ascend to the top and hold off all others who were trying to take over our position by pushing them back down the hill. In the mean time, everyone else was trying to take over the position of king of the hill by pulling the person who had succeeded in gaining the top down. This children's game continues to be played out in the lives of everyone who buys into the archo model of leadership. In this model, ascendancy over others is the goal. He who can command the highest rank, the most money, the best office, the most power is the leader. In the archo model of leadership, this is the ultimate goal.

The second model stands in stark contrast to the archo style of leadership. We will call it the diakonos model. Jesus goes on to say, in Mark 10, whoever desires to be great among you must be your minister. This word minister is the Greek word diakonos. It means one who executes the commands of another, especially those of his master. It is the origin of our word deacon. The very word seems to hold no leadership or greatness whatsoever. In fact, another definition of this word is a waiter, one who serves the more important people their food and drink. Jesus was telling his disciples that the way to be great in the kingdom of God was to subject yourself to a master, and serve him in whatever he tells you to do. According to Jesus, the way to the top is to intentionally place yourself at the bottom and serve the body of Christ.

Some of you may be thinking about now, "So, they way to get the recognition that I want is to begin to work hard and serve others? So how long does this take? How long must I serve others before I get recognized and put into leadership? How long does it take to work my way up?" If you are thinking any of these thoughts, you are still operating under the world's corrupt way of thinking. We are not talking about a three step program to the position you covet, we are talking about total annihilation of our own desires, and total surrender to serve God and to serve others. We are talking about a total change in how we see greatness and leadership. 1 Peter 5: 2-6, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

How often do we see this scenario played out in the body of Christ? The up and coming evangelist or pastor who knows that he has a call on his life, but has not yet surrendered his own desires to the Lord, cannot wait for his shot at the pulpit. He just knows that if he can get the chance to speak, that he will make a good impression, and will be on his way to that huge ministry he so greatly desires. Godly and experienced leadership in the body recognizes the unsundered ambitions and asks the young man to serve the body by cleaning the restrooms. "Who, me? But I am called to preach. You are making a mistake. I have so much to offer. You say this is the only way to get where I want to go? Well, OK, but how long do I have to do this before I get to take the platform?" We must realize that as long as taking a platform is our desire and goal, we have no business taking a platform. It is only when we can see the platform as a place of grave responsibility and humble service to the body of Christ that we are ready to stand there, or in any other place of leadership in the body of Christ.

The diakonos model of leadership is not always an easy one to follow. It goes against everything that is in our flesh. When man fell, his God given desires were corrupted. The desire for greatness in the eyes of God became a desire for greatness in the eyes of man, and the desire to lead by serving became a desire to lord over others. Our lust for power and recognition will hinder us from realizing our desires for greatness and leadership in the kingdom of God. Jesus said in Matthew 16:24-26, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" We must surrender our own perverted desires to the Lord to realize His true desires in our heart. This happens when we focus on Him and begin to delight in Him. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart, Psalm 37:4. I think we have often misinterpreted this verse. It does not say that the way to get what we want is to delight ourselves in the Lord. Instead, delighting ourselves in Him, learning to love Him more than anything else, will put to death the old perverse desires in our hearts, and awaken us to true desire, Godly desire.

Our own insecurities often hinder us in this area as well. Insecurities can cause us to feel like we have nothing to offer. They cause us to look at everyone else as so far superior to us spiritually that we despair of even trying to function in the body of Christ. We turn inward and shut down. Insecurities can also cause us to develop jealousies of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are sure that someone else is going to outdo us and take the place we thought was meant for us. Often these two tendencies work together in us and we bounce back and forth between feelings of inadequacy, and shrinking from any form of responsibility as a leader, to jealously guarding any position we perceive to be ours lest someone else knock us out of our place. Both of these tendencies must be surrendered to God, and we must learn to find our true

e identity and security in Him.

He loves us more than anyone else can possibly love us. His plans for us are so far superior to any plans that we can lay ourselves. Ephesians 3: 17-20 says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," Notice that by faith, Christ dwells in our hearts, and can cause us to put down deep, unmoveable roots in His love. It is only through our being grounded and rooted in His love that our insecurities can be dealt with, and our security truly rest in Him. When we are lost in Him, and His power, given through His Holy Spirit, works effectively in us, then we will see the things He desires to do in us come to manifestation.

The only way we can overcome the things that hinder us in our pursuit of greatness and leadership in the kingdom of God is through His grace. We cannot attain unto it by our own effort. When we begin to draw near to Him, and He draws near to us, His grace, His Holy Spirit, His power deals with these things inside of us. We no longer have to struggle to overcome them in our own effort. It really is a bit foolish to think that we can become the Godly servant of all, and attain unto greatness in the kingdom of God by our own effort, when trying to be great on our own effort is what prevents us from attaining to Godly greatness to begin with.

So how do we properly relate to that desire for greatness that God has placed within all of us? First, we must have revelation of the appropriateness of the desire God has placed in our lives. We must realize how much He loves us and what He desires for us to be and to do. Suppose you are sitting in a service in your church fellowship, and the minister asks everyone to stand that really desires a position of greatness in the kingdom of God. Would you stand? If you would remain seated, looking around, and wondering who is going to be bold enough, even arrogant enough to stand up, then you do not yet have a revelation of God's desire for greatness in your life. Pray that God would burn His desires for you deep within your heart.

Second, we must die to our own desire for leadership and greatness. This is possibly the hardest thing for us to do. God, if I let go of my right of self-determination, what will become of me? It often looks to us like we are giving up every hope we ever had of being great. Well, that is exactly what we are doing. We could never hope to be great in the kingdom of God on our own anyway, and any greatness achieved outside of that which comes from God is empty and will lead, ultimately, to dissatisfaction and destruction.

Third, we must submit ourselves to the Lord and to His ordained leadership in our lives, and begin to serve. Ask those who God has ordained to leadership over you what you can do to contribute to building God's kingdom where you are at. You may be asked to clean a building, serve at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter, make repairs, set up chairs, visit the widows, or a myriad of other jobs that those who have been called to wait on the Lord in prayer and in the word simply cannot do by themselves.

Then, expect God to show up and manifest His power in your life, even as you serve. Read Acts chapters 6 and 7. The original apostles were busy with the work God had called them to, and the Grecians complained that the daily delivery of food to the widows was being neglected. The apostles chose seven Holy Spirit filled men with wisdom to oversee and perform this daily ministry. These guys were the original meals on wheels coordinators. This was really a very important task. These men spent their days coming up with sources of food, and delivering this food to the needy widows in the church. No doubt they ministered from the word, and in prayer to these elderly women as they went. Stephen's testimony is one of the most notable in scripture. I want to highlight some important lessons from Stephen's life.

Stephen's faithfulness did not begin with this position of servanthood to the body of Christ. He had proven himself faithful for some time before this. He was chosen for this task because he was of honest report among the brethren. Stephen was a man who spent time with the Lord. He was also chosen because of the power of the Holy Spirit that was evident in his life. As an aside, I am becoming more and more convinced that being filled with the Holy Spirit should be one of the most basic requirements for any form of Christian leadership. Stephen was a man who spent much time in the Word of God himself. When questioned by Pharisees, he was able to give a powerful answer. You see, Stephen's life was devoted to knowing and loving God before it was devoted to serving God. His service to God flowed out of his relationship with God. Stephen was not looking to become something great in man's eyes, nor was he trying to get himself placed in some position of oversight. No doubt Stephen was known to the apostles as a man who was serving faithfully wherever he could, and as a result, he was chosen to oversee a ministry in the body of Christ of greater responsibility and opportunity to serve.

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We must change our way of thinking about leadership and greatness if we are to ever be great in God's kingdom. In the world's corrupted system, there are very few great ones. A man or woman is considered great because they have transcended the accomplishments of their peers in some area of life. They are great because they have somehow reached the top. In God's system, greatness comes as we lead from the bottom, and every believer is ultimately intended to attain unto that level of leadership and greatness. The world sees greatness as a position that has been attained or a task that has been accomplished. In God's system, greatness is measured by the degree to which we have become willing servants who are totally at God's disposal. In the world's system, greatness comes as we exalt and promote ourselves. In God's system, greatness will only come after we have crucified our carnal desire to be recognized and have ceased from trying to promote ourselves. God's desire is that we all become great in His kingdom, but that can only come as we submit to His definition of greatness, and to His system of becoming great.

Re: Do you want to be great in the kingdom???, on: 2009/11/15 11:41

Quote:
-----Have you ever felt a desire in your heart to be great? Do you see yourself now or in the future as a leader?

I do not see myself being a leader, for one thing I can't talk right. But I wouldn't want to be great. I'd run from greatness, like Saul, I'd be hiding amongst the stuff. 1 Sam 10:22

Re: Do you want to be great in the kingdom??? - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/11/15 11:53

Quote:
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Wonderful and true message from God's Word, Travis. Thank you for this post. May all who aspire to leadership in the kingdom read and take to heart this direct lesson from the Lord Jesus. Humility and sacrifice are the true marks of leadership in the Kingdom.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/11/15 13:49

DeepThinker said:

Quote:
-----I do not see myself being a leader, for one thing I can't talk right. But I wouldn't want to be great. I'd run from greatness, like Saul, I'd be hiding amongst the stuff. 1 Sam 10:22

Seems as though I recall another called man of God who said, "Not me, I cannot talk right." ;-)

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/11/15 14:42

Hi Travis,

This is a wonderful encouragement and exhortation !

How different Christ's kingdom is from the world's kingdom- how diametrically opposed are the goals of these 2 kingdoms

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The world's kingdom is well portrayed by some of the t.v. commercials that can be seen these days. For example the Oil of Olay motto : "because you're worth it".

In contrast, Jesus said that he was "meek and lowly of heart" and he washed his disciple's feet. What....the king of the universe washing the feet of the people he created... !!? Almost unthinkable. Almost too good to be true..But true ! :-)

Your post is very timely, since just today, I wrote the passage from Matthew 20:26-28 (about the need to be a servant if you wanted to great in God's kingdom) on our home 'whiteboard'. This was meant as a verse for our kids to memorize this week, and for us all to focus on.

I believe the following prayer that Evan Roberts prayed reflects the heart of God, and paved the way to the Welsh revival he witnessed :

"Bend me ! Bend me ! Bend me ! Bend us, oh Lord ! "

In Jesus,
John