

5 greatness

God's greatness defines your identity. The definition of greatness is the property possessed by something or someone of outstanding importance or eminence. When it's me, this is as big as my world will ever get. When this Someone of outstanding importance or eminence is God, He establishes your true identity. True greatness comes from our Savior. This is Who He is. This is how God sees you! This is Jesus in you! God made us spirit, soul and body. In our spirit lies what I call the "spark of divinity." It's in your innermost man. Your spark of divinity is a God instilled sense of greatness that you are born with. It is of God and not of you, which is why it's always there. Our body is our outer man. Our soul is our inner man – where our mind, our will, our emotions dwell. Our spirit is our innermost man where God meets us.

When your spark of divinity is ignited by a personal relationship with Jesus, and your innermost man - your spirit engages with your soul - inner man, you start to realize your full potential and glorify God in your gifts. Greatness is sparked by Jesus. You start to recognize that you have significance and you realize others have significance. You matter! When you know you matter, others will matter to you. Great sees the significance in you. Greatness sees the significance in others. I can look in the mirror, smile and praise God. ☺ Or I can take selfies, I can look in the mirror and ... "Ahhh!! ...I am just soo great." But that's as big as my world will get. If you keep yourself on the throne of your life, that's as big as your world will get! That's as good as it gets. That's as good as it will ever be. But when you put God on the throne of your life, the sky is the limit! That's when your world starts to grow.

Turn with me to Phil 2:3: ***"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;" NASB.*** Does anyone have a Message Bible? ***"If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care— then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand."*** Phil 2:1-4. Do you ever recognize how good it feels to serve someone in need? When you take

time to bring a snack, you need to stop and think about someone else's need. Lots of women here go right from the study to work. Are you thinking about bringing something that is nourishing or just bringing anything because you signed up? Most of our snacks reflect the thoughtful gestures of the heart intended to be a blessing to others. Have you ever noticed how good you feel about someone who asks you about yourself and listens? Are you the person in the room asking questions and ready to serve or giving the answers and waiting for someone to serve you?

Don't mistake grandiosity for greatness. Grandiosity means being impressive because of unnecessary largeness or grandeur. Greatness is true importance. The devil's grandiosity puffs up. God's greatness builds up. Grandiosity is about conceit and selfishness. Greatness is about significance and identity. Grandiosity reflects oneself in others. Greatness reflects Jesus in others. Are you seeing Jesus in others? Let's look at Luke 22:24-27 NLT: ***"Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. ²⁵ Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' ²⁶ But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. ²⁷ Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves."*** I needed to let go of my "Miss Feed Me a Grape" attitude and start feeding and serving those who might never be able to reimburse my "benevolence." True generosity is giving without expecting anything in return. This generates greatness. It feels so good to bring out the best in others! Serving while seeing the significance in others, without expecting anything in return feels so good because we recognize that this is about something bigger than our selves! This is God's greatness. God's greatness defines your identity.

Little is great in God's eyes. Jesus said, ***"I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is!" Matt 11:11 NLT.*** Your greatness has nothing to do with external appearance or worldly expectation, but rather living out Kingdom principles that build your spirit and the greatness in you. Because everything God does, everything He speaks to you, everything you do and every way you serve is significant. Little is wonderful in God's eyes. Greatness is not about size but significance.

God's greatness defines your identity. One of the meanings of identity is indistinguishability or "exact sameness." We need to look like little Jesuses!! Is your last name Jesus? Problem: I worship meaningless things because my identity is rooted in what I worship. We are pulling this sentence right out of the heart of 2 Kings 17:15 NLT: **"They worshiped worthless idols, so they became worthless themselves."** Other translations: **"They went after false idols and became false."** ESV. **"And they followed vanity and became vain."** NASB. **"They pursued meaninglessness—and became meaningless themselves."** ISV. Their worship created their identity. I don't want to be a landfill. I want to be Holy Spirit filled. What are you worshipping? You are worthy! You are significant!

The problem is actually the solution: Become what you worship. **"You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased."** Rev 4:11 NLT. Your identity is rooted in what you worship. **"God inhabits the praises of His people."** Psalm 22:3. This is where you find God's greatness. And it's His greatness that defines your identity.

My worship creates my identity. I become what I worship. Create an atmosphere where you nurture your identity in Jesus. Pour your life into someone else with love and kindness. Believe in something bigger than yourself. **"If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all."** Mark 9:35 WEB. God's greatness defines your identity. **Being servant and last of all is not about being less than. It is about lifting others up. It is about honoring humanity and recognizing the significance in others.**

There is greatness in you. We all want to "feel great." In this day and age of "selfies" "be all you can be" "do it for yourself" and "self-fulfillment" it's easy to confuse what greatness truly is. Your life counts. Your life is important. But if you ground your self-image in the world you will miss God's vision of you and for you. Purpose is knowing your life counts. Greatness is knowing someone else's life counts. It is knowing that someone else's life matters and not just your own. Worldly "great" is "I am wonderful!" Greatness is "You are wonderful!" There is greatness in you. God created you with the capacity to perceive the greatness inside your own heart. **"He has planted eternity in the human heart."** Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT. The greatness in you comes from God.

Read with me Matt 11:7-11 NLT: ***“As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. “What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? ⁸Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people with expensive clothes live in palaces. ⁹Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. ¹⁰John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say, ‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way before you.’¹¹ “I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is!”*** Do you know what Jesus is doing right here? Jesus is serving you humility with honor. Humility is a lack of false pride. It is self-acceptance. It’s knowing who you are and who you aren’t. Imagine Him serving you humility with honor on a silver platter! God’s greatness defined Jesus’ identity.

You are unique. Your uniqueness is the foundation of your greatness. Don’t let the devil deceive you into thinking you’re “not like everyone else” as an outcast. There is a big difference between being an outcast and unique. I used to feel like I never fit in. Feeling like an outcast was only a reflection of the toxic shame I felt growing up with family alcoholism. Healthy shame says you did something wrong. Toxic shame says you are wrong. Jesus set me free from toxic shame and the lie that went with it. In understanding God’s Word and Al Anon recovery I learned to see myself as unique, loved and accepted. God said in 1 Pet 2: 9 KJV, “we are a peculiar people.” “Peculiar” in other Bible translations means we are special people. What’s weird to the world is special to God. You are unique, loved and accepted for who you are! You are who God says you are!

Greatness is seeing God in all the little things in life every day. Let God’s greatness define your identity. I am praying you see God’s greatness in you and in others.