



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Good Over Great – Part 1

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Main Idea – The natural man, and secular society, emphasize the idea that we should pursue greatness. However, the Bible teaches that we should actually practice “goodness”. Greatness is isolated to one individual, and can be misdirected. Whereas, the goodness of God’s nature is transferable, and enables the Kingdom to thrive from generation to generation.

Pursue God’s goodness

- Humankind has been deceived into thinking greatness is a good thing.
- Lucifer’s pride directed him to attempt greatness.
- Greatness is self-fulfilling; it cannot be shared with others.
- Goodness is something that can be shared with others.
- Jesus rejected temptations to demonstrate greatness. Instead, He submitted to the Father’s goodness in order to do His will.
- Our goals in life should be directed toward blessing those around us. Goodness is what enables that to happen.
- Notice the different attributes of goodness in this Bible verse. **1 Peter 3: 9-12 – Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (NIV)**

God answers prayers of goodness

- Speak words, and express thoughts, of goodness.
- God responds to positive ideas and prayers because goodness is an attribute of the Fruit of the Spirit.
- Prayers that include ideas of greatness can lead to divisiveness. God will not positively respond to prayers with motives of greatness.
- “Great” is an adjective that implies ideas such as “being impressively large, bigger than others, important.”
- “Good” is an adjective that is a virtue. Goodness has attributes of “being morally excellent, virtuous, honorable, helpful.”
- The Apostle Paul prayed that Christians would possess goodness. Goodness

was used in the Body of Christ to encourage and direct believers. **Romans 15:14 – Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. (NKJV)**

- Seek goodness as life's goal for yourself.

Reject temptations to pursue greatness

- Lucifer craved greatness. That was his downfall.
- **Ezekiel 28** is a prophetic word of God given through the prophet Ezekiel. The prophecy addressed a prideful earthly nation of that era, but – at the same time – described Lucifer's rebellious nature, and his subsequent fall from God's grace. Lucifer, and the earthly nation-state of Tyre, thought of themselves as "great".
- Here is another passage that describes Lucifer's pride. **Isaiah 14: 12-15 – “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.” (NKJV)**
- The desire to achieve is not, in itself, evil. However, if that desire is not controlled it will open the door to sin.

Pursue God's call for your life

- When you decide to pursue something, make sure God is calling you to it.
- Ask God to show you the good things He has planned for you.
- **Matthew 7: 7-11 – “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there amongst you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him.” (NKJV)**
- God has given (or will give) you resources to accomplish good things that are in His will. The parable of the talents in **Matthew 25: 14-30** tells the story of how different individuals produced various results in response to the master's expectations.
- Each of us has been given abilities we are to use. God expects that of us.
- When we use the gifts God has given us -- in the way He wants us to use them -

- good things will happen. He will abundantly show His approval. **Matthew 25:21 – His lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” (NKJV)**

Two examples of individuals who understood the value of goodness

- As a young king, Solomon asked God for understanding so he could effectively serve the people of Israel as their leader. That request was a request for goodness, in God’s eyes. **1 Kings 3:9 – Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours? (NKJV)**
- Jonathan Edwards, the 18th Century American Christian theologian, intellectual, and revivalist, is an example of a person who left a great legacy because he lived a “good” life. Part of his goodness was demonstrated by his devotion to family. As a result of his correct priorities, both American religion and politics were greatly influenced by his work.

Goodness leaves a legacy

- Goodness is passed on from generation to generation. Goodness establishes a legacy that continues.
- Greatness cannot be passed on.
- Generations after you will benefit from the goodness that comes through you. Devote your life to goodness.
- Jesus rejected all temptations to demonstrate His greatness. Instead, it was His goodness that enabled Him to obey the Father, to humble Himself for our benefit.
- You are living a life filled with blessings because of Jesus’ goodness.

Reflective Questions for Good Over Great

1. Why, do you suppose, so many people tend to crave -- and almost worship -- ideas of greatness? How often, if at all, do you still have visions of greatness in your imagination?
2. What perceived needs cause us to pursue, or simply just imagine, greatness? What words can we use in our prayer time to ask God to eliminate those foolish (and dangerous) notions of greatness?
3. Describe how greatness is self-centered while goodness is outwardly directed.

4. What will it feel like – what will you think about -- once your soul has replaced ideas of greatness with the virtue of goodness?