

Thursday, May 7, 2026

The Greatness of God

1 John 4:19

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me."

We read today from 1 John 4:19. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the greatness of God?

An acronym that has become increasingly overused in our culture is the acronym GOAT, or Greatest of All Time. Someone is the GOAT in their field if they stand above all others in what they have achieved. This is generally used in the sports world.

Who is the men's basketball GOAT? I would say Michael Jordan, but others might say Kobe Bryant, Bill Russell, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, or even LeBron James.

Women's basketball? Diana Taurasi, Cynthia Cooper, Maya Moore, Sue Bird, Candace Parker, and A'ja Wilson are all in that conversation.

Football Goat. Tom Brady is the modern favorite. I personally like the toughness of Joe Montana and the grace of Walter Payton. Barry Sanders is the most exciting player to ever play the game.

Men's Hockey. There is not nor will there ever be a question about this one. Wayne Gretzky is the greatest hockey player ever. Come after me if you'd like. You will be wrong.

I'm going with Katie Ledecky as the most dominant swimmer, man or woman ever. She holds the top 12 times EVER in her event (the 1500 meters) and the 2nd person is 11 seconds behind her. In swimming, that is an eternity.

As much as I enjoy these conversations, I think that fundamentally, the purpose of the exercise is misleading. Of course, we can recognize the hard work, discipline, effort, and dominance of each of these athletes, the GOAT conversation fails to recognize one important point.

None of these people do what they do without God giving them the ability to do it. God is great. He is not superlative because he is the only one who truly knows greatness. Human achievement even in the best of what we might do pales in any comparison. Each one of us here on earth simply have the opportunity to be faithful with what we've been given.

"We love because he first loved us."

In 1 John, we hear what it looks like for followers of Jesus to walk in the light as he is in the light. His light comes through us when we take what it is we have been given by him and show it to the world around us for his glory. Our verse today highlights the greatest of what we've been given in love and reminds us that his gift is meant to be shared BECAUSE we have received it from him.

And while we should prioritize love as the greatest of his gifts to be shared, we should also be reminded that this type of phrasing can be used in any good thing that we are equipped or gifted to do in his kingdom.

We serve because he first served us. We speak because he first spoke to us. We care because he first cared for us. We disciple because he first disciplined us.

We are creative because he was first creative in making us. We are intelligent because we reflect his intelligence in considering us. We are capable to doing amazing things with our minds and bodies because he is a God who used an infinite mind and an incomprehensible being in making us.

In short, ANYTHING we do that is 'excellent, or praise-worthy' is sourced in him first. We are simply stewards of what we have been given from his greatness, and we are obedient to use our gifts to show the world how great we are.

Although it may sometimes seem cliché or trite, I'm grateful when an athlete, performer, or anyone who is recognized for achievement first gives thanks to God. I hope that their heart is expressing the sentiment that the giver of every good thing should receive recognition for his good work. The won that award, made that play, or got to the championship only because of God's work in them. It is good that they name the source of their 'greatness'.

So too with us. Every good thing that comes from us is a gift sourced in our creator. We do what we do, and we only do what we do because he is who he is and has given to us what we have for his glory.

I do not want to call God the GOAT. The acronym cannot be applied. I will simply call him Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His greatness is shown in every good thing that can be seen.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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