

The Kingdom Of God Pt 6

Prepared by: Pastor Blaine G. Smith

MightyFortressChurch.org

Scripture Study

The Law Of Greatness

People everywhere naturally aspire to be great. Mixing this desire with fleshly motivations and ambitions can be quite hazardous. The world judges greatness in human terms comparing themselves with others. This is based on pride and competition and both are sin. We must realize that there is a greatness that proceeds from purity. It is possible to excel in life without falling prey to pride. Lets look at some things Jesus said about the subject of greatness.

Matthew 18:1-4

- 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"
- 2 He called a little child and had him stand among them.
- 3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (NIV)

- ✚ Let's not forget the people that surrounded Jesus that day were just like us. Their customs were different than ours but people everywhere have the same basic human ambitions, desires and concerns. They were concerned about greatness in the kingdom of heaven. When they asked Jesus about this subject He gave them an answer they were not expecting. Jesus told them "whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
- ✚ What are the child like qualities that cause greatness in the kingdom of God? Complete trust and reliance upon their parents would be one. Complete simple trust in God's provision and protection is the first step toward greatness. Being hungry for knowledge is another step toward greatness. Have you ever noticed when children reach a certain age they have a relentless unending list of questions. No question is unimportant to them. It has been said that a child between the ages of four and five will learn more in that one year than they will in four years of college. Children under normal conditions are care free, life is one big adventure to them. Children are innocent, transparent, and genuine. These qualities will take you far in the kingdom of God.
- ✚ Jesus also mentioned humility in His teaching about greatness. Let's look at humility.

Proverbs 22:4

By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life. (KJV)

- ✚ Are you interested in any of the above benefits of humility? They interest Jesus, He died so you could partake of them.



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Matthew 23:12

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. (KJV)

✠ The NIV reads. "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." It is not wrong to be exalted, it is wrong for you to exalt yourself. Self exaltation equals pride and God resists the proud. Jesus said if you humble yourself like a child you will be exalted.

James 4:6-10

6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (NIV)

✠ How do we humble ourselves before the Lord? By keeping His Word. Keeping His Word is not limited only to good conduct. Complete submission to whatever God's Word says is required. If the Word says you are, then you must be, whether you think you are or not. If the Word says you have something, then you have it whether you can see it or not. Peter said to humble yourself under God's mighty hand. A truly humble person submits to all of God's Word not the parts that fit into their lifestyle. Make a commitment to act on anything and everything you see in the Word. Never place exceptions or conditions on the instructions found in the Word of God. Be a doer not a hearer.

1 Peter 5:5-10

5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

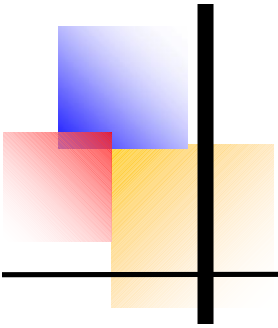
6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (NIV)



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✠ It seems that Peter and James were on the same page. Humility before God brings His grace and it is His grace that exalts us. When we are exalted in God's eyes we will be abased in the world's eyes. When we are exalted in the world's eyes we will be abased in God's eyes. I found it interesting that James and Peter both mentioned resisting the devil at the same time they were talking about humility. Pride is one of the greatest enemies to humility. It is important to resist the devil and submit to God. Submission and humility work hand in hand.

Luke 22:24-27

24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.

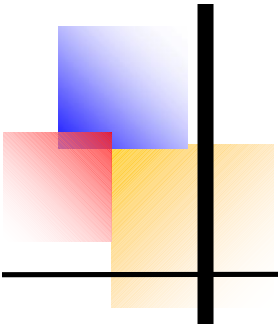
26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. (NIV)

✠ They were disputing over who would be considered greatest. This time Jesus hit them with a two edged sword. He said become as the youngest and serve others. Jesus came not to be served but to serve. There is no place in the kingdom of God for self exaltation and self promotion. Unregenerate man spends his entire life seeking honor, riches and long life. All of his efforts end in frustration emptiness and death. Lets take another look at Proverbs 22:4. It says that the humble man that fears God will have wealth, honor and life. What a paradox. Man seeks all his life for something that God wants to freely give him. It is just like the Lord to hide the answer to man's quest in life in humility. Becoming as a little child is the last place man looks to find greatness. The answer to greatness is to serve, to be teachable, to be humble, to submit, to trust. The world tries to achieve greatness through self serving arrogances, they are proud, never trusting anyone but themselves. Greatness comes by serving others. Man's idea of service is to try to force others against their will to serve them. In every point man tries to achieve greatness in exactly the opposite way God says greatness is achieved.

Proverbs 22:4

Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life. (NIV)



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The Law Of Unity

Matthew 18:19-20

19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (NIV)

Deuteronomy 32:30-31

30 How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up?

31 For their rock is not like our Rock, as even our enemies concede. (NIV)

Leviticus 26:7-8

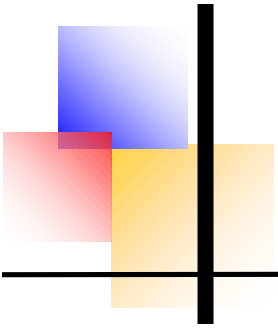
7 You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you.

8 Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you. (NIV)

Ecclesiastes 4:12

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (NIV)

✠ There is strength and power in unity. This strength is even seen in natural effort. When our unity is centered up on the Word [Jesus, Rock] as demonstrated in Deuteronomy 32:30,31 the power is increased many times over. There is spiritual power in agreement and unity. Jesus said when we come together in His name and when we are in agreement [unity] anything we ask will be done. I realize that Jesus was teaching about trespasses and church discipline when He made this statement. We must also realize that Jesus said "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." (John 14:13,14) "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:23-24) "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:23-24)



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† We know when we are gathered together in unity anytime for any reason Jesus will be there. Jesus is in us so where we are there He is also. There is great advantage to group agreement. There is more power available when all are using their faith together in unity. Picture a tug of war, every time you add another person to the rope you increase the force being applied. Spiritual unity and power works much the same way.

Genesis 11:6-9

6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.

7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

8 So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 9 That is why it was called Babel-- because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth. (NIV)

† God said that if this people work and think as one then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. These were natural people with natural ambitions working for a goal that was displeasing to God. If God said their unity would allow them to accomplish anything, how much more will be accomplished by unity and agreement together upon God's Word. Lets use unity in faith, in prayer, in praise and watch what God will do. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt 21:22) "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark 9:23) We can see that unity produces power now lets see what disunity produces.

James 3:16

For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. (KJV)

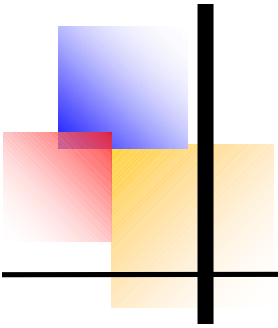
Galatians 5:15

But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! (NKJV)

Matthew 12:25-26

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? (KJV)



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✠ Where strife, contention and disunity is found, you will find confusion and every evil work. If we bite and devour one another we will be consumed one of another. A house of disunity cannot stand. If every evil work is found in disunity why would it be hard to believe that every good work would be found in unity. When we stand together in agreement, in prayer and in the name of Jesus, no evil principality or power can resist us.

James 1:6-8

6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;

8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (NIV)

Matthew 6:24

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (KJV)

✠ Personal unity must be achieved before group unity will be realized. We must be single minded, our hearts fixed trusting in the Lord. We must serve one master.

Psalms 112:7

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. (KJV)

John 17:20-23

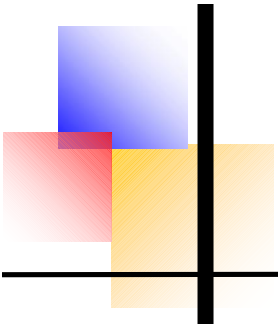
20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,
21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (NIV)

✠ Jesus prayed that we be one with each other just as He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. We are in God and God is in us. That makes us one with each other. We are one body. Verse 23 says it all.

✠ In closing. It seems that one of the biggest problems with the body of Christ today is its unending criticism of one another. Let us look for ways to agree instead of judging and criticizing each other. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. God's kingdom will stand and if anyone insists on being divided there will be no place found in the kingdom for that person. Let us do a personal inventory of our actions, our beliefs and our words.



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Study Questions

1. All greatness is sin. T or F.
2. It is God's responsibility to humble us. T or F.
3. When we humble ourselves before the Lord how will God respond?
4. Share any insight you received concerning the law of greatness.
5. Share any insight you received concerning the law of unity.
6. What will a life of disunity produce?
7. Expound on John 17:20-23.
8. What did God reveal to you as you studied?

Extra Blessing

(Study To Show Yourself Approved Unto God 2 Timothy 2:15)

Proverbs Chapter 4