

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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## **Greatness**

"Greatness lies, not in being strong, but in the right using of strength." – Henry Ward Beecher

"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." – James Freeman Clarke

"Greatness, after all, in spite of its name, appears to be not so much a certain size as a certain quality in human lives. It may be present in lives whose range is very small." – Phillip Brooks

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

"One of the marks of true greatness is the ability to develop greatness in others." – J.C. Macaulay

It is interesting in looking at definitions of the word *great*, and to find that it refers to that which is above normal or average. But this leaves man with a dilemma, because everyone may have a different perception of what is great, or for that matter, what is average or normal?

In life we have those whom we regard as heroes, and by virtue of what they have done, or continue to do, we elevate them to the status of being great. Sometimes greatness is seen in the status one achieves in life. For example, a poor person may regard a rich man as being great. You may even have a soldier who fought valiantly in battle and we look upon them as great. Or a spouse whom you may see in your eyes as exemplary.

When you look in the sacred text, we find references to things which were great, from the Greek *meigas*, referring to big in size. For example, a great age, a great famine, a great number of fish, a great multitude, a great feast, etc. But when it comes to attaining greatness, our Lord alters man's conception: "But he who is greatest (*meizon*, larger) among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matt. 23:11-12). This runs contrary to man's view of greatness.

Man seeks to exalt those who have others serving him. The more servants, the more slaves, the more subjects – all serves to elevate a man above others. But again, Jesus says that true greatness comes through service. The Lord regards the humble man as being greater than the proud man.

The disciples squabbled among themselves in an effort to attain greatness. You may recall that even James and John's mother wanted one to sit on the Lord's right hand, the other on the left (Matt. 20:20-28). It is but an example of how little we understand about true greatness.