

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and striped tie is shown from the waist up, celebrating with his arms raised. He is holding a large, ornate trophy in his right hand. The background is a bright blue sky with a sun flare on the right side. The text 'You CAN BE Great' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

You CAN BE *Great*

A Christian conception of true greatness

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A Christian Conception of True Greatness

*But the angel said unto him, Fear not,
Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy
wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou
shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have
joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at
his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of
the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor
strong drink; and he shall be filled with the
Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.
Luke 1: 13-15*

***I**n Luke 1:15, the angel of the Lord talking about John says, "for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord." And then in verse 16, the angel goes further to talk about the works of the lord that shall be done through this child that shall be born. There he says and many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the heart of the father to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

When we talk about greatness as Christians, we are actually talking about someone who stands great in the sight of God, because there is greatness in the right of men that isn't greatness in the sight of God. There are those who are called great but are not great in the sight of God. That is why we must understand that what God calls

*greatness is not what man calls greatness most times. Of course, men rate greatness in terms of what they call success today, and their success has everything to do with materialism. That is what the worldlings called greatness – they rate greatness in terms of material possessions, i.e wealth and riches, mansions, jeeps, and jets. No, that's not what God calls greatness. Jesus gave a whole new look on greatness. What was in the mind of Jesus, when he said he was greater than Solomon (Mt 12:42), yet had no place to lay his head (Lk 9:58)? What was in his mind when he said, **“He who would be greatest among you should be your servant” (Matt 23:11)**? In other words, the greatness was measured not by riches, wealth, and fame, but by service, self-abasement and servanthood.*

Rev 3:16-17 shows us in the words of Jesus that someone can be rich and wealthy whereas in the

spiritual and towards God, he is wretched, naked, poor, and blind.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Rev 13:16-17

In the spiritual sense of things, a person is not great because of his possessions, because that is not what makes him truly great before God. Let the mature christian see greatness from a higher perspective. In Luke 1:15, the angel said John would be great in the sight of the Lord. So until you are great in the sight of God you are not truly great. The Christian therefore must reconfigure his mind according to the teaching of Christ to see the way God sees. That is when he can rightly say such and such is great because being great in the

sight of men and not in the sight of God amounts to vain glory.

It is vainglory when the world merely hail you for your money and wealth—for the fifty billion dollars in your account, your estates, your mansions, your fleets of cars, and fleets of jets. It is vainglory because true greatness has nothing to do with material things.

Greatness in the sight of God has nothing to do with material riches. I will prove that from the bible so that our Christian folks who are already beginning to see greatness like the worldlings can know they are wrong.

Who are the greats of the Bible? First of all, the angel of the Lord says John the Baptist would be

great, but you can tell me that he was a man who lived in the wilderness. He had no house, no chariot like we would call a car, and no children to bear his name. But then this John the baptist that had nothing was great. Even Jesus confirmed that he was a great prophet, and the angel spoke on behalf of God that John was a great prophet.

John was a man of mighty works. He prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah. He spoke as a voice of a prophet in his day. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, who turned the heart of the people not by wealth or political influence or religious connections, but by the sole power of the Spirit of God. Israel was in spiritual disarray and chaos. They were in a spiritual wilderness. They needed to repent and prepare for their Messiah, and that task needed a fiery and daring man who had totally forsaken the world, who would go in the power of the mighty Spirit of

God. The strange move and strange dimension that John the Baptist commanded, no one in his day could command it. Everyone regarded him as a prophet and even the Pharisees were afraid. When Jesus Christ ask them ” The authority by which John preached was it from man or from God?” They themselves agreed that if they said it was from man the people would stone them, for the people highly regarded him as a prophet. His lifestyle of self-denial and sacrifice, and the challenges he faced and conquered were what made him great. He was a man of God, not a man of the people. He was a carrier of God. His voice radiated and reflected God. He was greatly used by God. His mighty works and mighty privilege were what made him great. In Lk 1:13, he would turn many, not few, unto God. And as torching his privilege, he baptized the Christ whom we serve, whom the prophets before him prophesied about, whose day Abraham himself longed to see.

Now let's analyse the greats of the Bible, great people as torching the faith. Now remember here we are not talking about secular greatness. We don't use worldlings to cite examples to saints. We are not of this world, our affections have been set on things above, and we don't conform to this world. Don't sit there as a Christian and think of a so-called great secular man, one worldly musician, one crafty businessman, someone who is in sin, who knows not God, who is not in Christ. What greatness has he? He is not great in the sight of God. He is but poor, wretched, naked, and blind. (Rev 3:16) No matter what he has or what he invented. His soul will someday burn. He has hope only in this life: he is most miserable. If he is only in this life great, he is really miserable for in the world to come, the better world, he has no place. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? The greats that

are great towards God are those who before God are worthy.

What was the greatness of Job? Job was great for his great faith, his longsuffering, his fear of the Lord, and his great patience. It was not actually his material wealth. He was a man of unusual integrity. What he passed through I doubt if anyone can pass through them and still retain his integrity. Though God gave him wealth, that was not what God could boast of to the Devil or any angelic being because wealth and riches make not a man great in himself, but rather are external to him. His durable and eternal greatness was his great integrity and that God looked for, saw, and boasted of. Concerning Job God said, "No one like him who so greatly fear the Lord", that was above Satan himself, he could not so fear the Lord. Concerning Moses, God said, " meekest upon the surface of the earth". What would be your own in

God's Heaven's book of records? Material wealth and riches don't count there. God does not need your money, he does not buy anything. He does not need your inventions, he is the self-sufficient creator of all things. Satan also is not thrilled by your material possessions: he gives wealth and riches. The world of angels doesn't need earthly inventions. Angels don't need your cell phones: they don't have communication barriers. They don't need your cars and jets: they don't have transportation difficulties. No splendour here amounts to the splendour of their world. That is why the Bible calls the craving for material luxury vanity. The luxury of material things, you should know have no eternal value, and if not properly handled, and converted to heavenly currency while still in this passing world, will lead to the final loss of the individual's soul. This the mature Christian knows.

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mark 8:36

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Mat 6:19-21

The Christian conception of greatness is thus different from worldly conception of greatness. As a Christian, somebody isn't great because of his material possessions, given that material possessions are not what make a man great in the sight of God. Gold does not make a great man, for

gold is external to the man. The consideration is on virtues that are intrinsic to him. This is how true greatness is valued. Integrity, sincerity, humility, truth, patience, and suchlike are not like costly apparels that can be sold, bought and worn. Virtues are inbuilt and stand for all eternity. Their value never diminishes over time.

Abraham's house no matter how magnificent it was, was only according to his day. In both facility and technology, it can't be compared to a modern-day house. Most of the best inventions of the past generations would not be desired now. Abraham stands great till tomorrow not because of whatever possession he had, but because of his faith and walk with God. He is today what he was more than 2,500 years ago –" Abraham the father of faith." Virtues don't lose values like material possessions or technological inventions — they stand the test of time.

Nobody should rate the greatness of a man of God by big churches, houses, and mansions, but by mighty works and legacies that would last through history and forever. That was the greatness of Abraham and not his material possessions. Where are his material possessions now? Show me one place where they are kept. His material possessions are all gone. But what about his great faith? It lingers on forever. Do you think Solomon's greatness was actually his material possessions? Where are his material possessions now? Where is his magnificent temple? It was destroyed. His enduring greatness is his wisdom, not his wealth that made him marry hundreds of women. What about David? He killed Goliath. The Lord used him to do mighty things. He was a man after God's heart. That is his greatness. His feats, his psalms, his prophecies, his legacies. His

material possessions are gone but his legacies still stand.

The greatness that is before heaven of immense relevance, that fades not, nor perish with the passage of time, that it is you are called to pursue. You too can truly be great.