

# What Is True Greatness?

by William MacDonald

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*True greatness is measured by the extent to which we serve others, not by the extent to which we are served.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:26-28, Luke 17:7-10, Luke 22:27, John 13:1-17, Philippians 2:7

**Topics:** "Servanthood", "True Greatness"

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## Description

William MacDonald explores the concept of true greatness, contrasting worldly views of power and status with the teachings of Christ. In the Kingdom of God, greatness is defined by one's willingness to serve others, exemplified by Jesus who took on the role of a servant. MacDonald emphasizes that true greatness involves humility, selflessness, and the readiness to perform even the most menial tasks without expectation of recognition. He cites examples from history and scripture, illustrating that serving others is the highest calling for believers. Ultimately, he challenges the congregation to embrace a servant's heart, following the example set by Christ.

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## Transcript

“...whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” (Matt. 20:26, 27)

What is true greatness?

In the kingdom of this world, the great man is the one who has risen to a place of wealth and power. He has a retinue of aides and assistants, conditioned to follow his orders. He is accorded V.I.P. treatment and receives special favors wherever he goes. People regard him with respect and awe because of his rank. He never has to stoop to anything menial; there are always others to do that for him.

But in the Kingdom of our Lord, things are quite different. Here greatness is measured by the extent to which we serve rather than the extent to which we are served. The great man is the one who stoops to become a slave for others. No service is too menial. He does not expect any special treatment or thanks. When one of George Washington's men saw him performing a menial service, he objected, saying, “General, you are too big a man to be doing that.” Washington replied, “Oh, no, I'm just the right size.”

Commenting on Luke 17:7-10, Roy Hession reminds us that “there are five marks of the bondsman: (1) He must be willing to have one thing on top of another put on him, without any consideration being given

to him. (2) In doing this, he must be willing not to be thanked for it. (3) Having done all this, he must not charge the master with selfishness. (4) He must confess that he is an unprofitable servant. (5) He must admit that doing and bearing what he has in the way of meekness and humility, he has not done one stitch more than it was his duty to do."

When our Lord left the heights of glory to become a Man on this planet, he "took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). He was among us as One who serves (Luke 22:27). He said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28). He girded Himself with a towel, the apron of a slave, and washed His disciples' feet (John 13:1-17).

"The servant is not greater than his lord" (John 13:16). If He stooped so low to serve us, why should we think it beneath our dignity to serve others?

Wast Thou, Savior, meek and lowly,

And will such a worm as I,

Weak and sinful and unholy

Dare to lift my head on high?

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