

## **The Greatest**

### **Ready:**

*But Jesus called them over and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and the men of high position exercise power over them. It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many."*

-Matthew 20:25-28

### **Set**

After defeating Sonny Liston to win his first title in 1964, Muhammad Ali proclaimed to the press, "I am the greatest!" The sports world has given Wayne Gretzky the nickname, "The Great One." But what exactly does it mean to be great? Is it determined by winning percentage? Championships? Fame? In the passage above, Jesus explained that greatness is being a servant. Today, I'd like to focus on three ways to serve your teammates:

#### **1. Put the team ahead of yourself.**

In his book "Wooden," John Wooden tells about his experience coaching Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He explained that Jabbar was so talented that he could score almost every time he touched the ball. However, Jabbar was a team player and learned how to get his teammates involved. The team ended up being better because of it. Jabbar sacrificed his personal stats so that they could be a better team. In order to serve your teammates, keep in mind what's best for the team, not what's best for you.

#### **2. Give all-out effort.**

You can't really serve your teammates unless you give them your full effort. It's like proposing with a ring from a Cracker Jack box. It's totally worthless because it's not your best. Like Yogi Berra says, "Give 100 percent. And if that's not enough, give what's left." Give your teammates your best effort.

#### **3. Share the credit.**

There is an old quote that says, "It's amazing what can be accomplished when nobody cares who gets the credit." When you succeed, share the credit with your teammates. Heisman Trophy winner Troy Smith was known for giving his teammates credit for spectacular plays that were credited to him. When you share the credit with your teammates, it is a visible sign that you are there to serve them and not just using them to inflate your own ego.

Greatness is in serving, and as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. commented, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve." You don't have to be born tall, fast or strong. You don't have to have the best jump-shot or the prettiest swing. If you can put the team first, give all

out effort and share the credit, then you can be great. Remember, life is like tennis: Those who serve well seldom lose.

## Go

1. Which one of these tips is the hardest for you to do? What makes it difficult? How can you overcome that obstacle?
2. How is the world's standard of greatness different than Christ's standard of greatness?
3. Name one person that you know who is a great servant? What about that person makes them a great servant? How could you be more like that person?

## Workout

Galatians 5:13-14



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