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A.C.T.S PRAYER METHOD

Begin with prayer using A.C.T.S. as a tool to guide you. Prayer is how we talk to and fellowship with our Heavenly Father. Even Jesus prayed because He fellowshipped with His Father every day.

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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- John 3
DEVOTIONAL

“You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.” (John 3:28-30, NIV)

GREATER is a word that means “prominent, eminent, important, distinguished, illustrious, celebrated, honored, acclaimed, admired, esteemed, revered, renowned, notable, famous, famed, well-known, leading, top, major, principal, first-rate, matchless, peerless, star.” All of us, if we’re honest, would love to be described by any one of these words. Our ego, our pride and our flesh hunger for this kind of notoriety from our spouse, kids, friends, coworkers, neighbors and basically from anyone we know.

In John 3:28-30 we find John the Baptist telling his followers that he is NOT the Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), but he is simply His announcer, His messenger, to let people know He was coming. John even uses the illustration of a wedding party and calls himself one of the groomsman for the Bridegroom. The groomsman is at the wedding in support of the Bridegroom. The groomsman is simply there to stand with the bridegroom and is excited to hear his voice as the bridegroom proclaims his love for his bride. Then John declares, “He must become greater; I must become less.” We, as believers, are here as living, breathing, walking, serving testimonies of Christ. We MUST chose to die, moment by moment, to what our flesh hungers for and live our lives in a manner worthy of Christ. We must proclaim Him and honor Him in ALL we do, say and even think.

We know that He, through His Holy Spirit, lives in each of us. We know we have ALL we need to live for Christ. We know ALL of His fruit dwells in us and it is His fruit that we are to bear, in our lives and through our lives. The question we need to answer each day is this: “When someone comes across my path, do they walk away knowing Christ or simply knowing me?” For Christ to become GREATER and us to become “less,” means we chose to die to our flesh and live by His Spirit through our actions, attitudes, words and even our thoughts. Let’s make sure we’re praying with, and for, each other so our Lord Jesus Christ is GREATER in and through ALL of us.

CHALLENGE

What evidence do you see in your life of you becoming less and Christ becoming greater?

List the evidence so you clearly see whether you’re living for yourself, and your selfish desires, or if you are really living for Christ.

If you find that you have been living for yourself, and your selfish desires, then confess that as sin and choose to die to your self. Today, begin to walk in obedience to Him and honor Him in all you do and say.
GREATER IN HIS KINGDOM
Devotion Two

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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- Matthew 11
- Luke 7
DEVOTIONAL

“Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Matthew 11:11)

“I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” (Luke 7:28)

When the world considers “greatness” among men, there are many whom we can find listed. Some of those are as follows:


Whether we agree that these people were “great” or not is really inconsequential when we consider what our Lord Jesus Christ deems as “great.” When our Lord was describing John the Baptist to His listeners He said, “There is no one greater than John” that had been born of a woman. Why would John be given such a high honor? He was the last of the Old Testament prophets; he was the messenger of the King, announcing the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of God. This was NOT about how great John the Baptist was, but that in comparison to those in the Kingdom of God, John the Baptist is not GREATER than the least of those in God’s Kingdom. How could this be possible?

Though John the Baptist was the last of the prophets setting the stage for Christ Himself, those in God’s kingdom are all His children and literally friends of the King! John the Baptist is also one of God’s children, so he too is a friend of the King. In God’s family, we are all on the same level. In this world there will be those who are considered great, but to be truly “great” is being a child of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Our Heavenly Daddy is the Creator of all creation, the King and Master of all, so this means we, as His children, are part of God’s royal family. In God’s eyes that makes us royalty as well and this position in Christ will NEVER end. We need to make sure we measure who is truly GREATER by God’s standard and not by what the world’s.

CHALLENGE

Think about this: Do you see yourself through your Heavenly Father’s eyes? Do you live your life knowing you are part of royalty, because your Heavenly Daddy is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords? Are you so focused on the earthly body you have, and the earthly possessions you own, that you are totally missing how great you are to God and His work and Kingdom?

You need to make sure you’re seeing yourself for who you really are, because you are GREATER than you think.
GREATER THEN ALL
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- Matthew 12
- Luke 11
DEVOTIONAL

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.’” (Matthew 12:38-42)

“As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, ‘This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.’” (Luke 11:29-32)

What will it take for believers to walk fully in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ? What will it take for nonbelievers to come to the point of personally knowing Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior?

In the passages today, Jesus is rebuking His listeners. He’s letting them know that He is GREATER than Jonah and He is GREATER than Solomon. He is the LORD, MASTER and SAVIOR of the entire human race and of ALL creation. Jesus makes it clear that the Ninevites who repented after Jonah preached AND the Queen of Sheba who listened to Solomon’s wisdom, will one day condemn and judge those who totally miss Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus was, is and always will be GREATER than Jonah and Solomon for He created them. He gave Jonah the words to preach and He gave Solomon the wisdom he asked for.

Today, we have been given GREATER things than even those in Jesus’ day, for we have Jesus Christ Himself living in us through His Holy Spirit. We have His testimony of His love, grace, mercy, forgiveness and judgment written on our hearts and in His Holy Word, the Bible. We have GREATER gifts through His Holy Spirit in us. We have GREATER opportunity to fellowship with Him, to know Him and to make Him known, because He is ALWAYS with us. We must make sure we are not one of those who the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba will one day condemn and judge due to the fact that we willingly missed ALL that our Lord Jesus Christ has given to us. “Something greater is here,” and as believers He is in us for all eternity!

So, the answer to the first two questions above is, “total surrender to Him who is GREATER!”

CHALLENGE

Are you walking in total surrender to Christ? Are you dying daily to yourself and living for Him? If so, list out the ways that you’re doing this.
If not, make a list of the reasons you’re not following Him wholeheartedly.

Listen to what God says. Then surrender and begin to walk with Him. He’s made the way; we simply need to follow.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- Matthew 22
- Mark 12
DEVOTIONAL

“One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

“One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘What commandment is the foremost of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The foremost is, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.”’ (Mark 12:28-31)

When we consider the value of God’s Word, it’s mind-boggling. God Himself, speaking to us through His Holy Word, is really beyond our finite minds. His Word is truth, wisdom, knowledge, insight, a sword, living, active, right, pure, lovely and powerful. We have it before us to read, study, memorize and live by every day. When we consider God’s Word being GREATER than all other written literature combined, it’s hard to put into words. Jesus was asked, out of all the commandments which one was the greatest. Without hesitation our Lord gave an immediate answer: the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. THEN, Jesus was not even asked for the second response, but He gave it nonetheless. He said the second commandment is just like the first, that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

If we did not have this in God’s Word and we were asked, “What is the greatest commandment?” would we have chosen the same ones He gave? There is nothing GREATER than God’s Word, but Jesus says: “on these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets,” AND “there is no other commandment GREATER than these.” As we examine God’s Word each day and allow God to penetrate our hearts and our lives with His Word, let’s make sure we love Him with ALL we are and that we love others the same way.

There’s nothing GREATER than these.

CHALLENGE

Think over this past week: Are you loving God and others with all you are? Take some time to list some ways you are loving God and, also, how you are loving others. This will help you put into action what God has challenged you with today.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- Luke 13
DEVOTIONAL

“Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.’” (Luke 13:1-3)

When we think of the word GREATER, we normally do not want to associate that word with our own sin or sinfulness. As we read in this Scripture today, some people came and told Jesus that some Galileans were murdered by Pilate while offering their sacrifices in the temple. Jesus asked His listeners: “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate?” Why would He ask this? Because many believed that God was simply a God of judgment and, if someone died such a horrible death, then they must have really been “GREATER sinners” than all others. Jesus answers His own question and makes it clear that anyone who does not repent of their sin will perish and be lost for all eternity.

The fact is, we are ALL born with a sin nature and we ARE separated from God because of our sin. No one is a “GREATER sinner” then anyone else. We may not like to hear that, but in God’s eyes we are all “GREATER sinners” because we have all sinned and fallen way short of God’s standard of perfection. To repent means we willingly turn away from something, or someone, to follow something else or someone else. Jesus said we must repent of our sin, which means we choose to turn away from the very nature we were born with, and we must choose to turn to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to receive the fullness of Him, His life, His nature, His mercy, His love and His forgiveness. To be GREATER means we have to “die to self” and become totally His.

CHALLENGE

Have you surrendered your life to our Lord Jesus Christ yet? If not, why not?

If you have not surrendered to Christ and you’d like to, stop and ask the Lord to cleanse you from all your sin and all your unrighteousness. Surrender to Him as your Lord and Savior. Romans 10:9-10 says, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.”

If you have surrendered to Christ either just now or sometime ago, be sure you are sharing your faith with those around you. Be sure to pray consistently for your friends and family who do not know Christ as their Lord and Savior yet.

Pray this for yourself and for all other Christians: “Heavenly Father, give us the right words so we can boldly explain Your mysterious plan that the Good News, the Gospel, is for everyone. Also, gives us Your boldness so we all keep on speaking boldly for You, as we should.”
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- Luke 22
DEVOTIONAL

“And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called “Benefactors.” But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.’” (Luke 22:24-27)

As we read today’s Scripture, we find the twelve disciples reclining at the table with Jesus at the Last Supper. It’s evident that these twelve young men have no clue that this is the last night they will have with our Lord in bodily form, for even at this time they are arguing about who is GREATER than whom. Jesus though, knowing that within a few hours He is going to be arrested, beaten and crucified, continues to teach these young men that being GREATER is not about rank, position, money or power; it’s all about serving. No doubt, in this world, being GREATER than everyone else is all about how much money is made, what position or rank is held, how much someone owns or leading by intimidation or force, which is normally accompanied with a very stern, critical approach to all that’s done. It was the same way back when Jesus walked on this earth.

As children of our Lord Jesus Christ, He wants us to be different than the world. He told those twelve young men then, and He tells us today, that if we are going to be GREATER than those in this world, than we must serve one another. We must lead by being a living example of what we expect from others. Jesus was, is and always will be GREATER than of all! He’s GREATER than all kings (monarchs, rulers), GREATER than all lords and GREATER than any human ever born or ever to be born. Yet, He came and served and gave Himself sacrificially for us. He modeled for His disciples what being GREATER is all about, especially when it comes to God and His Kingdom. Jesus desires for us to follow in His steps, His example and His model. Being GREATER in His eyes, is all about serving. Let’s make sure we’re following the GREATER example, our Lord Himself.

CHALLENGE

Being a servant, over being served, is a difficult choice. Our human nature craves to be recognized, served, pampered and taken care of. God has called us to a life of service and our model is Jesus Christ. Today, and throughout this week, lay out a specific plan on how you will serve those you live with, go to school with, work with and any other people God lays on your heart. Then, share your plan with someone who will help hold you accountable to living out your plan. Go and serve.
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SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 1
DEVOTIONAL
“The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Nathanael answered Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’” (John 1:43-50)

As Jesus Christ is beginning His earthly ministry, He chooses His disciples. Jesus invites Philip to follow him, so Philip goes to get Nathanael. Philip tells him that they have found Jesus, the one prophesied about in the Old Testament. Of course Nathanael is skeptical, just as people still are today, but he goes with Philip just to see. Jesus makes a comment to Nathanael that causes him to ask Jesus, “How do you know me?” Jesus lets him know that He saw Nathanael long before Philip ever went to get him. This so impresses Nathanael that he proclaims: “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” Jesus’ reply, though, is where we want to focus because Jesus says: “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” Jesus wants Nathanael to know that he has not really seen anything yet. What Jesus does is GREATER than anything we can even imagine. He does GREATER things for each of us every day of our lives, and we often miss them because we are so focused on our own immediate wants, desires and selfish passions. Our Lord does not want us to miss the GREATER things He has to offer us. Yet, it is up to us to keep our focus, our passion and our desire on Him and His Word. When we do this, we will easily recognize His work, in and through us. Then we will enjoy the GREATER things that only He can give.

CHALLENGE
Are you recognizing the GREATER work God is doing in you?

Are you recognizing the GREATER work God has for you to do?

Are you walking in that GREATER work, or are you so caught up in this world that you are missing ALL God has for you?

He has created us for Himself, His work, His will and His way. Make sure you are living fully in Him so you are fulfilling all He has for you to do.
GREATER THAN ALL
Devotion Eight

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SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 4:7-13
DEVOTIONAL
“There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had
gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, ‘How is it that You,
being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samari-
tans.) Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give
Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ She said to Him, ‘Sir,
You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not
greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his
cattle?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoev-
er drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become
in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’” (John 4:7-13)

Jesus gives us a great example by showing us that in order to reach people with the Gospel we have to be
out among them, where they are. As He carries on His conversation with the woman from Samaria, He lets
her know that He has “living water” to offer her. She immediately asks Him: “Sir, You have nothing to draw
with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father
Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?” The woman was
focused on the well itself and the physical water in that well. She did not know that our Lord Jesus Christ
was, and is, the Creator of Jacob and the Creator of the water in that well.

When we consider the word GREATER, we know that Jesus is GREATER than ALL this world has to offer. The
woman from Samaria asked an excellent question for someone who is only focused on what the world has
to offer. We often fall into this same trap and live the same way. We end up asking our Lord: “Are You truly
GREATER than all my problems?”; “Are You truly GREATER than all my needs?”; “Are You truly GREATER than
all my hurts?”; “Are You truly GREATER than all my worries?” and the questions go on and on. The reality is
that our Lord lovingly listens to us, just as He did to the woman at the well, and He NEVER condemns us.
He lovingly answers us, just as He answered the woman: “Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him
shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to
eternal life.” WOW, that is a life GREATER than all this world could ever offer us. We, as children of our Lord
Jesus Christ, need to remember what He has given to each one of us. In Him we will never thirst again.

CHALLENGE
What is your greatest need? Write it down and do not be afraid to ask our Lord to meet that need.

If it’s truly a “need,” then He will take care of it. If it is simply a “want,” then He will lovingly show us that
true life and true contentment can only be found in Him. Learn to be content in Him and learn to be thankful
for ALL you already have.

Share with someone today what God has taught you.
A.C.T.S PRAYER METHOD

Begin with prayer using A.C.T.S. as a tool to guide you. Prayer is how we talk to and fellowship with our Heavenly Father. Even Jesus prayed because He fellowshiped with His Father every day.

“A.C.T.S.” guides you through four sections of prayer:

ADORATION—Praising God by telling Him who He is and why you worship Him.
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Write out your prayers under each section:

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Thanksgiving (Give thanks to God for your talents and gifts. Thank Him for everything you are and everything you have. Thank Him for all He’s doing in you and through you.)

Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- John 5
DEVOTIONAL

“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.’” (John 5:19-23)

Our Lord Jesus Christ healed a lame man on the Sabbath. When the Jewish leaders of the day saw the man walking with his mat, they rebuked him for carrying his mat on the Sabbath. The man told them that the Man who healed him had told him, “take up your mat and walk” so he was simply doing what Jesus had said. When the Jewish leaders asked him who had healed him, he was not sure, but later Jesus came and told the man who He was. Then, the man went and reported to the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him. So, the Jewish leaders went to confront Jesus for healing someone on the Sabbath. That’s where our passage starts today. This is Jesus’ response to the Jewish leaders. Jesus was making it perfectly clear that He and the Father are the same. He was telling them that He and the Father are equal. Jesus took it even one step further and said: “the Father will show Him how to do even greater works than healing this man.”

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus because He not only healed on the Sabbath, which was against the Jewish Laws, but He was proclaiming to be equal with God. The point here, though, is that Jesus told them He was going to do even GREATER works than healing this man, which the Father would reveal to Him. When we think of healing someone, we probably think, that is a great work. Jesus knew that even though He had healed the lame man, that man would still suffer an earthly death. A GREATER work was what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, by dying for our sin, defeating death and rising from the dead. He offers everyone eternal healing from sin and spiritual death, so we can spend eternity with Him. This is definitely a GREATER work that lasts forever.

CHALLENGE

God wants to use you to continue His GREATER work. God wants to use you to share His Gospel with others so they can cross over from death to life and become part of His family and His work. Are you allowing God to use you in this way?

If so, that is awesome. Continue in His GREATER work. If not, then why not? Today, begin to be used in His GREATER work.
GRE>TER THAN ALL
Devotion Ten

A.C.T.S PRAYER METHOD

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Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 5: 33-47
DEVOTIONAL

“But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.” (John 5:36-38)

Jesus continues to testify to the Jewish leaders, who confronted Jesus for healing someone on the Sabbath. At this point, the Lord lets them know that His testimony is GREATER than John the Baptist’s testimony. There were many who believed John the Baptist as he testified of the coming Messiah, and Jesus wants those listening to understand that He is the One and Only Messiah who John the Baptist had been testifying about. Jesus did not stop there. He then proclaims to them that God the Father has testified about Him. He tells them that they had never heard God the Father, nor did they have His Word in them, because they NEVER believed God in the first place. WOW! That is a rebuke. Jesus did not want there to be any mistake in Who He is. He is GREATER than ALL because He is the King of all kings, the Lord of all lords, the One and Only Creator, Sustainer, Provider, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Lord.

We have the privilege of proclaiming Christ’s testimony because of what He’s done, is doing, and will continue to do in each of us who believe in Him. We have an excellent testimony because He lives in us. We have an excellent testimony because we now belong to Him. A testimony is not focused on how bad our past was, but instead the power of Christ in us, changing us each and every day. We do belong to Him and that is testimony enough to share with others. 1 Peter 2:9 says: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Let’s make sure we are proclaiming the excellencies of Him. Truly our testimony is GREATER because He is GREATER.

CHALLENGE

If you are not already doing so, begin to share your testimony with your friends, family and neighbors. You have a story, because Christ lives in you, and He constantly desires to use you to proclaim Him to others.

Remember what 1 Peter 2:9 says about you. You are someone special, because you belong to Him. That story is worth sharing.
GREATER THAN ALL

Devotion Eleven

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Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 8:31-59
DEVOTIONAL

“The Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’ Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.’ The Jews said to Him, ‘Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, “If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.” Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?’ Jesus answered, ‘If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, “He is our God”; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.’ So the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.” (John 8:48-59)

It’s amazing to think of ALL the incredible things that our Lord Jesus Christ did to convince the Jews of His day that He was God in a fleshly shell. He performed miracles. He invested in lives. He shared love. Yet, so many totally missed who He was. Things have not changed in over 2,000 years for our Lord continues to reveal Himself through us, as His children, and through His entire creation. Yet, people still totally miss Him today.

As Jesus is being confronted by the Jews in this Scripture, He tries to help them see that He is NOT demon possessed, but that He IS GOD. When Jesus proclaims to them: “I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!” Those Jews are so focused on the physical realm that they do NOT understand that Jesus is talking about their very souls. (NOTE: As humans, we do not have a soul, but we are a soul that lives in a fleshly shell on this earth. No one’s soul ever dies, so those who obey Christ will NEVER experience separation from God and His Kingdom. Whereas, those who refuse Christ, His forgiveness, His grace and His love will one day be separated from God and separated from His Kingdom for ETERNITY.)

So, when Jesus tells them that those who are obedient to Him will never taste death, the Jews challenge our Lord’s greatness by saying: “Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died?” This is where Jesus lets them know, not only is He GREATER than Abraham and the prophets, BUT He came to glorify the Father. Abraham is definitely still alive and rejoiced to see this day come. Jesus makes who He is incredibly clear by saying: “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” Our Lord uses the same name (“Yahweh,” or “Jehovah”) here as He describes Himself that He used with Moses in Exodus 3:13-14 when Moses asks God the following: “Then Moses said to God, ‘Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you.” Now they may say to me, “What is His name?” What shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’; and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ Jesus Christ is GREATER than all and that is why we must obey Him, worship Him and follow Him and Him alone.

CHALLENGE

Do you truly understand that Jesus is God? God has simply manifested (displayed, showed, presented, revealed) Himself in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
How are you living for Him?

List the ways that you are fleeing from the lusts of this world and how you are pursuing Christ and His Word. This will help you see all the areas of your life where you need to die to self and be completely surrendered to Him.
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SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 10:22-42
DEVOTIONAL

“At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, ‘How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.’” (John 10:22-30)

In this passage today, the Jews come to Jesus AGAIN and say to Him, “If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” Jesus tells them that not only has He told them Who He is, but ALL the works He has done are enough proof of who He is. Then, our Lord makes it clear of why they do NOT believe Him and all He has done. It is because they are not His sheep.

I had the privilege of experiencing an illustration of this years ago with a friend of mine in the state of Washington. He and his wife owned sheep and they had named every one of them. He took me out to the field and he began to call one of the sheep by name. That one sheep immediately responded to his voice. Then, he did it again by calling the name of another sheep and that one sheep immediately responded to his voice. I asked him if I could try, so he gave me a name to call and I called out, BUT I did not get any response from the sheep at all. So, I asked him to give me a different name to call and I tried that name. Again, zero response. The sheep did not respond to me because they were NOT my sheep. Therefore, they did not recognize, nor trust, my voice. Those sheep only recognized and trusted the voice of my friend, because they belonged to him. When Jesus tells the Jews in this passage: “But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me,” they understood completely what He was saying, for they knew that sheep only respond to their true master.

Jesus lets them know that He, as the Shepherd, will NEVER allow His sheep to perish NOR can anyone take them away from Him. He lets them know that no one is GREATER than Him. He reminds them that no one is GREATER than the Father and that no one can take His sheep away from Him BECAUSE Jesus and the Father are ONE—they are the SAME. Jesus is trying to reveal to them the truth that He is God and He is GREATER than all. We must know Him as our God and King as well. If we truly belong to Him, then we will know His voice as He speaks to us and we will be willing to follow Him.

CHALLENGE

You, like me, have never audibly heard God’s voice, but He speaks to us through His Word and He speaks to our hearts. When is the last time you clearly heard God speak to you through His Word and/or to your heart?

If it’s been a while, it is because you have chosen not to be in His Word on a daily basis? Maybe you’ve been too caught up in what the world says is important. Begin new today and ask God to speak to you.
Ask Him to reveal to you the things that are currently in your life that are getting in the way of hearing Him clearly.

Thank Him for His love and forgiveness and pursue Him and His Word daily so you can hear Him once again.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- John 13
“So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.’” (John 13:12-17)

In this passage, Jesus has just finished washing the disciples’ feet. This is the night of the Last Supper and He wants them to know what He’s called them to do. Of course, our Lord has made it quite clear what He’s called us to do as well. To catch the full meaning of what our Lord did, we have to understand the position of a foot washer in Jesus’ day. Out of all the slaves, the foot washer was the lowliest of jobs. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of all kings, the Lord of all lords, humbled Himself before His disciples and washed their feet to show them what true greatness in the Kingdom of God looks like. Our Lord let them know that if He, who is GREATER than them, was willing to wash their feet, then they also ought to wash one another’s feet.

The disciples, and just like us, had to be willing to serve each other. We must be willing to do the lowliest of jobs, tasks and work in order to be an example to those around us. Jesus Christ gave us this example so we would follow it. We are the slaves and Christ is our Master. We will never be GREATER than Him. He is the One who has called us to Himself. He called us into His Kingdom, and into His family, so that we could be sent by Him to do what He did. It’s not about us being GREATER, but it’s about being totally obedient to the One who is GREATER and will always be GREATER. We MUST serve one another in order to lead others to do the same.

CHALLENGE

To serve others is tough. You’ve already been challenged to serve in an earlier devotion. So, the question is, “How are you doing?”

Are you still serving? Are you staying consistent in your attitude to serve others?

If not, then get back on track starting today. Get your list out, or make a new list of how you’re going to serve those around you. As you serve, keep a journal of how people react to you serving. See what changes occur in them and write that down too. Serve and serve well.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 13
- John 14
DEVOTIONAL
“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.” (John 14:12)

In John 13, we see that the Last Supper has just concluded. Jesus then washes the disciples’ feet. He predicts Peter’s betrayal. Then, He tries to make it clear to His disciples, as John 14 begins, that He is God in the flesh. Philip then asks our Lord to show them the Father. Jesus replies: “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I Am? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father! So why are you asking Me to show Him to you? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak are not My own, but My Father who lives in Me does His work through Me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen Me do.” (NLT).

WOW! It could not be more clear that Jesus IS God. Jesus tells Philip, and all the others, to believe because of all the work they have seen Jesus do. Jesus takes it one step further though and says: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.”

The first time I read this, as a believer, it scared me because God never used me to touch and heal someone. God never used me to heal the blind, lame, leper, deaf or mute. God had never used me to raise someone from the dead, so I was really concerned I was missing something. My question was: “What GREATER works than these would I ever do?” Then, God revealed to me that EVERY TIME I proclaim Him to someone who needs a relationship with Him - and that person responds to God’s call on their life - God is using me to: heal a spiritually blind person, heal a spiritually mute person, heal a spiritually deaf person, heal a spiritually sick person and give new life to a spiritually dead person. The AWESOME thing is that this work is GREATER because this work is everlasting. We need to make sure we are all about the GREATER works that our Lord has for us—to proclaim Him to others so they can be healed for all eternity.

CHALLENGE
Are you allowing God to use you for His GREATER purpose?

He truly wants to use you to do even GREATER things, because now He lives in you. Ask God to give you the boldness and the courage you need to carry out His GREATER purpose. Then, allow Him to fulfill it through you.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- John 15
DEVOTIONAL

“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another.” (John 15:12-17)

There are many commands from our Lord throughout His Word. We are called and commanded to obey every one of them, but we can only do that by surrendering to Him and allowing His Spirit to be in complete control of our lives. It’s through Him living in us that we are able to fulfill His Word both in us and through us. Today, in the passage, our Lord Jesus Christ is very clear: “love one another, just as I have loved you.” To love with this selfless love can NEVER be accomplished in and of ourselves. We do NOT have the capability of loving this way by ourselves. This love, from our Lord, is totally unconditional. With Christ living in us, through His Holy Spirit, we are able to love this way. It is our choice to be obedient to Him and by loving others this way we bring honor and glory to Him.

This is definitely a GREATER love. Jesus then goes on to explain this GREATER love leads others to lay down their lives for their friends. Of course, our Lord Jesus Christ is making reference to what He is about to do for all mankind, but it still applies to us today. He laid down His life because He considers all mankind, who follow Him, His friends. He chose us, and appointed us, to go and bear fruit for Him and His Kingdom. Yet, we can only accomplish this when we are loving with His GREATER love. Let’s make sure we are following Him, obeying Him and loving Him by loving each other with the GREATER love He has given us.

CHALLENGE

How will you love others today, this week and this month? Start with how you will love your immediate family. List them on a sheet of paper.

Loving is not about how we feel; it is based on our actions. Find out what each member of your immediate family has as their primary love language. Is it “acts of service” (doing something for them) or “gift giving” (giving them something because you were thinking about them) or “personal touch” (giving them a hug) or “spending face-to-face time together” (playing a game with them, sitting and talking together) or “words of affirmation” (telling them the talents you see in them, how well they do at something)?

Loving others takes work, but it’s what we’re commanded to do. So, love others - especially those closest to you.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 15:18-27
DEVOTIONAL

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.” (John 15:18-21)

Living in this world has its ups and its downs. God will bring some people across our paths with whom we will be able to share the love of Christ and there will be people we invest in who will chose to turn their backs on us and Him. There will be days when all we notice is God’s mercy and His blessings and there will be days when we get caught up in the flesh and only see our faults and failures.

Jesus reminds us that the world hated Him. Therefore, the world is going to hate us because we belong to Him. He says: “A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” As we think about the word GREATER, we know our Lord is GREATER than all. Yet, even in all of His GREATNESS, the world hated Him, persecuted Him and eventually killed Him. So, He is reminding us that He is GREATER than us, and if the world treated Him this way, we should expect nothing less from the world as well.

We live in a world filled with sin. People are living in darkness, under the control of Satan and the demons, and they have no clue of this fact. Since Satan and the demons HATE our Lord, they will HATE ALL of the Lord’s children. They will place that hate in the hearts of the lost, and the lost will carry forth the hatred, the persecution and even the killing. The good news is that this world is NOT our home. We are strangers and aliens here in this world, and one day we will have the privilege and honor of going home to be with Jesus - for He is truly GREATER. As His servants we should not be surprised at the persecution believers go through, for we are not GREATER than Him. We can rest in Him and know we will enjoy the victory through Him one day.

CHALLENGE

Evaluate your life and ask yourself the following questions to see if you’re living for Christ or if you’re still living more for yourself.

“Do I suffer any persecution because of my relationship with Jesus Christ?”

“Do I live my life for Him in such a way that those who do not know Him make fun of me, talk bad about me and try to make me look bad even though I’ve done nothing wrong?”

“Do I live my life in such a way that it looks so much like everyone else in this lost world that no one even knows I have a relationship with Christ?”
GREATER SIN
Devotion Seventeen

A.C.T.S PRAYER METHOD
Begin with prayer using A.C.T.S. as a tool to guide you. Prayer is how we talk to and fellowship with our Heavenly Father. Even Jesus prayed because He fellowshipped with His Father every day.

“A.C.T.S.” guides you through four sections of prayer:

ADORATION—Praising God by telling Him who He is and why you worship Him.
CONFESSION—Confessing your sins to God.
THANKSGIVING—Giving God thanks for His work in your life.
SUPPLICATION—Asking God for your requests.

Write out your prayers under each section:

Adoration (Tell God how great He is.)

Confession (Confess your sins. As the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, agree with God the Father that it is sin and thank Him for His forgiveness through Christ.)

Thanksgiving (Give thanks to God for your talents and gifts. Thank Him for everything you are and everything you have. Thank Him for all He’s doing in you and through you.)

Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- John 19
DEVOTIONAL

“So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, ‘Crucify, crucify!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.’ Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, ‘Where are You from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to Him, ‘You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?’ Jesus answered, ‘You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.’” (John 19:6-11)

Being GREATER than others is not always a good thing. In this passage, Jesus is being put on trial for breaking the Jewish law. Because He proclaimed to be the Son of God, He proclaimed to be equal with God. Now, we know He is the Son of God, but the Jewish leaders do not have a clue. When Pilate heard this, he became even more afraid because in his heart he knew an innocent man was being condemned. As Pilate talks to our Lord, he tries to figure out how he can set Him free without causing trouble among the Jewish leaders. Pilate lets Jesus know that he has the authority to set Him free, but what Pilate hears is probably not what he expected to hear. Jesus makes it very clear to Pilate that his authority has been given from God the Father and that it was not given to him by any man. This means Pilate is accountable for his actions. But the GREATER sin committed was by Judas because he willingly handed over Jesus to the authorities of that day, without any God-given position of power. Judas had willingly given in to Satan’s control, therefore, his fault or his sin was GREATER than Pilate’s. We don’t like to consider that someone’s sin is GREATER than someone else’s sin, but Jesus said that Judas’s sin was GREATER.

Pilate was really trying to set Christ free because he knew Christ was an innocent man. Pilate did not want to cause the Jewish leaders to revolt, so he acted more out of fear for his own reputation and position. Jesus knew He had to go to the cross to pay for our sins, so when He told Pilate that God was really in charge of the power that Pilate had, He was letting Pilate know that no matter what decision he made, the Jews were going to make sure Christ was crucified. We need to be incredibly thankful that the blood that was shed for all our sin is GREATER still. Jesus’ blood cleanses us - makes us right with Him - so that we are set free from ALL sin, guilt and shame.

CHALLENGE

Do you live your life in the freedom and forgiveness that Christ has provided?

Do you know that ALL your sin is washed away, and because it is, you have the ability to walk in obedience to Christ and His Word every day?

Ask your Heavenly Father to help you see yourself the way He sees you.
Ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Use this knowledge to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, so that you attain to all steadfastness and patience. Joyously give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in His inheritance.
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Write out your prayers under each section:

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Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- 1 Corinthians 13
DEVOTIONAL

“Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).

“But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Being a part of Christ’s body is awesome. We are all individuals, as believers, but together we are all a different part of the body of Christ. When we are all doing the works He prepared for us to do, then the body of Christ is functioning well and is healthy. When we are NOT doing what He’s created us to do, then the body of Christ is hurting and not functioning to its fullest potential. As we read these verses in 1 Corinthians, we see that God has chosen each of us for different functions in His body, just like every part of our own body has a different function and purpose. Being different is NOT bad. If we all did the same thing, with the same gifts, then this life would be extremely boring and the body of Christ would be very limited in what we could do.

As we see at the end of 1 Corinthians 12, God led Paul to encourage ALL of us to desire the GREATER gifts. Then, in 1 Corinthians 13 we read all about God’s perfect love. As this chapter ends, we see that faith, hope, and love will all continue forever, but the one that is GREATER than the other two is LOVE. As we seek to walk with our Lord Jesus Christ each day, we must remember that He designed us to function well in His body, and part of functioning well is making sure we love Him with all we are. We love others as we so desire to be loved. The GREATER we love, the better the body of Christ will function, and the healthier the body of Christ will be.

CHALLENGE

Are you fulfilling your part in the body of Christ?

Are you making sure the body of Christ stays healthy?

As you live your life today, live it in such a way that Christ’s love is evident to those who come across your path. What does that look like?

God wants us to love others not based on their looks, their likes or if they love us back, BUT He wants us to love them with ZERO conditions. Love is not about our feelings, but it’s about our actions and attitude toward others. Love well and keep your part of the body of Christ healthy.
Devotion Nineteen

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CONFESSION—Confessing your sins to God.
THANKSGIVING—Giving God thanks for His work in your life.
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Write out your prayers under each section:

Adoration (Tell God how great He is.)

Confession (Confess your sins. As the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, agree with God the Father that it is sin and thank Him for His forgiveness through Christ.)

Thanksgiving (Give thanks to God for your talents and gifts. Thank Him for everything you are and everything you have. Thank Him for all He’s doing in you and through you.)

Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- Philippians 1
DEVOOTIONAL
“Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.” (Philippians 1:12-18)

It’s hard to imagine being imprisoned for something that is right in God’s eyes or for something we’ve been wrongly accused of. God is sovereign (in charge of all things). Yet, though we say we believe that He’s sovereign, sometimes when “bad things” happen to us we gripe, complain, have a horrible attitude about it and even question God’s sovereignty and His control. As God led Paul to write to the believers in Philippi, we find that Paul is writing to them from prison. We know that Paul is in prison because he had been preaching about our Lord Jesus Christ. The religious leaders of the day had Paul arrested, hoping to stop the spread of the Good News of Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

As we read this passage of Scripture, we find that Paul is NOT griping, complaining, having a horrible attitude about his imprisonment nor questioning God’s Sovereignty. What we do find is something GREATER. God, through Paul, is letting the believers in Philippi, and us, know that He is still in charge and that He is using Paul to continue to spread the Good News about our Lord Jesus Christ, even in prison. Paul says his circumstances have turned out for the GREATER progress of the Gospel. The religious leaders thought if they could imprison Paul, then that would stop him and discourage all other believers from sharing the Good News of Christ. NOT! The result was just the opposite. Paul was being chained between two Roman guards and the guards would be chained to Paul for four hours at a time before new guards would replace them. Paul was allowing Christ to use him to preach the Gospel to ALL these Roman guards. Many of them were surrendering their lives to Christ. Another GREATER outcome that was happening was that: “most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of Paul’s imprisonment, had far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.” God is Sovereign, and He will always do GREATER things in us and through us when we focus completely on Him and NOT on our circumstances.

CHALLENGE
Are you allowing God to use every circumstance and every situation in your life for His glory? Or are you so focused on yourself that when bad things happen, your bad attitude and complaining just get in the way of what God would love to do through you?

What needs to change in order for all your circumstances to be used for God’s glory?

Examine what God is saying to you and then turn to Him and let Him do it.
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Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- 2 Thessalonians 1
DEVOTIONAL

“Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.” (2 Thessalonians 1:1-4)

As we walk with our Lord Jesus Christ, what do others say about us? What is it that sticks out to others about our walk with our Lord? In God’s Word we find Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, along with Silvanus and Timothy, writing a second letter to the believers in Thessalonica. As we read, we see that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy have incredibly grateful hearts about their fellow believers in Thessalonica. This was due to those believers living out their faith in Christ so openly that everyone could see it AND their love for each other was obviously growing even GREATER. This is what should be said about all of us, as followers of Christ, by anyone who spends any amount of time with us. Our love for each other, and our faith in Christ, should become GREATER on a daily basis. It should be obvious to all who are around us because we’re openly living it out and not just talking about it.

Be sure not to miss the fact that these believers in Thessalonica were suffering major persecution during this time. Yet, their faith in Christ and their love for each other was still becoming GREATER. What would be GREATER about us, about our actions and/or our attitudes, if we were in the midst of trials, tests, suffering and persecution? Would those around us see and hear from us griping, complaining and feeling sorry for ourselves? Or would they see our faith in Christ and our love for other believers still growing even GREATER? We face trials, tests, suffering, and possibly even some persecution, but we still need to live in such a way that those who talk about us are able to say the same things that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy heard about the believers in Thessalonica. Our love for one another ought to be continually growing GREATER!

CHALLENGE

Think about this: What has your life been saying lately? What do others say about us when we’re not around? What’s the truth about our lives, actions and attitudes?

Ask those who love you unconditionally (parents, family members, close friends, etc…) to tell you what they really see from your life on a daily basis. Ask them if they could truly say about you: “Your faith is greatly enlarged and continues to grow, and the love you show toward others grows ever greater too.”

If they cannot, then ask yourself, and them: “What do I need to do to allow others to see my faith in Christ and my love for others?”
GREATER THAN ALL
Devotion Twenty-One

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Write out your prayers under each section:

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Thanksgiving (Give thanks to God for your talents and gifts. Thank Him for everything you are and everything you have. Thank Him for all He’s doing in you and through you.)

Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- Hebrews 6:9-20
DEVOTIONAL
“For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.’ And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.” (Hebrews 6:13-18)

When we think about people who are GREATER than us, we can all come up with a huge list of folks. But out of all of the people we list, we probably would not make an oath (a sworn declaration) by any one of them. God Almighty made a promise to Abraham about 4,000 years ago, as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, and told him: “I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.” As we see recorded in Hebrews, when God made the promise, He sealed it and made it binding with an oath by swearing to keep the promise by His own Name: “Since He could swear by no one GREATER, He swore by Himself.”

Over the centuries we, as people, have made promises, and then bound ourselves to those promises, by swearing an oath by someone GREATER than us, like a king or God Almighty Himself. God wanted Abraham and all of Abraham’s descendants, which include us, to know for certain that God WILL keep His promise and that He will NEVER change His mind on this promise. These two things—God’s promise along with His binding oath to keep that promise—are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. This gives ALL of us GREATER encouragement to hold fast to the hope that is set before us in Christ Jesus our Lord. We need to be thankful to God that there truly is no one GREATER than Him.

CHALLENGE
Do you trust God and His promise?

If you do, then your life should show evidence of your trust. He set you and me free from sin and its bondage. He gave us Himself, through His Holy Spirit who lives in us, so we could walk in victory every day. The world wants us to believe that there is no way to really know God, that there is no way to really know where we go when we die and that there is no way to have true hope and peace. But God and His Word tell us differently, so we need to live according to His promise and share this promise with everyone we meet. This is a promise of which we can be sure.

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Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- Hebrews 9
DEVOTIONAL

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:11-15).

We, as believers, worship, adore and serve the great High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, we read how God had come down to earth in the Spirit on the Day of Atonement to the Holy of Holies in the Temple. It was built by human hands to receive the blood sacrifice of a slain lamb, which was offered by the high priest in order to cover the sins of the people. Then, 400 years before Christ entered Mary’s womb to come into this world to sacrifice His own life for ALL people, God stopped coming down to the Holy of Holies and He was silent for those 400 years. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to earth as the perfect sacrifice to shed His blood. This was not to cover the sins of all people, but to wash away the sins of ALL people and give us His forgiveness, righteousness, holiness, mercy and grace.

When Christ ascended back into heaven, He entered the GREATER and perfect tabernacle, NOT made with human hands. Under the Old Testament law, the blood sacrifices of bulls, lambs, rams, goats and doves would cover the people’s sins. God Almighty would overlook their sins due to the blood that was sacrificed. Jesus Christ offered His own blood to God the Father as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Everything Christ came to do was GREATER than all the previous sacrifices that had been going on for over 4,000 years. Because His life, His sacrifice and His blood was perfect in every way. He paid the price in full for all people. Christ is our Advocate, Mediator and Peacemaker between us and God the Father. Christ fulfilled ALL of the Old Testament Laws, the Old Covenant, and made a New Covenant between all people and God the Father. We, as believers in and followers of Christ, have the GREATER gift. Everyone who confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as their own Lord, and believes in their heart that God has raised Him from dead, will receive the eternal inheritance God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Christ has totally cleansed us, washed us white as snow and set us free from ALL our sin, and our lives are GREATER because of Him.

CHALLENGE

Write out your responses and keep them in a place where you can continually come back to what you write down today as a reminder of what you will do.

What has God taught you today about Christ and His sacrifice?

What should be our response to what Christ has done for us through His body and His blood?

What will be different about your choices, from this day forward, due to what God has shown you through His Word today?
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Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- Hebrews 11
DEVOTIONAL
“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.” (Hebrews 11:24-26)

Chapter 11 of Hebrews is all about real faith, lived out by real people, who became saints through their relationships with God Almighty. One of those saints is Moses who, just like us, had his strengths and his weaknesses. But God considers him a great man of faith. Moses chose to receive ill-treatment, with his people (the Jewish Nation), rather than choosing the temporary pleasures of sin by staying in Pharaoh’s family. Moses knew that to suffer with Christ offered GREATER riches than all the treasures he could accumulate in Egypt.

We may not like to consider suffering with Christ one of our top options, but as believers we must expect suffering. The GREATER riches of having Christ as our Lord, Sustainer, King, Master, Provider, Peace and Friend also means that we will suffer because of our relationship with Him. Jesus suffered while here on earth, and He tells us throughout His Word that if the world persecuted Him, then this lost world will persecute those who follow Him. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the GREATER riches, He is the GREATER reward, and we have Him to look forward to when He finally calls us home. Let’s make sure that we not settle for the temporary pleasures of this world and miss all that Christ has for us here, and all He has for us when He finally calls us home.

CHALLENGE
What are you hanging onto that you know is causing you to stumble in your walk with our Lord?

What are you enjoying from this world that you know is nothing more than a “passing pleasure of sin?”

As God, through His Holy Spirit in you, reveals to you the things of this world that you are hanging onto for nothing more than the “passing pleasures of sin,” stop and confess to Him that it in sin and thank Him for loving you enough to reveal that sin to you.

Thank Him for His awesome, incredible forgiveness. Now find someone today that you completely trust. This needs to be a strong, godly Christian of the same gender, and ask him or her to hold you accountable in this area of weakness so you can grow in Christ.
GREATER GRACE
Devotion Twenty-Four

A.C.T.S PRAYER METHOD
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Thanksgiving (Give thanks to God for your talents and gifts. Thank Him for everything you are and everything you have. Thank Him for all He’s doing in you and through you.)

Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE
Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- James 4
**DEVOTIONAL**

“Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: ‘He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us’? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:5-7)

God is GREATER in all ways and He gives us ALL we need to live this life fully and completely for Him. God being jealous for His Spirit who lives in us may seem a little weird, but the reality is that God jealously desires His Spirit to be fully welcomed in us. He wants for us to submit fully to Him and His power, so that we live in His righteousness. The Holy Spirit also jealously desires ALL of our devotion to Him, and He should for He has given us His all. God knows we struggle in this world, that is why He gave us His Holy Spirit to live in us and with Him comes His GREATER grace. This means God is giving us more and more grace, through His Holy Spirit’s power, so we can stand against and overcome our fleshly desires, our evil tendencies.

This is GREATER grace indeed. This is why God opposes, resists and stands against the proud, because they are all about themselves (me, myself and I). But the humble are all about God Almighty (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and fully submit to Him, His authority, His power and receive His GREATER grace. This why we must continually submit to God and humble ourselves before Him, because then we can stand firm against the devil and all the demons, and they will all flee from us.

**CHALLENGE**

Think over this past week: Are you living your life fully devoted to God and His Word? Reread the passage today.

What kind of attitude do we need to have as believers?

Are you continually submitting to God, humbling yourself before Him?

Remember, only then can you resist and stand firm against the devil and all the demons so that you have daily victory.
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Supplication (Ask Him for whatever is on your heart. Give Him your requests.)

SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.
- 2 Peter 2
DEVOTIONAL
“Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the Day of Judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.” (2 Peter 2:9-11)

Living for our Lord is choosing the GREATER life. There are those who live today for their own sensual, sexual passions and lusts and they think they are free from judgment and consequences because, so far, they have not really suffered any consequences at all. They are so arrogant and prideful that they even make light of, and mock, supernatural beings (Satan and the demons). It’s interesting that God led Peter to say that even “angels who are GREATER in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.” Think about that truth for a minute. Angels, who are so much GREATER in power and strength then we could ever imagine, do not even dare to bring a charge of blasphemy before the Lord, against those supernatural beings (Satan and the demons). For they know that God is omniscient and He is omnipotent, so He already knows all and is already over those supernatural beings in power as well.

God has blessed us abundantly, but that does not give us license to do whatever we want. Those who are “false teachers” will one day be judged with a very harsh judgment. They may think they are immune to God’s judgment because they cannot see Him, but He will bring a GREATER judgment that will last for all eternity. That is GREATER, for sure, so let’s not take lightly ALL that God has done for us. Let’s NEVER bring a reviling judgment against God or any of His angels.

CHALLENGE
How are you living your life?

Has God’s grace been cheapened because you think that you can do what you want, when you want, to live for your own desires?

God has, and continues, to rescue us from the trash of this world, but you must choose to walk in obedience to Him as well. Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13 this week: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

Allow God to remind you that nothing this world throws at you is too much.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- 1 John 3:18-24
DEVOTIONAL
“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” (1 John 3:18-22)

We can all talk about “love,” and all the things we should be doing to love others, but talk is cheap and accomplishes nothing if there’s no action to follow. To love as God loves means we love through our actions. We reveal to others, and even to ourselves, that we belong to God by the way we put into action our love for others. It’s also our actions that reassure us of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. The confidence we need to come before Him comes through the way we demonstrate and live out the love He has so richly given us. Our “feelings” are very deceptive because there are times we “feel” very far away from God and there are other times we “feel” very close to Him. Often our “feelings” torment us through guilt, shame, self-accusation, self-condemning and self-criticism, but God is GREATER than our “feelings” and He knows EVERYTHING, including the fact that our hearts belong to Him. Nothing is hidden from our God. That is why He came in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. God knew then, knows now and will always know that our righteousness, forgiveness, holiness and real love can only come through our relationship with Him through the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need NOT listen to our “feelings,” but we MUST trust in God’s truth and what He declares us to be through Christ. The confidence we’re looking for comes when we believe His truth, ALL He has done, is doing and will continue to do for us, in us and through us. With His confidence we come before Him totally free from guilt, shame, self-hatred and self-condemning because we see ourselves for whom we really are in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. This confidence and assurance gives us what we need to receive all He has for us and we choose to follow Him in obedience, habitually practicing what we know pleases Him.

CHALLENGE
How do you see yourself? Do you believe what God and His Word say about you? Do you know how much you are really worth, because you belong to Him?

If you have been caught up in “feelings” of torment through guilt, shame, self-accusation, self-condemning and self-criticism, then STOP and confess those feelings as sin.

Thank God for who you are in Him and through Him.

Thank Him for being your Daddy and King and for including you in ALL of His plans.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- 1 John 4
DEVOTIONAL
“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (1 John 4:1-6)

Our world is full of false teachers and false religions, and the spirits of darkness are working in and through them. We must constantly be in God’s Word - reading, studying and memorizing it, so that when a counterfeit teacher, preacher or prophet comes along, we know immediately that there is something that’s not right about them or their teachings. The Good News is that God has given us His Holy Spirit to dwell in us so we can discern, through His wisdom and His truth, the lies of the world. One way we can do this is to examine whether the teacher/preacher confesses Jesus as the ONLY ONE TRUE Messiah, who lived in an earthly body and became 100% man, while also being 100% God. If they are not willing to teach this fact and confess this fact for their own lives, then they are false teachers/preachers. They are NOT of God but ARE of this world.

Satan and his demons are actively at work in this world to deceive all people to believe the lies of religion and not the TRUTH of God and His Word. Another part of the Good News is that we, as God’s children and born-again followers of Christ, belong to God and we have already WON the victory over these false teachers/preachers. The Holy Spirit in us is GREATER than any spirit in this world. Those teacher/preachers who speak lies are OF THIS WORLD, so they speak what the world wants to hear and the world listens intently to them. BUT, because we belong to God and are His children, we listen to His Truth and to those who speak His Truth. Those who do NOT belong to God do not want to listen to the Truth. This is another test of how we can know if someone has the Holy Spirit in them, or if the spirit of deception still controls them.

CHALLENGE
Whom are you listening to?

Whom do you highly respect, and why?

Make sure that you are following people who truly speak and live God’s Truth. Make sure you are listening to the right message and the right voices. If not, you can be led astray, and you will find yourself suffering the consequences of the lies you decided to buy into.

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**SCRIPTURE**

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- 1 John 5
DEVOTIONAL
“Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” (1 John 5:5-12)

We are in a constant daily, and sometimes hourly, battle against all the world throws at us, trying to get us off track with our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. The good news is that through our faith in Christ ALONE, we have already WON the victory and overcome the world. We still battle because we live in an earthly, fleshly shell and it constantly hungers for all the world has to offer. This is why it is so important for us constantly to cling to, trust in and rely on the fact that Christ is our Lord, King, Savior and Friend. Here is the testimony: Christ came and was baptized with water. He shed His blood to cleanse us from all sin. He defeated death and rose from the dead. He then ascended into heaven. He then came back to earth through His Holy Spirit to live in us, so that we testify of Him through our lives and our words.

So, there are three witnesses of Christ on this earth: His baptism, His death/shed blood and His Holy Spirit. JUST AS there are three witnesses in heaven: God the Father, the Word (Christ Himself, the Logos) and the Holy Spirit. These THREE are ONE. We are willing to believe people when they say something is true, BUT what God says is GREATER. His Word is GREATER than anything any person could ever say. Therefore, we MUST believe His Word. EVERY ONE of us who believe that Jesus is the ONE TRUE MESSIAH, the Lord, King, Savior and Master, already knows that God’s testimony is TRUE. Those who do not believe God and His Word are calling God a liar. God clearly told us, through Jesus Christ and His Word, that He has given us eternal life and this life is through His Son, Jesus Christ, alone. Everyone who has the Son, has life. All who do not are dead in their sin. The testimony of God is GREATER, and we must share the GREATER testimony with everyone who comes across our path.

CHALLENGE
Are you sharing the truth of Christ with your friends and family?

How are you sharing your faith?

Words are not enough; our lives need to match our words. Today, list some ways of sharing your faith with those around you. Then Take the challenge of sharing your faith each day.
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SCRIPTURE

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- 3 John 1
DEVOTIONAL

“The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.” (3 John 1:1-4)

All of us have received words of encouragement from a friend, family member and/or a brother or sister in Christ. Those words may have been shared face to face, through someone else bringing the message to us or through a written message of some kind. When those words are shared, no matter by what means, they always lift us and bring major encouragement to our hearts. The third letter of John was written by the Apostle John to his brother in Christ, and good friend, Gaius. John lets Gaius know that he’s praying for him, that he will stay in good health physically, as John knows Gaius’s soul is in great health because he’s a believer and totally healed spiritually through our Lord Jesus Christ. John is letting Gaius know that some brothers in Christ came to him and shared with him how Gaius was continuing to walk in the truth of God’s Word.

John says that he has no GREATER joy than the joy he receives when he hears about anyone he has had the privilege of leading to our Lord continuing to walk in God’s truth. As we think about our own lives, are we so consistently walking in our Lord’s Truth that when those who led us to the Lord hear about our lives, they also enjoy this GREATER joy? We must make sure we are passionately pursuing our Lord and His Truth daily, so our lives clearly reflect Him and His truth to everyone we come in touch with each day. There is no GREATER joy we can bring to those who have mentored us, than for them to hear we are remaining consistent in our walk with our Lord Jesus Christ. Let’s be sure to share this GREATER joy with those who have invested in us by pursuing Christ and His Word every day, moment by moment.

CHALLENGE

Whom have you had the privilege of leading to our Lord?

Are they still consistently pursuing God and His Word?

You have other believers living around you - are they consistently pursuing God and His Word?

What could you do today to encourage any one of them, the way John encouraged his friend and brother in Christ, Gaius?

Write a note today, send a text or a personal message through social media to encourage a fellow believer who is walking with our Lord.
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**SCRIPTURE**

Read and meditate on God’s Word in the following Scripture.

- Matthew 12:1-7
DEVOTIONAL
“At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, ‘Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.’ But He said to them, ‘Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, “I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,” you would not have condemned the innocent.’” (Matthew 12:1-7)

The Pharisees were legalists who were more concerned about their strict observance of the Jewish law than they were about actually obeying God. They had to have superior sanctity (holiness, godliness) over others. They would have been the “traditionalists” of their day. The Pharisees knew that in their law, no one was to do any work on the Sabbath. Of course, they had made their law so burdensome that no one could follow it, including them, but that was beside the point in their eyes. Jesus then asks them about specific situations, recorded in the Old Testament, when David ate the consecrated bread or when the priests in the temple actually broke the law of the Sabbath. Then, Jesus tells them that something GREATER than the temple is in their very presence, and it is HIM. The Pharisees were absolutely clueless that the God they said they worshipped was standing right in front of them in bodily form. Then, Jesus quotes right out of the Book of Hosea: “For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings” (6:6). God desires us to know Him, not a set of rules and regulations. He desires the GREATER form of worship, which is being totally loyal (faithful, true, devoted) to Him and not to man’s rules, laws or statutes. In the Pharisees’ eyes, the temple was “THE PLACE,” for it is where all the sacrifices to God took place. It was where God was supposed to show up once a year, but He had been silent for 400 years and had not spoken a thing until John the Baptist showed up to proclaim that the Messiah had arrived. Now, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords, is standing in their presence and the Pharisees are worried about Jesus’ disciples picking and eating grain on the Sabbath.

CHALLENGE
Are we more concerned with keeping a set of religious rules or truly being sold out to our God and King?

Are we so sold out to our Lord that we are willing to live for Him no matter what the religious establishment says?

We need to examine our lives to see if we are living to know Him and make Him known.