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Monday Manna

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THE BENEFITS OF PURSUING TRUE GREATNESS

By Rick Boxx

How would you define “greatness”? Or to put it another way, what would it require to achieve true greatness in the business and professional world?

Some would connect greatness with the attaining of mass amounts of material wealth. Others might say that to be great, one would have to earn high status or fame within their chosen field of endeavor. For some, greatness means becoming the featured subject of articles in prestigious periodicals or being a celebrity who is interviewed on TV shows or used in commercials to pitch the company’s products.

Each of those is significant, different ways for measuring high levels of achievement. But do they truly equate to greatness? Many people have attained such heights in their professions, only to find themselves wondering with regret, “Is that all there is?” Let me tell you about someone I know who has a very different perspective on greatness.

Doug, a retired business owner, told me recently he had just returned from a week-long fly-fishing trip to Montana, with 10 younger men. Doug is in his 70’s, but most of the group consisted of men in their 40’s. With such an age disparity, why would someone like Doug devote so much time with these men? He explained: “I don’t like fishing. I only caught five fish all week, but I have mentored many of these men for years. It is extremely worthwhile for me to see them enjoy the outdoors while we also study the Bible.”

As a mentor, Doug is not only sharing his personal experience and insights with these men, but is also pointing them to the one unchanging, timeless source of truth and wisdom – the Word of God – and helping them to understand how it relates to every area of their lives.

Clearly, Doug does not have to do this. As a retired businessman, he could be “resting on his laurels,” or spending leisure time engaged in hobbies or other interests he did not have as much time for when he was working full-time. In reality, he is pursuing a special interest: the desire to help younger men to grow in their faith and learn how to become effective, fruitful servants of the Lord where they work and live. As 2 Corinthians 5:20 describes it, to become “*ambassadors for Christ.*”

In one sense, Doug is sacrificing his time. But he really does not view it that way. He regards it a very special privilege to help others learn and practice God’s ways. And in the process, even though he does not claim this for himself, he is fulfilling what Jesus Christ said in Matthew

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5:19, "Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

He is also applying another principle Jesus taught in His "sermon on the mount," as recorded in Matthew 6:19:21, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moths nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Doug's sacrifice may lead him to greatness in the kingdom. Better yet, he may just drag a few younger men along with him. Rather than pursuing earthly rewards, he has his sights on what Jesus called, "fruit that will last" (John 15:16).

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Reflection/Discussion Question

- 1.To answer the opening question, how would you define "greatness"? Within the context of the marketplace, what does it require to be considered "great"?
- 2.Based on what Mr. Boxx has written, why is he saying that it not enough to pursue visible and tangible rewards in the workplace, things like wealth and prestige, status and acclaim?
- 3.Have you ever served as a personal mentor for someone, or been the beneficiary of an individual who mentored you? If so, what has that been like? Have you found it rewarding, as the retired businessman Doug explained?
- 4.What do you think it means to "lay up treasures in heaven" rather than "treasures on earth"? If you were to evaluate your own life and work in this regard, how would you describe it?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 11:4,28, 15:6,16, 23:4-5, 27:24, 28:20; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; 1 Peter 1:4

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