

ACHIEVING GREATNESS

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To be great is to be remarkable or outstanding in magnitude, degree, or extent. A great person is someone who is superior in quality or character; someone who is noble. A great person is someone who is powerful, influential, eminent and distinguished in life and in career.

A great person is someone who is enthusiastic about life and his career, and pursues it with passion. A great person is someone who is very skillful in his work. A great person is someone who is very good in what he does. He is a first-rate or first-class person.

Greatness has to do with achieving something of outstanding significance or importance in life. Greatness is the state, condition, or quality of being great; as, greatness of size, greatness of mind, power, etc. Greatness is the property possessed by something or someone of outstanding importance a position of power, success, or respect.

True greatness is measured by the positive impact of your life and work in other people's life. If you are not blessing lives, then you cannot be said to be really great.

Howard W. Hunter defined true greatness as, "To do one's best in the face of the commonplace struggles of life-and possibly in the face of failure and to continue to endure and to persevere in the ongoing difficulties of life when those struggles and tasks contribute to others' progress and happiness and one's own eternal salvation-this is true greatness."

We should be encouraged to reach our potential and become the best we can, but we must always remember who we are. We must focus more clearly on the things of life that are of the greatest worth. Worldly greatness, that is most of the time just temporary fame, can at times pull at us and tempt us to compromise our standards. We have seen individuals who have become successful and wealthy as if overnight, but true greatness only is achieved by persistence and long suffering. There is no such thing as instant greatness; true lasting greatness is a long-term process, with occasional setbacks. It is a consistent path of small, sometimes ordinary or mundane steps over a long period of time.

True greatness is summed up in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself when He said: *Matt 20:25-28*

25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

NIV

A truly great person will be and remain a servant to the people no matter his level of success and achievement in life. We exist to be a blessing to others.

God our Father is a great God who desires all in covenant relationship with Him to be great. When He created man at the beginning, He created him with the seed of greatness in him, to have dominion over all the earth. He made man to be the great ruler of the earth.

Gen 1:26-28

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

NIV

At redemption, He redeemed man to rule his world as a king. He put Satan and his evil forces under the believer. He put sin under the believer.

John 3:16

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

NIV

Rev 5:10

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

KJV

1 Cor 4:8

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

KJV

Rom 5:17

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

KJV

Gal 3:13-14

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

NIV

Gen 12:1-3

12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

NIV

All these he did to make man great on the earth. So, by creation and redemption, God's plan is that man will be great, rule, have dominion and administer the earth on His behalf. God wants you successful and great.

Deut 28:13

13 The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.

NIV

God does not want you to be anything less than great. He wants you to be successful in all that you do in life. This is the reason why He gave us laws and principles to help guide man to success and greatness. Failure to abide by these principles will bring failure and defeat.

Josh 1:8

8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

NIV

IGNORANCE

Ignorance is the main problem that has kept many Christians from attaining greatness in life. When a man is knowledgeable in any area of life, he makes steady progress because he makes bold to take hold of his inheritance.

Hos 4:6

6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

NIV

GREATNESS IS BY COVENANT

A covenant is a formal agreement that is legally binding. A covenant is a commitment between two or more people.

Every genuine believer in Jesus Christ is in a covenant relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. By covenant greatness is guaranteed. The seed of Greatness which is the life of Jesus Christ is in every believer. Living the life of Christ and walking with Him empowers and helps one to achieve greatness.

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT GOD

1. God does not relate with a man except on the basis of a covenant.

Matt 11:28-30

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

NIV

Nobody follows God for nothing. You relate with God according to his terms and not your terms. It is a covenant relationship. God is faithful to those who are faithful.

2. God does not engage a man in a service except on the basis of a covenant.

Jer 1:4-5

4 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

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Jer 1:17-19

17 "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. 18 Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land--against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

NIV

When God calls a man to service, He will reveal the assignment; give him promises and conditions for service. God has a covenant with every of His servant. As long as that servant is faithful in following the terms of the covenant, God will prove Himself faithful.

3. God does not bless a man except in a covenant.

Deut 28:2-14

2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:

3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.
4 The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock--the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.
5 Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.
6 You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.
7 The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.
8 The LORD will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.
9 The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. 10 Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will fear you. 11 The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity--in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground--in the land he swore to your forefathers to give you.
12 The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. 13 The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. 14 Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

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John 15:7

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

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All the promises of God are covenants. There is a God part, and there is a man part. Do your part and God will do his part. You can't receive or claim the blessing promised except you are fulfilling the conditions (covenant requirement). **Example:** Prosperity answers to tithing and giving and not just to prayers and fasting.

4. God does not violate (treat with disrespect) his covenant.

Ps 89:34

34 I will not **violate** my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.

NIV

5. God will not forget his covenant.

Deut 4:31

31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or **forget** the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath.

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6. God will not break (annul) his covenant.

Judg 2:1

*2:1 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never **break** my covenant with you,*

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God is trustworthy as far as covenant keeping is concerned. Just be faithful, and He will not disappoint you. It may appear as if He is slow, or he has forgotten you, I want you to be rest assured he can never forget you, and because no one is higher than Him, He will always rescue, protect and bless you as He has promised.

7. God wants you to keep your covenant (vows and promises).

Eccl 5:4-6

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. 5 It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. 6 Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the [temple] messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?

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Keep your part of the covenant by obeying every command of God.

Deut 28:1-2

28:1 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:

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When you walk in covenant with God as He has demanded of you, greatness will definitely be your portion. Every man is blessed as he relates with God in the covenant.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

The journey to greatness after accepting Jesus Christ starts through the silent acceptance of one's destiny. The plan of God for all His children is very great. Accepting that God has planned greatness for you as a person positions you for its actualization. You have to believe that deep within you lies all you need to make it big time in life. All you will need to make life say yes is already in you in Christ Jesus. Acknowledging your potentials and gifts, releasing and maximizing them will bring about greatness in your life.

"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great." (Mark Twain)

VISION

A vision is a dream of the future given by God to a man of what He wants him to become, or how He wants His life, business, home or family to be. It could be within a given time period. A vision is a picture painted and carried in the mind until it is fulfilled. A vision is what a man leaves for. It is what drives a man. It is the reason why a man wakes up daily and engages himself in rigorous hard work and subjects himself to all kinds of risks, mental and physical disciplines.

No man achieves greatness without a definite vision of what He wants to become or achieve. His vision is always before his eyes and motivates all he does.

The vision of God concerning Samson ruled his life.

Judg 13:2-5

2 A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless. 3 The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. 4 Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, 5 because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

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The vision of God for Joseph ruled his life and brought him to the palace of Pharaoh as a prime minister.

Gen 37:5-7

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

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Identify God's vision or plan for your life and pursue it with passion for the rest of your life and greatness will be yours at the end of the day.

FOCUS

The secret of all failure is broken focus.

Josh 1:7

7 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

NIV

Remember that Satan's greatest goal is broken focus (to distract from our focus). Lot's wife became a pillar of salt when she stopped focusing on the town they were fleeing to, and looked back at Sodom.

Nehemiah succeeded because he did not allow himself to be distracted from the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, despite many temptations and oppositions.

Focus creates momentum.

Phil 3:13-14

13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

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Your energy will only take you to your focus. Remember, *"The me I see, is the me I'll be"*.

DETERMINATION

Determination is firmness of purpose; resolution. Determination is persistence. All achievers are determined people. Without determination, there can be no success or accomplishment. Life is full of challenges, obstacles and problems capable of cutting one's destiny short if yielded to. It is only those who are determined that face the challenges with boldness and confidence and win. Determination will turn you into a winner. The road to success is a rough and rugged one. Only the tough – the determined pass through it to the other side of the tunnel where there is celebration amidst great and beautiful lights.

Determined people never quit. They don't take no for an answer – They fight till they win. Jacob continued wrestling with the angel of God until he got blessed. (Gen. 33:22-32) The Canaanite woman who wanted Jesus to heal her daughter refused to leave the presence of Jesus until Jesus attended to her daughter's problem. (Mat. 15:21-28)

Determined people believe there is always a way out of every ugly situation. They believe they will overcome all obstacles that come their way. Determined people will stop at nothing until their goals are achieved. Jacob determined to marry Rachael and he didn't care how long it took him to serve her father Laban to get her. (Gen. 29:15-30)

Jacob was determined to go back to the land of Canaan with great possessions. His determination paid off. Your determination will always pay off. (Read Gen. 30:25-43) Be determined. It pays to be determined. It takes people of rugged faith to survive in times like this. You are more than a Conqueror. Don't give in to obstacles and pressures. Don't give in to lack and financial difficulties. Don't give in to barrenness and unfruitfulness.

Don't give in to sickness and diseases. Don't give in to Satan and his forces of darkness. Be determined. Doubt your doubts. Have faith in your faith. Believe all things are possible (Mk. 9:23). Believe you can do all things through Christ that strengthens you. (Phil. 4:13)

You are destined a winner and a star. Therefore arise and shine, for your light has come and the glory of God has risen upon you. You will make it in Jesus name.

HARD WORK

The first major conclusion is that nobody is great without work. It's nice to believe that if you find the field where you're naturally gifted, you'll be great, but it doesn't happen without hard work. There's no evidence of high-level performance without experience or practice. Painful and demanding practice and hard work is a major key to achieving greatness in any field no matter your level of gifting.

You will achieve greatness only through an enormous amount of hard work over many years. Not just any hard work, but work of a particular type that's demanding and painful.

Warren Buffett, for instance, is famed for his discipline and the hours he spends studying financial statements of potential investment targets. The good news is that your lack of a natural gift is irrelevant - talent has little to do with greatness. You can make yourself into any number of things, and you can even make yourself great if only you will pay the price for it.

Prov 14:23

23 All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

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Apostle Paul succeeded because he was a hard worker (2 Cor 6:3-10). Our Lord Jesus Christ was a hard worker, and succeeded because he gave himself to His assignment.

John 4:34-38

34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

NIV

John 5:17

17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

NIV

John 9:4-5

4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

NIV

- You cannot be a son of God and not be a hard worker. God discourages laziness, and wants all His children to be hard workers.

Prov 10:4

4 Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

NIV

2 Thess 3:10

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

NIV

- Laziness destroys while hard work makes a man skillful, and skill brings him to the palace.

Prov 18:9

9 One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.

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Prov 22:29

29 Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.

NIV

- Hard work brings peace, comfort, exaltation, honour, and praise.

Prov 31:17-27

17 She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. 18 She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. 19 In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. 20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. 21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. 22 She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. 25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. 26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. 27 She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

NIV

Prov 12:14

14 From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him.

NIV

Researchers tell us that the most accomplished people need around ten years of hard work before becoming world-class, a pattern so well established. Researchers call it the “ten-year rule”.

Bobby Fischer, became a chess grandmaster at 16? Turns out the rule holds: He'd had nine years of intensive study. And as John Horn of the University of Southern California and Hiromi Masunaga of California State University observe, "The ten-year rule represents a very rough estimate, and most researchers regard it as a minimum, not an average." In many fields (music, literature) elite performers need 20 or 30 years' experience before hitting their zenith.

So greatness isn't handed to anyone; it requires a lot of hard work. Laying on of hands alone will not make you great. Anointing with oil alone will not make you great. Gifting alone will not make you great. Fasting and prayers alone will not make you great. It takes hard work in improving yourself and acquisition of skills to attain greatness.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

The best people in any field are those who devote the most hours to what the researchers call "deliberate practice." It's activity that's explicitly intended to improve performance, that reaches for objectives just beyond one's level of competence, provides feedback on results and involves high levels of repetition.

For example: Simply hitting a bucket of balls is not deliberate practice, which is why most golfers don't get better. Hitting an eight-iron 300 times with a goal of leaving the ball within 20 feet of the pin 80 percent of the time, continually observing results and making appropriate adjustments, and doing that for hours every day - that's deliberate practice.

A footballer whose daily practice revolves around juggling balls and just playing with his team mates may never become great. But target practice at dribbling, moving the ball from one end of the post to the other and scoring goals from different parts of the field, angles and positions will definitely make him a great player.

Winston Churchill, one of the 20th century's greatest orators, practiced his speeches compulsively. Vladimir Horowitz supposedly said, "If I don't practice for a day, I know it. If I don't practice for two days, my wife knows it. If I don't practice for three days, the

world knows it." He was certainly an addicted practicer, but the same quote has been attributed to world-class musicians like Ignace Paderewski and Luciano Pavarotti.

Many great athletes are legendary for the brutal discipline of their practice routines. In basketball, Michael Jordan practiced intensely beyond the already punishing team practices. (Had Jordan possessed some mammoth natural gift specifically for basketball, it seems unlikely he'd have been cut from his high school team.)

Tiger Woods is a textbook of what hard work can make a man. Because his father introduced him to golf at an extremely early age - 18 months - and encouraged him to practice intensively, Woods had racked up at least 15 years of practice by the time he became the youngest-ever winner of the U.S. Amateur Championship, at age 18. Also in line with the findings, he has never stopped trying to improve, devoting many hours a day to conditioning and practice, even remaking his swing twice because that's what it took to get even better. He was world's number one player for many years until only recently after his marriage failure when he lost that position.

The business side

The evidence, scientific as well as anecdotal, seems overwhelmingly in favor of deliberate practice as the source of great performance. Just one problem: How do you practice business? Many elements of business, in fact, are directly practicable: Presenting, negotiating, delivering evaluations and deciphering financial statements - you can practice them all.

Still, they aren't the essence of great managerial performance. That requires making judgments and decisions with imperfect information in an uncertain environment, interacting with people, seeking information - can you practice those things too? You can, though not in the way you would practice table tennis.

Instead, it's all about how you do what you're already doing - you create the practice in your work, which requires a few critical changes. The first is going at any task with a new goal: Instead of merely trying to get it done, you aim to get better at it.

Report writing involves finding information, analyzing it and presenting it - each an improvable skill. Chairing a board meeting requires understanding the company's strategy in the deepest way, forming a coherent view of coming market changes and setting a tone for the discussion. Anything that anyone does at work, from the most basic task to the most exalted, is an improvable skill.

Hard work includes:

- **Research** – sourcing for relevant information that will enhance your productivity and help you achieve your goals and excel in life.
- **Brainstorming** – resourceful and creative thinking.
- **Planning** - strategizing and supervision.

- **Headhunting** - recruiting of capable hands to assist you achieve greatness.
- **Training and retraining of staff.**
- **Marketing**
- **Presentation**
- **Sales promotion**

BUILDING STRONG CHARACTER

- It takes a godly character to make a great person.
- It takes a strong and godly character to make a good husband or wife.
- It takes a good character to retain a good job and get promoted.
- It takes a good and strong character to become what God wants us to become.
- It takes a good character to please God and secure His favor.

Go to work on yourself by getting rid of all the wrong habits and character in your life. Begin now and do not postpone action. Resolve in your heart to be disciplined and mature in your life.

Thus, true greatness is never a result of just chance; greatness requires the development of character. It is a result of correct decisions made in everyday choices between good and evil that ultimately shows clearly what we are made of, what we truly value, and who we really are. In evaluating our lives, we need to not only look at what we have achieved but how we achieved it. We each have different conditions in our lives we live under, we are each different and unique. We have different starting points in life with different levels of opportunity, skills, talents, challenges and constraints. It is what we do with what we are given, and the positive effect that we can have on others that truly shows greatness. It is this aspect that can help us to understand why some of the simple, common, ordinary work of life should be valued so highly.

Greatness is earned through strong and godly character. Never forget that. Greatness is the result of a disciplined life and walking in integrity. To attain greatness is to develop strong godly character, and through it become what God planned for your life. It is to walk in the covenant with God and secure the support of God in the journey of life.

POSITIVE MINDSET

Without a positive mindset, no one can achieve greatness. It takes a mental attitude that is strong in the face of opposition to win and become great. An optimist is always better and achieves more than a pessimist will. A positive mind is based on the truth of God's word.

John 1:12-13

12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

NIV

1 John 4:17

17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

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John 3:31-32

31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.

NIV

Mark 9:23

23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

NIV

Phil 4:13

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

NIV

INTIMACY WITH GOD

Through intimacy with God we receive revelations, instructions, guidance and spiritual, mental and emotional strength to achieve greatness.

Rev 4:1

"Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

NIV

Ps 32:8

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

NIV

Ps 91:1-8

1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. 4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. 5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys

at midday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. 8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

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