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I Shall
RAISE
THEE UP

ANCIENT PRINCIPLES FOR LASTING GREATNESS

REVISED & UPDATED

I Shall Raise Thee Up:

**Ancient Principles for
Lasting Greatness**

By

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1

INTRODUCTION

“...Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth.” (Romans 9:17 KJV)

Raise up: *def.* change the arrangement or position of

Everyone desires to be great. Regardless of color, culture, profession, gender, and the like, everyone desires to be better.

In an interview with *Fast Company* Magazine internationally known best selling author Jim Collins, was asked his reasons for the success of his book Built to Last. His response was the need people have to be greater than they are:

“I never expected it to hit the way it did; and I can't really explain the mysteries of the zeitgeist. Perhaps one factor is that it speaks to a deep human yearning to be better, always better. It turns out that a lot of people want to build something great, perhaps even enduring, as a way to find meaning in life.”

The fact is this: history and common sense show that within the human heart longs the desire to be better.

God raises up people. He is the Author of time. As the Author He has the right and responsibility to pick the characters, the plot, the climax, and the ending. He is the invisible Hand behind the drama of life; He cues the curtain and knows when to bring each character on and when to take them off. He's in complete control:

“For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the

south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another.” (Psalms 75:6-7 NKJV)

True Greatness is found in Christ

Christ is the standard by which God measures all things. True greatness, in the Eyes of God, is found in Christ alone. In Him, we see God’s original purpose and ultimate destiny for mankind:

“We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God’s original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything...everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment.” (Colossians 1:15-17 MSG)

We were all called to be great. God created no one to be mediocre—not one person. We were all created to find our greatest greatness in Christ, and yet many think there is another way—the reality is there isn’t.

When Aaron’s sons —Nadab and Abihu—offered a strange offering to God they died. Moses told Aaron,

“This is what the Lord meant when He said, ‘I [and My will, not their own] will be acknowledged as hallowed by those who come near Me...’” (Leviticus 10:3 AMP)

The chief blunder of Nadab and Abihu was in trying to get God’s blessing (or His best) **their** way instead of **His** way. No one can have God’s best their way. It has to be His way or the way He’s prescribed. And ALL of God’s best is found in Christ—period:

“So spacious is He, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in Him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces

of the universe-people and things, animals and atoms-get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of His death, His blood that poured down from the Cross.” (Colossians 1:19-20 MSG)

This book is for Entrepreneurs

The Bible says God “*made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation.*” (Acts 17:26 KJV) The word “times” is the Greek word “*Kairos*” (pronounced KAHEE-ROS). “Kairos” not only implies time—but an opportunity to do. It means having a task at hand and using the season to get it done.

We all have a season, or time, to do a task, like king David *who “after he had served his generation by the will of God fell asleep,”* (Acts 13:36 NKJV) we all have a generation to serve—to impact.

I’m privileged to serve a very entrepreneurial one.

But when I say “entrepreneurial,” it’s more than a business owner. The word “*entrepreneur*” is derived from an old French word, “*entreprendre*” which means “undertake.” So an entrepreneur is someone who undertakes some venture, enterprise, or plan and assumes responsibility for the outcome.

In other words, an entrepreneur can be...

- An author wanting to change the world.
- A speaker wanting to make a difference.
- A musician going against the grain.
- An artist striving to be known.
- A leader wanting to take a company from good to great.
- A pastor looking to turn around a dying church...or help a dying world.
- An athlete yearning for greatness.
- Or a college dropout wanting to become a business mogul.

The main criterion is taking the path of most resistance and being responsible for the outcome.

This book is for entrepreneurs—game changers! If you’re that...this book is for you.

Everything is for your ultimate good

Like many of life’s blessings, I realized, in hindsight, that the thing I hated was in fact a blessing in disguise

It’s funny though, no matter how much I hear it I can never seem to get it through my thick skull: God is always blessing. I guess it never fully registers because when “bad” things come into my life I ask, “How can this be His blessing?”

- “How can I be blessed and unemployed?”
- “Blessed and broke?”
- “Blessed and depressed?”
- Or like Joseph, “How can I be blessed and be in prison?”
- Or like Moses, “How can I be blessed on the backside of the desert?”
- Or like David, “How can I be blessed and be on the run from Saul?”
- Or like Elijah, “How can I be blessed under a juniper tree not wanting to live anymore?”
- Or like John, “How can I be blessed when I’m isolated from everyone I know on the Island of Patmos?”

The fact is a blessing speaks to the end of a thing.

Being blessed means that all minor afflictions are preparation for a greater end—blessings prepare us to become the person we need to be. The school of hard knocks teaches us lessons we wouldn’t have learned otherwise.

So, in that respect, we are all blessed.

This blessing is a gift: *“There’s far more to this life than trusting in Christ. There’s also suffering for Him. And the suffering is as much a gift as the trusting.”*
(Philippians 1:29 MSG)

Everything in your life up to this point has been preparing you towards a great end. Your path is *“as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”* (Proverbs 4:18 KJV)

He’s getting you ready...and deep down...you always knew that yourself. When God does raise you up, in hindsight **everything** will make sense, and in the end you will be able to say to Him, *“My troubles turned out all for the best— they forced me to learn from Your Textbook.”* (Psalms 119:71 MSG)

2

WHAT IS GREATNESS

“They started arguing over which of them would be most famous. When Jesus realized how much this mattered to them, He brought a child to His side. ‘Whoever accepts this child as if the child were Me, accepts Me,’ He said. ‘And whoever accepts Me, accepts the One Who sent Me. You become great by accepting, not asserting. Your spirit, not your size, makes the difference.’” (Luke 9:46-48 MSG)

“Be not afraid of greatness; some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them.”—William Shakespeare

The definition of “greatness” is as varied as the people who use it. One definition may be “to rule a nation,” while another definition may be “to be a good father, husband, mother, business person, and responsible citizen.” Who’s to say any of these definitions are wrong? But in spite of the different definitions, there is one thing that characterizes true greatness: service.

To serve is to be great.

Paul when he spoke about greatness and service said,

“Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.” (Philippians 2:3-4 MSG)

It's that helping "*others get ahead*" mentality that births true greatness. True greatness is not becoming great at the expense of others but rather at the expense of self—finding ways to serve the needs of people and make them better. We were all meant to be great because we were all meant to serve.

Of course, doing this comes at the expense of personal sacrifice, but when the history books are written, it's these people that stand out among the anonymous. It's these people that become examples to us.

There is only one problem with greatness—it's when a person decides to live **beneath** their definition. There's something wrong with having a level five potential but living at a level one or two. You were meant to be great.

Seeds of Greatness

The great God who formed you placed in you seeds of greatness—not the fruit but the seed. Whenever God gives anything He communicates it in seed form—whether it's a talent, an idea, or even His Word:

“Here is another illustration Jesus used: ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches. (Matthew 13:31-32 NLT)

All great things begin in seed form, but understand this: even though God supplies the seed we're all responsible for producing the fruit. Ultimately, we're all accountable for how we handle His investment! Jesus said:

“It's also like a man going off on an extended trip. He called his servants together and delegated responsibilities. To one he gave five thousand dollars, to another two thousand, to a third one thousand, depending on their abilities. Then he left. Right off, the first servant went to work and doubled his master's investment.” (Matthew 25:14-16 MSG)

Notice it was the **servant** who went to work and “*doubled his master's investment.*”

The story continues with the first two being profitable and the master promoting them. But the third servant simply hid his master's investment and gave it back to him—every cent of it! Needless to say the boss wasn't thrilled with that:

“The master was furious. ‘That’s a terrible way to live! It’s criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least?!’” (Matthew 25:26 MSG)

Again, there are seeds of greatness inside of us and they need to be cultivated. Paul said, *“We have this treasure from God, but we are like clay jars that hold the treasure. This shows that the great power is from God, not from us.”* (2 Corinthians 4:7 NCV)

One of the great errors of this generation is that we misunderstand the real purpose of education. The word “education” comes from the Latin word “educare” and it means to “draw out.” It’s synonymous with the Egyptian name “Moses,” which means to “pull out.” So a truly educated person is someone who’s able to get out of them all that’s placed inside of them.

This is not to say we don’t need teachers—quite the contrary. In fact, the best teachers understand the concept of pulling out of the student greatness. The Bible says, *“Though good advice lies deep within the heart, a person with understanding will draw it out.”* (Proverbs 20:5 NLT)

In other words, everything a person needs to succeed is in them but it takes a person of insight, skill, and wisdom to draw it out. Not to mention a person of patience—as people “get it” at different times and different ways.

Paul understood this.

He, like a true teacher, was so concerned about getting the best out of his students that it hurt:

“My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you until Christ’s nature is formed in you. How I wish I were with you now, so that I could take a different attitude toward you. I am so worried about you!” (Galatians 4:19-20 GNT)

In fact, the best Teacher has always been concerned with getting the best out of His students:

“Christ’s love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything He does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness.” (Ephesians 5:26-27 MSG)

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Greatness

Greatness is broken down into two categories: qualitative and quantitative. It’s possible to be quantitatively great and not qualitatively great, and vice versa. The differences are as follows:

- a) **Quantitatively great—the external appearance of greatness.** In the eyes of many this would be money, prestige, power, and the like.
- b) **Qualitatively great—the internal attributes of greatness.** These would be the character traits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

It’s possible for someone to have both, just one, or neither. It’s truly commendable if you want to possess both; however, if you had to choose between the two: Be a person of quality. A person with more quality than quantity can still enrich the lives of many. A person with more quantity than quality is like a bounced check—they give the appearance of wealth but inside they’re broke!

In fact, God is more concerned about your inner person than He is your outer person:

“What matters is not your outer appearance— the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes—but your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in.” (1 Peter 3:3-4 MSG)

Stephen Covey broke down the concept of greatness in a similar fashion: **primary greatness** and **secondary greatness**. In recent years the world witnessed the devastation as honesty, integrity, and the like were substituted for quick gain, lying, and deceit.

In a 2008 interview with *Success* magazine he delved deeper into his definitions of greatness and the effect their neglect had on the world at large:

“Financial success—prestige, wealth, recognition, accomplishment—will always be secondary in greatness. Primary greatness is about character and contribution. Primary greatness asks, what are you doing to make a difference in the world? Do you live truly by your values? Do you have total integrity in all your relationships? And when correct principles are not followed or ignored, the results can be catastrophic as we have witnessed the past year in the financial markets.”

You Become Great for Others

The Bible says, “*David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom **for His people Israel’s sake.***” (2 Samuel 5:12 KJV) You were meant to be great, but know this: that greatness is not for you—it’s for those around you. When God truly raises up someone He does it for the sake of others.

The Queen of Sheba understood this.

She heard about the wisdom of King Solomon and went to see if the reports were true. When she heard his wisdom, saw the palace he built, his wealth, his servants, and the worship services; she was breathless:

“She said to the king, It’s all true! Your reputation for accomplishment and wisdom that reached all the way to my country is confirmed. I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it for myself; they didn’t exaggerate! Such wisdom and elegance—far more than I could ever have imagined. Lucky the men and women who work for you, getting to be around you every day and hear your wise words firsthand! And blessed be God, your God, who took such a liking to you and made you king. Clearly, God’s love for Israel is behind this, making you king to keep a just order and nurture a God-pleasing people.”
(1 Kings 10:6-9 MSG)

The talents you have, the tests you’ve been through, and the resources you’ve been

given were never meant just for you. Life was designed in such a way that whatever we give away we gain more of and whatever we hoard, we lose:

“There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.” (Proverbs 11:24-25 NKJV)

People of greatness understand that they’re born for others—their greatness lies in helping others to become great. They “die” so that others can live. Jesus said,

“Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you’ll have it forever, real and eternal.” (John 12:24-25 MSG)

If You Don’t Know the Lesson, You Won’t Pass the Class

“Hear me brothers and sisters, He is not a respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of principles. It doesn’t matter who you are, God is no respecter of persons but He is a respecter of principles. And if you don’t learn the principles regardless of who you are as a person He will keep sending you back to the first grade until you master the principle.”—T.D. Jakes

Imagine a school in which God is the Teacher of every grade and every subject. In this school are students from all around the globe—all cultures, colors, and races. He doesn’t give out variations of grades (no A’s, B’s, or the like) just a green “P” (Pass) or red “F” (Fail). Any student who doesn’t pass His class doesn’t go to the next level or grade. The next level represents greater knowledge of the subject—and as a result—greater responsibilities.

Some students in His class are older than the rest because of being forced to repeat the class. Despite the calls from parents, the uproar of the community, and the anger from the students themselves He refuses to just “pass” them through. “Until they truly learn My lesson,” He says, “they will never pass My class!”

Tim and Billy

The classrooms are similar to each other: giant blackboard in the front, teacher's desk on the right, 28 identical desks grouped in rows of 7, lockers in the back for students, a larger locker for the Teacher, a row of windows on the left, a clock above the lockers behind the students, and a big wooden sign above the blackboard with an inscription:

“To know something is to do the thing one knows.”

The Teacher would often point to the sign and say to the class, “If you learn this and apply it to My lesson you'll have learned My lesson.

Now in one particular classroom there are two boys who've repeated the same grade a number of times: Timmy Teachable and Billy Satisfied. They both came into the class at the same time and because they've spent considerable time together they're good friends.

They're also the silent laughter of the class (silent because they're much older than everyone else...and as a result much stronger).

It breaks the Teacher's Heart to see them come back year after year especially since He knows the potential in each of them. But though His heart breaks with compassion His rule remains inflexible:

Pass: you'll be promoted; **Fail:** I'll see you here next year.

At the beginning of this particular year Tim meets with Billy:

“Billy, I'm tired of this. I'm tired of failing this class,” Tim says. “We know His lesson inside out and I can't understand why we're not passing,” says Billy.

“Yeah I know. Why doesn't He just pass us already...I'm tired of being here. He just likes to see us suffer. It's His fault why we're still here.”

Tim replies, “Nah...that can’t be it...you know He’s not partial. Maybe...maybe...it’s something wrong with us.”

“Us?? Nah man! Something’s wrong with Him. I even went to ask Him what’s going on. All He kept saying was ‘Billy you have so much potential...it breaks My Heart to see you here...blah, blah, blah.’” Billy said mockingly. “Then He said something... what’d He say again? He said ummmmm...Oh yeah... ‘live what you learn and you’ll learn what you’ve lived.’”

“What was that last one?” Tim asked with piqued curiosity. “‘Live what you what?’”

“Why? What happened??” Billy asks curiously, unable to see the truth before his eyes.

“Just say what He said again!”

“He said, ‘live what you learn and you’ll learn what you’ve lived.’”

“Billy, I think that’s it!! Maybe...He doesn’t want us to just know the lesson but to *know* it,” Tim said. He’s still unsure of what he’s stumbled on but he knows it’s something.

“Like I said....maybe the problem’s not with Him... maybe it’s with us?”

“Tim, the only problem we have is a Teacher who doesn’t want to pass us,” Billy said flatly. “Nothing’s wrong with us, we know what He’s teaching, we can handle the added responsibilities—although I’m not sure if I want to—He just doesn’t want to pass us.”

“Listen why don’t we try to work harder?” asks Tim with a gleam in his eye. “Let’s ask those who’ve passed what they did, what He wants, and let’s just do it!! It may, you know, be a bit harder but I think if we really focus on it, work on ourselves, try to practice what He’s teaching...I think we can get it done. Come on man, I think we can do it.”

“‘Do extra work?’ ‘Work on ourselves?’ I’m not sure if I’m with that. I mean I don’t like this whole thing...but that just seems like too much. Nah, I’m not with it. I think I’m just gonna complain some more, maybe get my folks involved, you know maybe they can push His Hand a bit. Maybe I can just get the answers from one of the smart kids?”

“Please Bill we can do this! We can do it together!” Tim pleaded.

“Listen Tim you do it your way and I’ll do it mine,” Billy said.

And with that Tim was true to his word. He started by asking those who had passed what they did. At first he expected no one to help—he was willing to deal with a couple of rejections, but was shocked to find that those he asked were more than willing to help! They saw his eagerness and sincerity and wanted to assist.

They remembered what the Teacher told them when they passed.

As Tim grew in knowledge his habits changed. Everyone in the class began to notice the difference in Tim including Billy.

The Grade

It’s now the end of the year, and the Teacher hands out the grades. His practice has always been to hand out the grade and ask the student to leave. He knew giving it in the class would tempt those who passed to look down on those who failed and those who failed to envy those who passed.

After some time the only two students left in the class are Tim and Billy. The Teacher stands up from His desk, walks over to them, and addresses them both:

“You know how I’ve labored with both of you to learn My lesson. I know both of you have potential, talents, dreams, and so forth but **no one** graduates from My class just because they have potential. Only by learning what I teach will anyone pass My class.”

With that He hands both of them a folded sheet of paper, turns around, walks to

the door, and motions with His Hand, “Good day gentlemen.”

The two boys glance at each other, get up, walk down the row of desks, walk past the Teacher, walk into the hall, and hear the door close behind them.

It’s the last day of school so the hallway is practically empty except for a few students walking towards the exit. “I can’t take the suspense anymore,” says Billy. With that he opens his paper and finds a red “F” in the middle of it. He reads the comments from the Teacher—the kind he’s received year after year: ““smart...potential...learn My lesson and you’ll pass this class’...blah, blah, blah. Oh well, the work’s too hard in the next grade anyway, too much responsibility. Who needs it?! Open yours Tim!”

Tim looks at the paper and his heart flutters as he opens it. In the middle of it is a big green “P.” He reads the Teacher’s comments to himself: “great improvements...I knew you could do it...you’ve learned this lesson...don’t forget to serve...be ready to share the truth with those who want to know....congratulations!!”

Billy is shocked as he looks at the passing grade! He looks at Tim, looks at the paper, grabs it out of Tim’s hand, reads the comments, and looks back at Tim.

“What? You passed? No, that’s a mistake! You cheated didn’t you? Yeah, that’s it you cheated!! That’s not fair!!” By this time the hallway is deserted and all is heard is the echo of Billy’s last comment.

“I didn’t cheat, Billy.” Tim started. “I simply learned what He was trying to teach us. I...we...could’ve learned this years ago, but we refused to be taught. I just didn’t want to go back in that class again.”

“No, you cheated, that’s the only way you passed. You think you’re better than me now don’t you? Don’t you?!”

“I’m not better than anybody and I didn’t cheat,” Tim getting a little more angry. Realizing his tone and seeing the despair in his friend’s face he brings it down a notch, “Look Billy, I’ll be more than willing to show you what I did, so you can

get out too. If I can do it so can you.”

“Nah that’s ok,” says Billy, as he hands back the sheet of paper. “I don’t need to go to that next grade anyway. I’m used to it here. Besides I’ll find new friends. I don’t need to hang out with cheaters anyway.” Billy breaks away from Tim and with a quicker pace walks toward the exit.

“Please Billy,” Tim pleads. “I will help you.”

“Thanks but no thanks.” Without even looking at Tim, Billy gives a wave with his hand. “Catchya later, cheater!”

Billy never did graduate from that class and never did understand what the Teacher wanted. He made new friends and together they found multitudes of people to blame for where they were.

Tim, on the other hand, continued his ascent and went on to do greater things. What Billy failed to realize was that the Teacher wasn’t looking for knowledge of the lesson plan, but obedience to it.

Both Tim and Billy knew what the Teacher taught but only one was willing to apply what he learned. And so it remains: to pass His class is to learn His lessons through obedience.

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