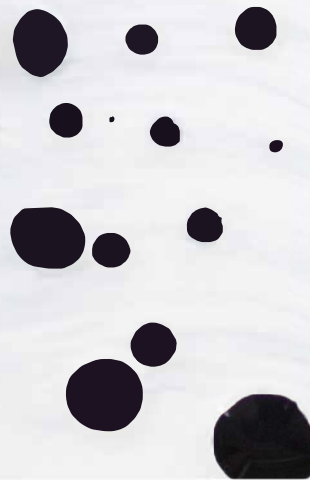




GO BE GREAT

A 28-DAY DEVOTIONAL



GO BE GREAT - 28 Days Devotional
Introduction

Who do you look up to? When you think about someone whose life example is worth modeling, because of their contributions to society, their personal achievements or their ability to overcome difficult times and impact the lives of people in meaningful ways - who stands out for you? We should all have such people who come to mind that inspire and challenge us to dig a little bit deeper and try a little bit harder to be better at what we do and at who we are. Their greatness should give us that burning desire and provide for us the blessed assurance that in our own lives we too can go and be great.

This month, we want to encourage you to do just that - to be the best version of yourself. To take on the kind of attributes and do the kind of things that will cause your best self to bubble to the surface. And you know that person. You have seen glimpses of him/her before, only for that person to retreat from the forefront allowing a lesser you to take the lead. Whether in your personal or professional life, your faith in Christ should help you to be great - a great person, a great parent, a great employee, a great spouse, a great friend, a great student, A GREAT YOU!

Over the course of this month, I want to encourage you to read from this Go Be Great daily devotion and consider how it applies to your life. Each day, you should consider deeply if that day's topic is an area where God is calling you to correct some things so that you can be a better person and live a better life? Be honest in assessing where the spaces exist for you to conquer so that you can experience God's best for your life.

You can be great. You can have a great life. You can rise to a higher version and be what John Ortberg refers to as "the me I want to be." My prayer for you is that over the course of these 28 days you will open yourself to see that person and allowing her/him to emerge and remain out front as the Holy Spirit empowers you to Go Be Great!

**Reginald M. Buckley,
Senior Pastor**



Week 4

February 22 - Be Solution-Focused

Have you ever noticed that there are some places and some people who seem to have a default response of “no I/we can’t do that”? It’s almost like they are programmed to tell you what they can’t do rather than what they can do. These are the kinds of places that breed what I call a “culture of no.” In such organizations, the morale is usually quite low. People tend to do only what they know they can do. There is little creativity or ingenuity. No thinking out of the box, because that’s usually met with little if any support. In cultures of no, people tend to know more of what they can’t do than what they actually can and what they are opposed to than what their mission is and why they exist.

Just the opposite, there are those persons and places whose disposition and approach to requests and doing business is, “yes, of course.” The difference is striking. Employee morale is generally high. People are positive and supportive. Rather than focusing on what they “can’t” do, they look at problems and requests from the perspective of what they can do. In this environment, people are free to think and to dream; encouraged to ask; invited to try new things knowing that there is a culture of support around them. And those who patronize such businesses do so because they know that their requests, problems, and questions will be met with the intention of helping and solving it.

So what’s the difference? Do the two organizations have different rules? Are there different policies in place that govern what they can do? Perhaps. But what mostly accounts for the difference is the approach taken. Here’s an example. Suppose someone asks you to do something that is outside of your responsibility or authority to handle. You could answer by saying, “no, I can’t do that.” Which would be true. But what have you just done to that person who came to you for assistance? You gave them a loss. Likely a negative feeling begins to develop, because all the person heard was “no.” They heard a rejection of their request. Now they are more likely to want to either debate with you about why you should be able to do what’s being asked, when the issue is not that it can’t be done - but that you are not the person to do it.

What if, on the other hand, your response was, “yes, of course. Let me connect you with the person who can take care of that for you.” You just handed the person a win. The reality is that you were not the one who could do it, but because you were solution-focused, you remained positive. The difference is striking. You have helped

someone with their question/issue; you have maintained a positive interaction; and you have observed not to cross any lines of authority.

How we interact with people is an indication of how we value them. This is a lesson that Jesus had to teach his disciples several times, especially when it came to those who were considered less important. One day children were around Jesus and the disciples said, “no. You can’t be here. Get away.” Jesus rebuked them and brought the children closer to him. In essence, Jesus was saying that in order for us to be effective, we can’t push people away. We can’t be so programmed to say “no” especially when people need to hear a “yes.”

Be solution-focused. Rethink ways that you might respond to requests that offer helpful suggestions and the right solutions, rather than starting and stopping at “no.” Create a culture of “yes” and help to spread joy into someone’s heart at least for that day.

Proverbs 3:27

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

Prayer: Lord, when I am too quick to say, “no” give me time for pause and reflection. If it is in my power to help someone to get a win, guide me to the solution. Help me to be a bridge rather than a roadblock in human interactions that others might be helped to experience life more abundantly. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

February 23 - Be Teachable

There is a theory to just about everything - literary theory, music theory, art theory, medical theory, culinary theory. All of which help to provide a way of understanding how these things work. Learning the theory of a discipline helps you to communicate with others about that discipline in terms that are accepted and understood by those within the discipline. The challenge for some is when you have the talent but you don’t know the theory. You know what works, but you don’t understand how or why.

Sometimes, we convince ourselves that just being able to do something is enough. Understanding the technical aspects of it just gets in the way of creativity, we conclude. But here’s the thing. Oftentimes, it’s the theory of a thing that unlocks the creativity and capability that’s already present and actually prepares you to move into another level of greatness.

Take for example the person who has learned to golf on her own. She is self-taught and therefore she has learned to do things that just work for her. She's learned to make adjustments for the hooks and turns that the ball makes when she hits it. And even though the ball ends up in the fairway, if she understood the proper grip, swing and stance, she could probably add about 75 more yards when she drives the ball. The talent is there. But the theory would enhance the talent making her a better player.

This, of course, requires that she be teachable. It also means unlearning some bad habits and learning some new ones. The challenge here is real, because what usually happens is what's called the j-curve. The j-curve gets its name from the dip that usually happens in performance when un-learning and re-learning take place. Because you are being taught a new way to do something, usually there is a period of time in which you are not as good as you once were. This is when people usually quit learning the theory and go back to their old ways of doing things. But if you were to continue learning, practicing, and re-training in the new habits and ways of doing things, what usually happens is that you return to and surpass your previous level of performance. But you must be teachable.

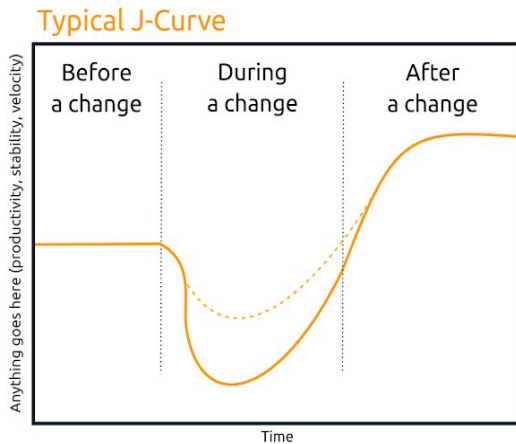
It's one thing to be talented; it's another to be teachable. A teachable spirit is one that is open to learning, listening, adjusting, and correcting. A teachable spirit is willing to un-learn and re-learn how to be better and do better.

Proverbs 9:9

Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

Prayer: Lord, I admit that sometimes I just want to do what comes easily for me. Give me the discipline to learn and the spirit to be taught. If I must unlearn in order to re-learn, grant me the patience and the willingness to persevere. Thank you for my talents and give me the will to maximize them through the opportunities that you give me. In Jesus' name, Amen.





February 24 - Be Prayerful

We've said a lot about some of the character traits and personalities necessary to take on greatness. We should be reminded, however, that none of this is possible in our own power or strength. Being solution-focused, teachable, humble, encouraging, and all of the other things that have been mentioned this month must happen with and through prayer.

Jesus was not shy about taking time to pray and teaching His disciples to do likewise. After great teaching moments, Jesus separates himself for quiet, contemplative, prayer-time with the Father. Building prayer-time into your life is the power and the edge that makes a difference between good and great. It's the difference between operating in the flesh and in the spirit. It's the difference between using your talent and tapping into your anointing.

As a follower of Christ, you have been given exclusive access to God the Father. Prayer is the door and faith is the key. For Jesus says in John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. You have been given the privilege of prayer, where you can ask the Lord for what you need to be great for His glory. You can ask the Lord to help you to be thoughtful; help you to be patient; help you to be still; help you to be flexible; help you to be open; help you to be fair; help you to be sensitive - because all of these will help you to be the light and salt that Jesus declared of you.

Make prayer a priority in your life starting today. Spend time with the Father daily and ask Him to help you become a great witness for the Kingdom of God.

John 15:16

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.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the privilege and the power of prayer. I admit that I need to make it more of a priority in my life that You might live more powerfully through me. Lord, thank you for making Yourself available to me and giving me access to Your presence. Help me to take time to talk with You in quiet, contemplative moments to hear Your voice and be moved by Your spirit. In Jesus, name, Amen.

February 25 - Be Holy

Does that sound too churchy for you? Well, there just is no other way to say it. In your walk into greatness, holiness cannot be left out. Perhaps, though, you should have holiness unpacked a bit more as to better appreciate the need for you to embrace it. Too often, we reduce holiness to morality. We make holiness about rules of things to do and things to avoid; things to practice and things to put away. And while holiness certainly leads to moral living, it does not begin there.

The most basic biblical definition of holy is to be “set apart” or “dedicated” to God. Keeping the sabbath holy was a commandment that it be a day set apart from the others and dedicated to God. In Exodus chapter 30 we read the following account, **25** And you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. **26** With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, **27** and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, **28** and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils and the basin and its stand. **29** You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy. Whatever touches them will become holy.

Here, God is giving Moses instructions about establishing worship and doing so by setting some things aside for use in the tabernacle. Holiness, then, at its base is not about morality, but about relationship. Holiness is the act of being separated and consecrated for service unto God.

Being in relationship with Christ, we have been set aside or set apart to be used in the service of God. God desires to use you to do great things as a witness of His love and a representative of His Kingdom. It is your relationship in Christ alone that allows you to be holy. Aside from that, holiness could not be possible. Too often, we miss the

relationship in Christ that imparts holiness focusing, rather, on the rules of christian living that perfect it. Holiness is primarily about union with God through Christ, which allows us to partake in his holiness, which then makes holy living possible.

Here is the good news. When God says, “be ye holy, for I am holy,” know that God does not ask anything of us that is not possible to accomplish through and in relationship with Him. So be holy - in your living, language, and lifestyle. Be holy in your relationships and reasonings. Be holy and experience the greatness that God will unfold in you.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 **11** Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. **12** And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: **13** To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Prayer: Lord, holiness is something that I don't always think about as being my experience. Sometimes, I even think it to be out of reach for me. Too often, I have relied on myself rather than resting in my relationship with you to be holy. Thank you that my holiness is established in You and I have been separated to serve You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

February 26 - Be Fit

You probably figured that at some point we would get to the need for physical fitness. A healthy body is critical in being your best self. Eating a balanced diet and having regular exercise help to keep your body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, operating at its peak performance. Be physically fit.

Jesus actually addresses being fit - but not the physical fitness that we tend to think about when we hear this word. Rather, Jesus explains that there is a certain fitness that comes with being useful in the Kingdom of God. And he actually provides for us a fitness test that we can all take to see how fit we are.

In Luke chapter 9, we see three examples of people who are potential followers of Jesus. And Jesus puts their fitness to the test.

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. **58** And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. **59** And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury



my father. **60** Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. **61** And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. **62** And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

The good news is that being fit in following Jesus is not about our physical strength or stamina. The fitness that Christ lifts up has to do with total surrender without regret. Being fit means being willing to give up your priorities to take on His. Being fit means leaving those things and/or reprioritizing those relationships that have slowed you in your walk and witness for God. Jesus underscores the fact that one is unfit if he/she is following Him while looking back. Reminiscing on what you have left, romanticizing what you gave up and remembering what you put down all suggest a level of unfitness. You cannot move forward into the greatness that He has for you regretting the decision.

Being fit for God to use you in great ways comes with some decisions on your part. You must decide what has been an obstacle in your progress and let it go. You must determine who has been a weight in your advancement and let it go or at least reprioritize the relationship so that there is a proper alignment of priorities. The choice to be great is a choice to be fit - which naturally means making some breaks, cutting some ties, changing some routines, and staying focused on where you're going - not on what you're leaving. When you have surrendered your life with clean breaks from the past and prioritized relationships such that God is first, you will pass the fitness test for greatness in the Kingdom of God.

Philippians 3:13-14

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, I want to be fit for You. In what areas and with what things I have not completely surrendered, let it be known. Who I have incorrectly prioritized, let it be clear. Then give me the strength to make clean breaks from my past and put in place those who will aid in my pursuit of You and Your will for my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

February 27 - Be Reflective

Have you ever been met with something for which you wanted to immediately respond - knowing that your immediate response, very likely, wasn't going to be your most Christ-like response? We all face such moments when we have to dig deep, breathe even deeper and invite a better response to come to the forefront. Rash responses when we've been offended are rarely good ones. And while there are some that need little delay in being addressed, oftentimes these are moments that offer us an opportunity to reflect rather than to immediately respond.

Why is reflecting good? Because it allows you to listen beyond the words that are sometimes hurtful and hear the heart of the matter. Sometimes people speak from their hurt. And when speaking from their hurt, the word choice isn't always the best. When speaking from their hurt, it's the wounds, not the words that you should focus on understanding. In these moments, you can easily see why the person either shouldn't be offended. And typically, when someone "comes at you" a normal response is to become defensive. But if you want to be great, learn how to be reflective rather than defensive.

If you take the time to listen (again past the words and to the wounds) you will have a chance to empathize with the person and perhaps understand why they feel the way they do. You may not agree with them, but at least by sitting in their seat, you have the opportunity to feel some of what they feel. In fact, the bible teaches that such moments should be seen as opportunities for healing and not further insult or division. Proverbs 12:18 says, "There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Rather than being rash in your responses, be reflective. Take the time to hear the wound rather than the words and see if you can't be a part of the healing process.

Proverbs 13:3 Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.

James 1:19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this; Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

Prayer: Lord, I acknowledge that I can be quick to become defensive when I should be more receptive and reflective. Help me to hear beyond the words so that the heart of those who are hurting might be heard. Give me wisdom to know when to speak and what to say so that healing might occur. In Jesus' name, Amen.

February 28 - Be Expectant

We made it. I pray that the last 27 days have been a journey to discovering and becoming your best self. I want to end with a bit of a shorter devotional than usual and simply say - be expectant. All that we have shared over the last few weeks is a lot to do and become. There

may be some days and entries that resonated with you more than others. Go back and review the ones that touched a nerve or spoke to a space in your life that deserves attention and begin to do the deep tissue work necessary to bring that character trait into your life. And then, expect. Expect that as you commit yourself to making the change and building that thing into your life that God will help the great potential inside of you bloom into its fullness.

Spring is around the corner. We have just gone through a historic ice and snow event that has left many without water and electricity. But I am expectant. I am hopeful. For so many reasons. I expect great partnerships to emerge from having to work together. I expect a deepening of relationships whose roots will anchor community servants in new and more connected ways. I expect the budding of new leaders who will do amazing things in the church, our city, and our state. I expect brighter days than we lived through in 2020. I expect the beginnings of a return to the church buildings after a year of being away from one another. And I expect (and hope) that we will come back differently than when we left - more honest, more patient, more humble, more solution-focused, more teachable, more sensitive, more thoughtful, more creative and more receptive. I expect great things from great people because of our Great God! Thank you for journeying with us this month. Now, let's Go Be Great!

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

Prayer: Lord, I am hopeful. I am expectant. And I believe that you have given me the power that I need to be all that you have called me to be. Thank you for your amazing grace that is wonderfully sufficient, your love that is overwhelming, and your peace that comforts me in life's swift transitions. Help me, O God, to be great for your Glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Cade Corporate Fasting

28 Day Fast and/or Self-Denial (Your choice)

Fasting from News Cycle - CNN, MSNBC, FOX, Yahoo News, Social Media News outlets, etc.

Only daily National News and Local News only at 5, 6, or 10 (pick 1)

Wednesday: Daniel Fast and Noon day Prayer (Pop-Up Prayer on Facebook and YouTube)

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CHAPEL



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