

# Called to Greatness!

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One of the most well-known heavyweight boxing champions is Muhammad Ali. He called himself “The Greatest,” which was also a descriptor proclaimed by others. “The Greatest” soon became his nickname—Muhammad Ali would often boast and brag to others, especially those whom he fought, that he was the greatest heavyweight boxer of all times. Although Muhammad Ali had some great boxing skills, there was more to him than just boxing. He also stood up and spoke against racism, war, and injustice, and helped others who were in need by supporting various charities. Muhammad Ali certainly made a name for himself, and very few would have thought a young, black man named Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr., born in Louisville, Kentucky, would be known by many in the world as “The Greatest.”

There are many people such as athletes, artists, and actors and actresses who are trying to walk a similar path by using their gifts and talents to earn the title G.O.A.T.—greatest of all time. Although it is an honor to be thought of in such a way, it seems the title is given by others and a society based on their standards of greatness. Therefore, whatever society determines as worthy of greatness is what people try to accomplish in their lives. Because of this, people, especially youths, want to be like someone else. They want to be like their favorite athlete, singer, rapper, or actor. They see a society that values fame, fortune, popularity, money, and power as greatness, and anything other than this is less-than or not valuable at all. The reason so many youths crack under peer pressure is because they look to society and others to define who they should be, instead of basing their identity on their own standards. If one does not have a certain talent, gift, popularity, money, or other “greatness currency,” then he/she thinks his/her life is not worth much. Consequently, youth begin to look to others for approval and may even think that who they are right now is not good enough. Trying to be great based on society’s







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standards can bring disappointment, low self-esteem, depression, and suicidal thoughts. According to a report published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the rate of adolescents' and young adults' dying from suicide has reached its highest level since 2000. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among people between the ages of 15 and 24 in the United States, behind auto accidents.

Youth must be very careful not to allow society or others to define what is valuable and what should be considered as greatness. Instead, there is another source—a greater source that determines your value and worth. This is your Creator. You were created in the image of God, which means that God made you with some of His characteristics. Just as people comment that you look just like your mother or father, because God created you, there are some aspects of you that look like your Creator. Because you have some ways like your Creator, He also created you for a purpose. You were created for greatness, not according to the world's standards, but according to the reason why God created you. In Luke 5:1-11, there are some men (Simon Peter, James, and John) fishing and Jesus gets into Peter's boat and tells them to put their nets into the deep part of the water to catch fish. Although they had been fishing all night and were tired, they did what Jesus said and they caught a lot of fish. At this moment, Simon Peter apologizes to Jesus for his frustration and for doubting Him. Jesus tells him, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people" (Luke 5:10b). After Jesus says this, all three of them leave everything and follow Him. What does Jesus mean by "fish for people"? Why do they just give up their jobs and follow this man? Jesus'

purpose as the Son of God is to find and save those who do not have a relationship with God; He came to save people from their sins and wrongdoing. Jesus wanted some help to accomplish this goal, so He chose some disciples. These three men were chosen by Jesus to help catch and save people instead of fish. They were trained to teach people about God. These disciples were responsible for preaching and teaching the Good News of Jesus Christ. This is a very important assignment, and Jesus chooses just plain fisherman to help Him. According to society's standards, there was nothing special about these men; some of them were not educated; they did not go to the best schools; and none of them had a lot of money or were the most popular people. However, Jesus chose them anyway. Why? First Samuel 16:7 states, "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." God determines what is great by His own standards; and who best to determine what is valuable and important than the one who created you? Before these men were even born, God already had a plan and purpose for their lives. That same God has a very important plan for your life too. God does not look at what society may think is successful or great because He knows that you are already important and valuable. God looks at your heart, not at your appearance or talent. Guess what? You are already valuable and great because God created you that way! All you must do is be careful not to allow others or this world to measure your value by their standards. Instead, believe what the Bible says and what God already knows about you! Remember, the works of the Lord are wonderful, and you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

