

high school



Palm Sunday / April 13, 2025

Grasping Greatness

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Palm Sunday Focus:

We need to have the attitude of Christ.

Palm Sunday Bible Basis:

Philippians 2:1-9

Palm Sunday Memory Verse:

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
—Philippians 2:5-7

Students will consider what true greatness is and Who truly displayed it.

Materials:

- Internet access
- Index cards
- Pens/pencils
- Whiteboard and markers (or screenshared document)

As students arrive, use the following question as an icebreaker: What qualities do you think of when you think of “greatness?” (If your class is meeting online, invite teens to bring supplies with them to class and have them ready at home.) Distribute supplies and have students write out their responses on index cards. When all your students have arrived and had a chance to think and write, allow volunteers to share as you record significant qualities of greatness.

➤ **What qualities do you think of when you think of “greatness?” What qualities define a truly great person? Are these characteristics the same? Are they compatible?** (The word greatness conjures up imagery of bigger, stronger, best. When we think of a great person, we may think of an especially good person who demonstrates kindness, care, and integrity. A person who has achieved greatness in a typical way can also be a great person. The type of greatness one pursues says something about their priorities.)

“Greatness” may bring to mind great athletes. Their strength, agility, and skills take God-given talent and tons of practice and discipline to achieve. Sports stars are godlike figures to some. We marvel at their abilities and honor the very best for accomplishing what only they or a small few have been able to.

Sadly, our heroes fail us—frequently. There are too many stories of athletes accused of drug use, domestic violence, cheating, or other immoral or illegal acts. These disappointments in the people we’ve deemed to be great makes the uniqueness and importance of the NFL’s “Man of the Year” award that much more significant.

➤ **Why do you think the NFL has this award? What message is being sent?** (The message is that strength of character is greater than physical strength. It is a reminder to players and fans that football careers and records don't last forever, but making a positive impact on others can have lasting effects.)

Let's check out a video clip of the 2024 Man of the Year winner, Grady Jarrett, accepting his award.

Play the following short video for your students [0:56]:
Grady Jarrett's 2024 Walter Payton Man of the Year
https://www.youtube.com/shorts/VH_Fi-3iJ5U

Grady was selected and honored not only for his performance on the field, but for a life marked by selfless service to others, especially through his organization Grady Gives, “a non-profit charitable organization that advocates for and promotes awareness for causes such as anti-bullying, literacy awareness and empowering youth and young adults to find their purpose in life.”

➤ **If you were to nominate someone from your own life for man or woman of the year based on the strength of their character and great selflessness, who would you choose and why?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Students may realize how parents and other leaders have gone above and beyond for them or may have a friend or other acquaintance that demonstrates selflessness in significant ways.)

Greatness in the typical sense of being the best is something we may strive for, but today we will see a different example. Jesus, who being God Himself truly was the greatest of all, chose to act as the least of all, in a life of service to others. In doing so, He shows us that a servant's heart is actually the greatest thing we can pursue.

Additional source:
<https://gradyjarrett.com/asked-questions/>

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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STEP 4 

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—Philippians 2:5-7

Materials:

- Pens/pencils
- Index cards (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class.

Jesus could have been tempted to cling to His divinity and exercise His power to His own advantage while on earth. Anyone in a position of power may have similar temptations.

➤ **What do you think are the biggest temptations that come with power, prestige, or influence?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Most will relate to self-importance and greed.)

It takes time, effort, and commitment to keep focused on putting others before ourselves.

➤ **What do you think motivates powerful people to put others before themselves?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Perhaps having come from a place of need or experiencing someone else's needs firsthand. Or perhaps from a deeper sense of purpose.)

Challenge your students to think of a specific way to set aside pride, competition, etc. this week and vow to act with more Christlike humility. Instead, they should seek to put others first, and treat others as the greatest. Have them think about the people they tend to act the least humble toward. Perhaps someone they are competitive with in sports or school, or someone who often doesn't act kindly toward them—anyone they find hardest to love naturally.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). Divide teens into pairs or small groups. (If your class is meeting online, you can use the breakout room feature of your video chat software.)

Have students brainstorm their thoughts with a partner and commit to praying for and encouraging their partner during the week. Encourage teens to write each other's prayer requests on their index cards so they can pray intentionally for each other this week. Be sure to ask your students to share about their experiences with this exercise when you next meet.

Close in prayer.

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