

THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

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A couple of years ago, the popular game show *Jeopardy* had a “Greatest of All Time” tournament between the three biggest winners in its history. The winner of that tournament, Ken Jennings, was crowned the greatest Jeopardy player of all time.

There is a lot of discussion in sports, politics, and other realms as to who should be considered the greatest quarterback, the greatest team, the greatest president, the greatest rock band, etc. The debates can become heated and lengthy.

The subject of greatness and who is considered the greatest is something that many are interested in. That included the disciples of Jesus:

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.” (Matt. 18:1-5)

Please note that Jesus did not say that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven would be the most talented, the richest, the smartest, or the most popular. He used a little child to illustrate that the character of the greatest person would be humility.

On another occasion, Jesus stated that “whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:26). Even after that we are told that “there was a rivalry among [the disciples], as to which of them should be considered the greatest.” Jesus told them, “He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves” (Lk. 22:24, 26).

The greatest Jeopardy player will win with the most points, but the greatest in the kingdom of heaven will be the one humble enough to serve others. One will not become great by seeking earthly fame, but “he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt. 23:11-12).
