

a fresh look

DR. TIM KIMMEL

AUTHOR OF GRACE BASED PARENTING

RAISING KIDS FOR TRUE GREATNESS

redefine success for you and your child



A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

RAISING KIDS FOR TRUE GREATNESS

© 2006 Tim Kimmel

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published in Nashville, Tennessee, by Thomas Nelson. Thomas Nelson is a registered trademark of Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Thomas Nelson, Inc., titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fund-raising, or sales promotional use. For information, please e-mail SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version. © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. Other Scripture quotations are taken from the following: New King James Version® (NKJV®). © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The New Century Version® (NCV®). © 1987, 1988, 1991 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover Design: gearbox

Interior Design: Stacy Clark

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kimmel, Tim.

Raising kids for true greatness : redefine success for you and your child / Tim Kimmel.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8499-0951-1

1. Parenting—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Child rearing—
Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BV4529.K552 2006

248.8'45—dc22

2005034990

Printed in the United States of America

09 10 11 12 13 QW 14 13 12 11 10

Study Guide:

Let's Talk About Greatness!

This book may have been written with the individual in mind, but it's a blast to study as a group. The subject of greatness is one of those bigger-than-life desires that all parents should have for their children. When you pool your thoughts and ideas with others, there is no limiting the many ways this concept of true greatness can teach you, grow you, and empower you to make it one of the center-stage commitments of your life.

To make your discussions more effective, I've divided the questions for each chapter into three parts:

- **Get the Discussion Going**—questions that break the ice on the chapter everyone just read;
- **Taking It Deeper**—questions designed to interact directly with points and principles developed in the chapter;
- **Making Greatness a Way of Life**—questions that help you turn what you've read into specific actions you can apply immediately.

The only thing I suggest is that you don't let the questions hold you hostage. Don't feel you have to do them all, and don't feel that you're confined to only these questions. If you have questions of your own that you want to discuss as a group, go for it! And if you feel you didn't get enough time to discuss the chapter as thoroughly as you wanted, don't be afraid to revisit it the next time you get together. Set a pace that enables you to get all that this message has to offer.

Are you ready? Let's talk about greatness!

Why Success Isn't Enough

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Most people have high admiration for people like Mother Teresa, yet few people would want to trade places with her for more than a couple of hours. What does that say about our deeper spiritual beliefs?

Taking It Deeper

1. If it is true that most parents don't lead their children to high standards of service toward others, what are some of the negative trade-offs when it comes to their children's attitude toward God? Their view of themselves? Their attitude toward their parents' leadership?
2. In what ways do churches today promote the culture's priorities of success?
3. In the contrast between success and true greatness, why do you think many parents gravitate toward "success" even when "true greatness" looks far nobler?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. What is one principle you learned from this chapter that can help you build a sense of true greatness into your children?

chapter one

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD TO GREATNESS

Getting the Discussion Going

1. What are the philosophies within our culture that make it so difficult to maintain an attitude of service toward others? Within our churches? Within our hearts?
2. How did Jesus describe true greatness in Matthew 20:25–28? In what ways is Jesus's definition of *greatness* different than the world's definition?

Taking It Deeper

1. What are some things that parents do that unwittingly push children toward an attitude of wanting to be served by others rather than wanting to serve others?
2. How much of what we do as parents teaches our children to work for a heavenly reward as opposed to an earthly one?
3. Of the three big questions facing our children (mission, mate, master), which one do you find the most difficult to equip your child to answer? Why?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. If an outsider were objectively evaluating your calendar, checkbook, attitude, heart, and reputation, would he conclude that you are aiming your kids at success or at true greatness? How would he build his case?
2. Why do you think it is so easy for people of faith to get drawn into our culture's love affair with the standard goals of success (wealth, beauty, power, and fame)?

FINE-TUNING OUR IDEA OF GREATNESS

Getting the Discussion Going

1. What are some of the lessons that the heroes of 9/11 taught us when it comes to the stark differences between success and true greatness?
2. If life is an unending struggle for meaning, purpose, and hope, why do the normal targets of success fall short when it comes to satisfying these deep longings?

Taking It Deeper

1. In the days of Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus, many parents within the nation of Israel were aiming their children at the standard features of success. How do success-oriented parents undermine God's greater purposes of God in the church today?
2. Tim referred to vulnerable moments in our children's lives—when they're asleep, being dumped by a boyfriend/girlfriend, injured, or sick. What do these moments tell you about your deepest longings for your child?
3. Moses is a great reminder that it may take many years of deliberate work before you see any real payoff for your efforts of raising kids for true greatness. Success, on the other hand, often gives easy and immediate positive results. What are the internal battles you fight when it comes to leaning your efforts one way or the other?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. Of the “Ten Ways to Be a Great Employee,” which one do you find most difficult to carry out? Why?
2. What is one principle you learned from this chapter that can help you build a sense of true greatness into your children?

chapter three

THE SUCCESS ILLUSION

Getting the Discussion Going

1. What are some of the negative by-products of falsely equating wealth with greatness when it comes to our role as parents?
2. What are some of the ways the Christian environment has unwittingly accommodated our appetite for the “success illusion”?

Taking It Deeper

1. The piety of the Pharisees led them into the trap of self-righteousness. This is often the by-product of how we measure a person’s commitment to God. What are some of the superficial standards that we embrace in our Christian circles that cause us to fall short of genuine spiritual greatness? Read Mark 12:38–40 and Luke 18:9–14 to gain some insight.
2. What do you think Jesus was trying to say in Luke 17:33 regarding the folly of pursuing fame?
3. How much does the priority of looks and beauty play into your attitude toward your children? How do you think that affects their spiritual beliefs? Their attitude toward you?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. What are some of the priorities of your parenting efforts that may end up in eternity’s Dumpster?
2. What are some specific things you can do to offset the constant barrage your children receive from their culture regarding the trophies of success?

THE PARADOX OF TRUE GREATNESS

Getting the Discussion Going

1. What are some specific ways that God's economy runs counter to our culture's? How does this complicate your role as a parent trying to raise kids for true greatness? (See Isaiah 55:8.)
2. How does focusing our children on the priorities of success push our kids toward an attitude of arrogance? How do you think it affects the impact of their faith?

Taking It Deeper

1. Tim says, "Our attitude toward doing the work of God's ministry in our church should be to do whatever we can, forget who gets credit for it, and pray that God gets all the glory." What do you find is your biggest obstacle to living out this kind of attitude in front of your kids?
2. Tim talked about making "grace" our native tongue. What role do you think grace plays in raising kids for true greatness? In what specific ways can you model grace to your children?
3. Like the desperate boy with the brick, God sometimes takes drastic steps to show us the folly of our thinking. Has God ever used extreme measures to get your attention? What was He trying to show you? How well did it work?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. What is the biggest insight you gained from this chapter when it comes to the priorities you are embracing as a parent?
2. Of the "Ten Ways to Be a Great Teammate," which one do you find most difficult to instill into your child? Why?

RELEASE THE SECRET WEAPON

Getting the Discussion Going

1. How does the pursuit of success handicap our children's ability to be the kind of friends God has truly called them to be?
2. What is it about the characteristics of true greatness (humility, gratefulness, generosity, servant attitude) that makes a person so attractive to others? What are some of the ways our culture coaches us away from building these traits into our children?

Taking It Deeper

1. Read the scriptures listed for *humility* (1 Peter 5:5–6; Micah 6:8; Proverbs 15:33) and *gratefulness* (James 1:17–18; Philippians 4:11–13), and then discuss other ways that humility can be carried out by our children besides the ones listed in this chapter.
2. Read the scriptures listed for *generosity* (Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 13:4–5; Colossians 3:12–14) and *servant attitude* (Philippians 2:3–4; John 13:4–5, 12–17; Matthew 25:37–40) and then discuss other ways that generosity and a servant attitude can be carried out by our children besides the ones listed in this chapter.
3. Tim says, “God has not called us to raise safe kids; He’s called us to raise strong ones.” How can the preoccupation with trying to protect our children from the culture undermine our ability to build true greatness into their character?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. Of the “Ten Ways to Be a Great Classmate,” which one do you find most difficult to instill into your child? Why?
2. What is one principle you learned from this chapter that can help you build a sense of true greatness into your children?

LIVING LARGE BY THINKING BIG

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Read John 6:1–14. What are some personal and practical things God teaches about true greatness through this passage?
2. Based on Tim's overview of abundant thinkers, do you think they are more or less born that way (it's their personality), or do you think this attitude can be cultivated regardless of a child's personality traits?

Taking It Deeper

1. Did scarcity thinking play any role in your family of origin? How did it affect your view toward yourself? Your siblings? Your future? God?
2. How does abundant thinking enhance your relationship with your children? Your spouse? Your relationship with God?
3. How much do you think fear plays into the mind-set behind scarcity thinking? What are the fears that block you from being the kind of abundant thinker you'd like to be for your children?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. What are some specific ways you could build an abundant mind-set into your children?
2. Of the "Ten Ways to Be a Great Friend," which one do you find most difficult to practice on a consistent basis? What is one thing you could do to overcome this problem?

HELPING YOUR CHILDREN CHOOSE A GREAT MASTER IN LIFE

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Why do you think so many people of faith are easily lured into the assumption that God wants to bless us with wealth and ease? How does this confuse our children's understanding of true greatness?
2. If life is not about us and is instead all about God, what are some specific ways we could teach this profound truth to our children on a daily basis?

Taking It Deeper

1. Tim says, "Every last one of us is in a state of servitude to someone or something." If it's true, what role do you think servanthood plays in our ability to model true greatness to our children? (You may want to reread Matthew 20:25–28.)
2. In what ways have you seen your bent toward selfishness block your ability to model true greatness to your children? What do you do to counter this natural tendency?
3. Tim listed some of the truly great people from the Bible: Abraham, Joseph, Ruth, David, Esther, and Daniel. If you're familiar with these Bible heroes, which one's life is closest to the life you have been called to live? What can you learn from that person when it comes to living out true greatness?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. In the list of common misunderstandings about God, has one or more of them affected your role as a parent? Which ones? What are some specific ways you could overcome a flawed or limited view of God?

chapter eight

HELPING YOUR CHILDREN CHOOSE A GREAT MATE FOR LIFE

Getting the Discussion Going

1. In what ways do you think instilling the characteristics of true greatness into your children (humility, gratefulness, generosity, and a servant spirit) will enhance their ability to marry someone with similar commitments?
2. Tim says, “The key to finding the right mate is being the right kind of person.” Do you really think it is that simple? How does who we are affect whom we attract?

Taking It Deeper

1. Do you find yourself torn between allowing God to lead your child to his or her ideal mate and wanting to try to steer the process? Why do we tend to feel like we need to manipulate this part of our children’s lives? How is it working for you?
2. Do you find it easy or difficult to trust God to decide and direct the earning capacity of your married children?
3. What are some specific ways that we can walk our children through their battle with hormones rather than merely set a high standard and leave them to battle it alone?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. Tim says, “The best wedding gift we can give our children is to show them what a great married couple looks like.” How are you doing on this? What are some specific things you can do to improve the example your children have? If you’ve been through a divorce, what are some specific ways you can minimize the negative effects of it?

HELPING YOUR CHILDREN CHOOSE A GREAT MISSION IN LIFE

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Although Tim is all for children getting a good education, he believes that many parents overemphasize education at the expense of raising more well-rounded and therefore more valuable kids. How does our culture's worship of education undermine our ability to raise truly great kids? How can we counter these influences?
2. In what ways is developing a sense of mission into our children's lives more valuable than merely preparing them to make a great living when they grow up?

Taking It Deeper

1. What are the biggest factors keeping your children from hitting their "sweet spot" when it comes to their mission in life? What are some things you can do to counter these factors?
2. In what ways does raising kids to have an eternal mission in life enhance their ability to succeed at their temporal mission? (See John 10:10; Romans 5:2–4.)

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. How are you doing at building an environment of fun, excitement, laughter, and grace into the context of helping your kids be academically prepared for the future? How do you think you could improve this?

HELPING YOUR CHILDREN SUSTAIN A GREAT MISSION IN LIFE

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Read Philippians 2:3–4. Does having this kind of “others orientation” come easy to most parents? What are some specific things parents can do to instill this powerful quality into their kids?
2. What is it about us that inclines us to err on the side of raising our kids in a safe environment—not necessarily a *strong* one—while they’re living under our roof? What effect do you think “safe parenting” has in the long-term development of courage and true greatness in the hearts of our children?

Taking It Deeper

1. Psalm 15:4 says that trustworthy people “swear even to their own hurt and do not change.” This includes the promises we made in our marriage, in legal contracts, with our employer or customers, and so on. How does our success-driven culture work against this truly great mind-set? What are some ways you can help your children live out this principle of trustworthiness?
2. What are the things in your background or your present circumstances that make it difficult for you to maintain a tenacious attitude toward the commitments God has given you?
3. If *courage* is as John Wayne said, “When you’re scared to death, but you saddle up anyway,” in what areas do you find yourself having to saddle up and ride into the middle of truly frightening situations? How do you see God using these to

build your children's commitment to true greatness? (You may want to reread Psalm 73:25–26.) If you cower from these callings, what do you think will be the price tag to your kids' view of true greatness?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. Tim suggests some specific things to do to turn around years of pursuing the success illusion: ask God for forgiveness, get mentors, ask God for His unlimited strength, become a person of excellence, and acknowledge your bad example to your kids. If this sounds like something you need to do, what are some specific ways you can put this plan into action?
2. Of the “Ten Ways to Be a Great Church Member,” which one do you find most difficult to instill into your child? Yourself? Why?

The Taste of True Greatness

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Having read this book, what do you think about the idea of raising kids for true greatness?

Taking It Deeper

1. How has the concept of raising kids for true greatness changed the way you view yourself as a parent or grandparent?
2. What are the biggest obstacles keeping you from embracing a philosophy of parenting that emphasizes true greatness over success? What are you going to do about these obstacles?
3. How important is the exercise of day-to-day grace to the transferring of a truly great mind-set to your children?

Making Greatness a Way of Life

1. What is the most important thing God has shown you through the study of this book?
2. What are the most significant changes you will make in your role as a parent or grandparent now that you've read this book?
3. Based on what you've learned from this book, how are you going to be different as a person, outside your role as a parent or grandparent?