

# GRACE BASED parenting<sup>®</sup>

VIDEO SERIES

Aiming Your Child at True Greatness

Session 3

## The Success Illusion



## Introduction

- We live in an age when success is defined by looks, IQ, strategic alliances, titles, and world records.
- Our culture encourages parents to become preoccupied with crowding their children's academic, athletic, and social résumé with the accolades that count most in our culture but don't have any bearing on eternity.

### I. Aiming children toward man-made success is very tempting, but the success is an illusion.

- A. Jesus voices a harsh indictment on pursuing status for status' sake.
- B. Jesus contrasts the \_\_\_\_\_ of the success illusion with the heart of true greatness.

*To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'*

*"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'*

*"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:9-14*

## II. Aiming children toward man-made success undermines their greater significance because of the superficial way our culture measures success.

A. \_\_\_\_\_: Our culture is driven by it.

- There is absolutely nothing wrong with having money or making plans.
- We get into trouble when we attach the capacity to make a lot of money to whether a person is truly successful or valuable.

*Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. Ecclesiastes 5:10*

B. \_\_\_\_\_: Our culture is defined by it.

- There's nothing intrinsically wrong with wanting to look your best or put your best face forward.
- There's something extremely detrimental, however, when children are raised in an environment that places a higher value on superficial attractiveness.

*We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. 2 Corinthians 10:12*

C. \_\_\_\_\_: Our culture is intoxicated with it.

- It's one thing to encourage children to be good leaders, it's another thing to push them to dominate and subjugate their peer group.
- Indoctrinating children into needing to rule over others sets them up to be challenged for the rest of their lives.

*But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:6, 10*

D. \_\_\_\_\_: Our culture worships it.

- There's nothing wrong with fame that is the logical result of doing things well or being at the right place at the right time.
- There's something extremely detrimental to a child's future when they are encouraged to pursue fame.
- There's a fine line between encouraging our children to excel and pushing them to gain the public's attention.

*Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. Luke 17:33*

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### Conclusion

- True Greatness has nothing to do with wealth, beauty, power, and fame.
- True Greatness is a passionate love for God that demonstrates itself in an unquenchable love and concern for others.

### Making This Yours

How did you do implementing the one practical application you committed to in the previous session?

### Getting It Started

1. What are some of the things that you or your parents have pursued that are going to end up in heaven's dumpster?

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2. Bobby Hayes' story was a sad reminder of what happens when we define ourselves by past achievements. What have been some accomplishments of your past that you have been tempted to let define you for good or for bad? Are your children feeling the pressure to be defined by their acts of success?
3. Did academics come easy or hard to you? Did you feel an inordinate amount of pressure to be successful in school? Have you seen a connection between your grades in school and your ability to excel in life?
4. As an adult, have you ever felt wrongly evaluated because of your looks, how you dress or what kind of shape you are in? What kind of an effect does that type of assessment have on your kids? How have you tried to reassure your children of their worth despite other's appraisals of their looks?

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### Taking It Deeper

1. When “spiritual” people measure themselves against the world’s standards of success, they can easily fall into the trap of self-righteousness. See Luke 18:9-14 below. What are some of the ways that we can fall into the symbolism of spirituality in our daily walk and miss out on the substance of true greatness?

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2. How does James tell us to obtain grace and achieve greatness in our lives? Share about a time in your life, or someone else's, when you have seen this happen?

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### Bringing It Home

1. Have you ever received one of those "over the top" Christmas letters that Tim was talking about? If you could write your family's Christmas letter based on the definition of True Greatness, how would it read?

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2. Our kids are growing up in a culture that glorifies the trophies of success – wealth, beauty, power and fame. What are some specific things you can do to offset the constant barrage your children receive from their culture regarding the trophies of success?
3. How has this session challenged and/or confirmed your perceptions and assumptions about parenting?
4. As you commit to raising your children for true greatness, what is one thing you are going to put into practice this week that you learned in this session?



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### Prayer

*Lord, forgive me for being blinded at times by the bright lights of wealth, beauty, power and fame. I want to focus on the things in life that you value most and that includes my family. Thank you for each one of them and how you made them in your image. Please give me your eyes as I see their significance in who they are and not how they measure up to the world's standards. Amen*

Prayer Requests:

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We encourage you to read **Chapter 4** of Tim's book, *Raising Kids for True Greatness*, in order to get the most out of the upcoming session - **The Paradox of True Greatness**.



### Stay Connected:

The best way for our kids to grasp the value of a life lived for True Greatness is for them to see their parents living their lives for more than the success illusion. Go to **GraceBasedParenting.com** and click **For Participants** for some practical ideas on how to model this at your job and in your neighborhood.