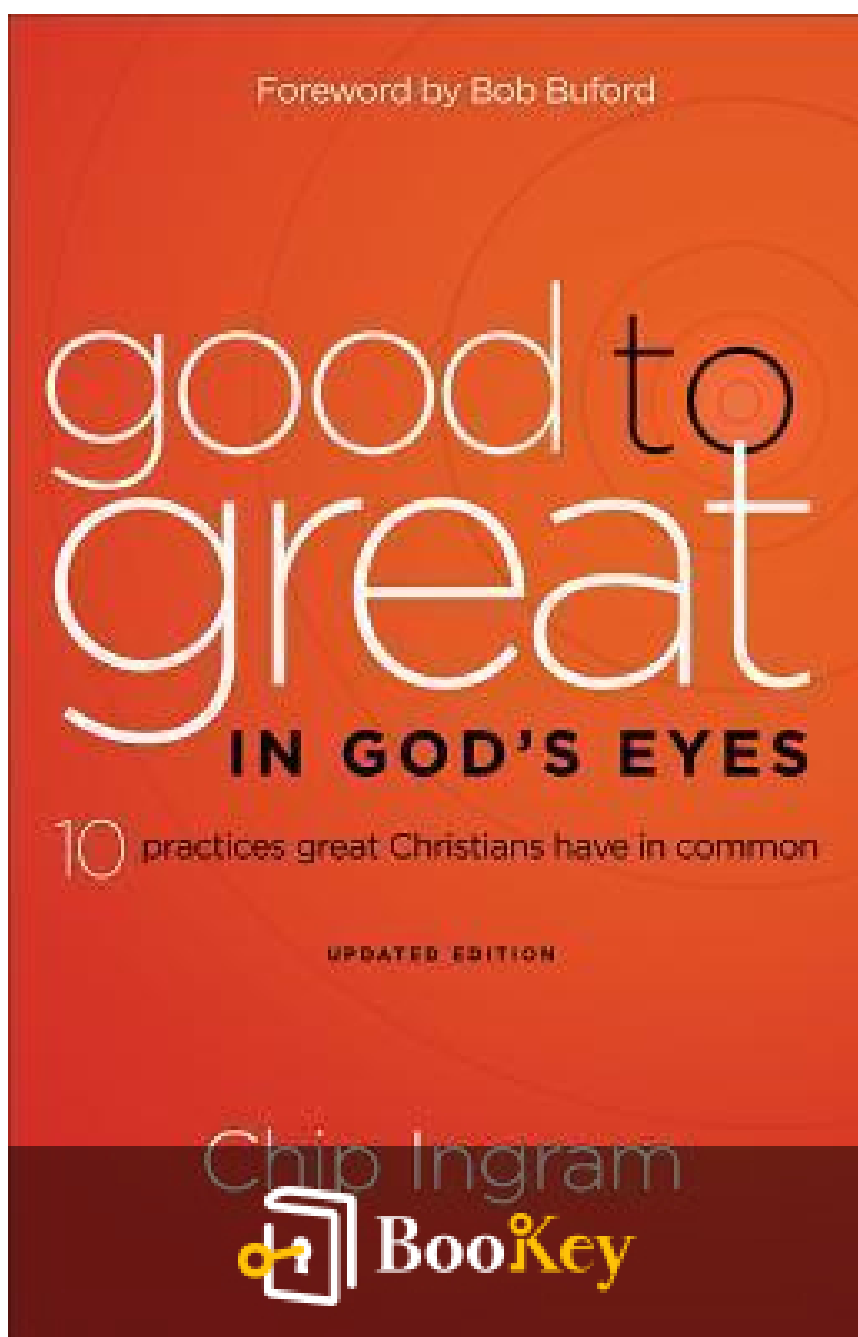


Good To Great In God's Eyes PDF (Limited Copy)

Chip Ingram



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Good To Great In God's Eyes Summary

Transforming Success Through God's Perspective and Principles.

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About the book

In "Good to Great in God's Eyes," Chip Ingram invites readers on a transformative journey to discover the true essence of greatness as defined by God, rather than the superficial standards of success often celebrated in society. With insightful biblical wisdom and personal anecdotes, Ingram challenges us to shift our focus from human achievement to spiritual fulfillment, emphasizing that true greatness stems from a deep relationship with God and a commitment to serving others. This compelling read not only redefines success but also provides practical steps to foster a life that is profoundly impactful and pleasing to God. Get ready to elevate your understanding of what it means to be truly great, as you embark on this enlightening exploration of faith, purpose, and personal growth.

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About the author

Chip Ingram is a renowned author, speaker, and the CEO of Living on the Edge, a ministry that helps individuals gain practical insights from the Bible to enrich their lives. With over thirty years of experience in pastoral leadership, Ingram has a deep commitment to teaching biblical principles that foster personal and spiritual transformation. He is widely recognized for his engaging speaking style and his ability to convey complex theological concepts in accessible language, making him a respected voice in Christian teachings. Ingram's passion for helping others grow in their faith is evident in his numerous books, radio broadcasts, and teaching series, including the compelling insights found in "Good to Great in God's Eyes," where he explores how believers can achieve excellence in their spiritual journeys.

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Chapter 1 Summary: 1. Think Great Thoughts

The central theme of the discussed chapters revolves around the profound impact of our thoughts on our emotions, behaviors, and ultimately, our lives. As articulated through various quotes and insights from philosophers and psychologists, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Locke, the importance of cultivating a healthy thought life emerges as a foundational principle for achieving personal fulfillment and spiritual growth.

The narrative begins with Dr. Jack Haskins' research highlighting how daily exposure to negative media can adversely affect mental health, leading to depression and a skewed perception of reality. It illustrates the greater implications of a pessimistic mindset—teaching that just as we must be cautious about the physical nourishment we consume, we should also be mindful of our mental and spiritual diet. Positive thoughts are equated to nourishing food, shaping our emotional landscape and behavior.

Central figures from Christian history, including Augustine and Martin Luther, demonstrate how “great thoughts” lead to significant personal and societal transformation. Their search for truth and understanding bore fruit that impacted generations, reinforcing the notion that great thinkers lead great lives. This is exemplified in the transformative journey of Dwight Moody, who, despite limited formal education, influenced countless lives by internalizing a profound thought about total devotion to God.

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Paul's exhortations in his letters, particularly to the Philippians, stress the necessity of aligning thoughts with positive, noble, and godly attributes. He encourages believers to focus on what is true, honorable, and pure, establishing a link between our thought life and emotional peace. Philippians 4:8 is pivotal as it emphasizes not just fleeting contemplation but a deep, reasoned meditation on uplifting truths.

The text underscores the habitual nature of thought processes, akin to physical habits of routine. Just as healthy physical habits lead to long-term well-being, spiritually and emotionally beneficial thoughts foster wellness in our lives. The framework presented illustrates how thoughts lead to emotions, which influence behavior and yield consequences, either positive or negative.

Moreover, the discussion brings to light practical steps towards establishing a habit of positive thinking. Engaging with Scripture, immersing in nature, and surrounding oneself with beauty are suggested as ways to cultivate a mind rich in godly thought. Examples include Jim Elliot's profound reflections on sacrifice and St. Francis' prayer for peace, underscoring the wealth of inspiration available for thoughtful meditation.

To harness these insights, the text advises readers to identify their sources of thought, actively protecting their minds from harmful influences, and

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fostering an environment laden with truth and beauty. Establishing great thoughts about God, oneself, others, life, and challenges fosters a life marked by purpose and fulfillment—encouraging continual growth and transformation.

In summary, these chapters present a compelling argument for the power of thought in shaping life's trajectory, with actionable insights that emphasize a proactive approach toward mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness. By adhering to the principles of positive, truth-centered thinking, one can experience a profound transformation, enabling them to live a life reflective of their deepest beliefs and values.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Power of Thought

Critical Interpretation: Imagine starting each day with a mindset rooted in positivity and truth. The chapter emphasizes that your thoughts shape your emotions, behaviors, and ultimately your life's trajectory. By consciously choosing to focus on uplifting ideas, you can transform your emotional landscape, leading you to respond to life's challenges with grace and resilience. As you internalize these 'great thoughts', like Dwight Moody did, you are not just enriching your own spiritual journey but also enhancing your capacity to impact others positively. You have the power to cultivate your thought life intentionally, steering it toward nobility and purity as advised in Philippians 4:8, ultimately opening doors to personal fulfillment and transformational experiences.

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Chapter 2 Summary: 2. Read Great Books

In this engaging chapter, the author reflects on the transformative power of reading great books, particularly those that delve into spiritual truths and foster a deeper understanding of God. The journey begins with the author's encounter with a brilliant missionary in Hong Kong, who impresses him with his dedication to reading one Christian paperback daily. This encounter leads to the introduction of "**The Knowledge of the Holy**" by A.W. Tozer, a profound book that reshapes the author's view of God from a harsh cosmic enforcer to a loving and joyful friend.

He highlights a key quote from Tozer: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." This insight emphasizes the necessity of understanding God's nature, which, in his experience, leads to a significant shift in perspective on life and relationships. The chapter serves as a tribute to the impact of literature on the heart and mind, illustrating how great writings can redirect one's focus away from self to God.

The author's exploration of the biblical foundation for the written word underscores that God prioritizes teaching through Scripture, which has been instrumental in transforming lives throughout history. Examples from the Bible showcase how God's Word engages communities and prompts personal change.

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As the author recounts personal experiences reading biographies of Christian figures like **Dawson Trotman**, founder of The Navigators, and **Cameron Townsend**, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators, he emphasizes how ordinary individuals can achieve extraordinary things through faith. This notion serves as a motivation for readers to embrace their potential to impact the world, regardless of their background or status.

In the next phase of his journey, the author recounts his struggle with balancing faith and intellect during his time in graduate school, finding solace in the works of philosopher **Francis Schaeffer**. The thesis that results from this encounter solidifies his understanding that a well-reasoned faith can coexist with intellectual inquiry, reinforcing his confidence in Christianity amidst academic challenges.

The chapter also discusses the importance of humility and prayer, guided by influential works such as **E.M. Bounds' "Power Through Prayer"** and **Andrew Murray's "Humility: The Beauty of Holiness."** Through these readings, the author learns about the necessity of prayer as an acknowledgment of human limitations and dependence on God.

The narrative shifts to family dynamics as the author shares insights gained from books on marital communication and parenting, illustrating that continual learning is vital for growth within family life. Titles like "**Commu**

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nication: *Key to Your Marriage*" emphasize the essence of understanding one's spouse deeply.

As the chapter develops, the author highlights pivotal reads that shape his approach to pastoral leadership and emotional health. Insights from **Paul Tou rnier's "The Strong and the Weak"** and Henri Nouwen's "**The Return of the Prodigal Son**" help him grasp the significance of authenticity and vulnerability in ministry, prompting a more compassionate outreach to others suffering with insecurities.

The final moments of the chapter encapsulate the journey of reading as a life-transforming discipline. The author encourages readers to find their path to growth through learning, whether by engaging with the books he recommends or discovering their own. He reinforces the idea that these literary explorations can yield profound insights that change perspectives on faith, relationships, and life experience.

Ultimately, the discourse invites personal reflection on one's appetite for growth, the influence of significant books, and the practical steps to incorporate reading into daily life as an essential element of spiritual and personal development. The chapter concludes with actionable suggestions for engaging with literature that cultivates understanding and wisdom, underscoring the timeless value of reading great books in one's spiritual journey.

Key Points	Description
Transformative Power of Reading	The author discusses the importance of reading great books that explore spiritual truths and deepen the understanding of God.
Encounter with a Missionary	The author meets a missionary in Hong Kong who reads a Christian paperback daily, inspiring his own reading habits.
Influential Books	"The Knowledge of the Holy" by A.W. Tozer alters the author's perception of God, portraying Him as a loving friend rather than a harsh enforcer.
Quote from Tozer	"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." This highlights the significance of God's nature in shaping our lives.
Scriptural Foundation	The chapter emphasizes God's focus on teaching through Scripture, which has transformed lives historically.
Inspiration from Biographies	Reading about Christian figures like Dawson Trotman and Cameron Townsend illustrates how ordinary people can make extraordinary impacts through faith.
Balancing Faith and Intellect	Struggling between faith and intellect during graduate school, the author's engagement with works by Francis Schaeffer strengthens his confidence in Christianity.
Humility and Prayer	Influenced by books like "Power Through Prayer" and "Humility: The Beauty of Holiness," the author learns the importance of prayer and humility in his spiritual life.
Family Dynamics	The author shares insights from books on marital communication, emphasizing continuous learning for growth within family life.
Leadership and Emotional Health	Reading works by Paul Tournier and Henri Nouwen leads the author to understand authenticity and vulnerability in pastoral leadership.
Encouragement	The author encourages readers to pursue growth through reading,

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Key Points	Description
for Growth	suggesting ways to incorporate literature into daily life for spiritual and personal development.
Conclusion	The chapter emphasizes that engaging with great literature can yield profound insights and personal reflection, vital for a spiritual journey.

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Chapter 3 Summary: 3. Pursue Great People

In the chapters discussed, the narrative explores the profound theme of mentorship, influence, and the significance of the relationships we cultivate throughout our lives. Central to this discussion is the biblical figure Elisha, who, faced with the imminent departure of his mentor Elijah to heaven, demonstrates unwavering commitment by following him closely. Elijah tries to dissuade Elisha from accompanying him, but Elisha's determination reveals an essential truth: the choice of whom we follow significantly shapes who we become.

Elisha's request for a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit symbolizes the desire for spiritual inheritance and growth. Elijah acknowledges this request, but it comes with a condition: Elisha must witness his ascension. This serves as a metaphor for the broader principle that pursuing exemplary figures can lead to spiritual and personal transformation. The chapter progresses through examples of biblical figures who benefited from following great mentors—like Joshua with Moses, Solomon with David, and Timothy with Paul—illustrating that God places influential people in our lives to guide our growth.

This principle extends beyond the spiritual realm into all facets of life. Historical patterns show that individuals rise to maturity by learning from great mentors, whether in the arts, sciences, or leadership. Thus, it's vital to

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identify and actively pursue relationships with those who exemplify greatness, thereby setting ambitions and aspirations to achieve even higher levels of personal development.

The discussion then turns to the often painful realities of our backgrounds. We inherit traits and tendencies from familial relationships that can either hinder or bolster our personal growth. The author suggests four key principles to address familial baggage: recognizing the imperfection of parents, practicing gratitude for positive influences, expressing appreciation, and constructively dealing with past hurt. Accepting that no one comes from an ideal background is crucial as we seek to surround ourselves with positive influences.

A practical step is to reflect on significant individuals from our past—our own “spiritual Mount Rushmore”—to understand the attributes we admire and desire to emulate. This reflection assists in identifying future mentors and influences who can help shape us into the person we aspire to be.

The text introduces several personal mentors from the author’s background, including Coach Lantz, who first provided tough love and belief in his potential; his sister Punkie, a role model of Christ-like behavior; and Dave Marshall, a humble disciple-maker who exemplified integrity and consistency in his life. Each character exemplifies different dimensions of mentorship—from sports coaching to spiritual guidance—showing that

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impactful figures can emerge from various walks of life.

The author's journey includes pursuing another influential mentor, Howard Hendricks, a respected professor whose teaching impacted the author profoundly. Through practical teachings and personal interactions, the author gleaned invaluable life lessons that shaped his ministry.

Ultimately, the chapters advocate for a proactive approach to pursuing great people. The author delineates steps to identify and cultivate these relationships—beginning with prayer, initiative, and a willingness to learn. The final sections emphasize the necessity of maintaining a balance of mentorship in one's life, urging readers to seek out their own Pauls, Timothy, and Barnabases—figures to mentor them, those they can mentor, and supportive friends.

In conclusion, these chapters compellingly argue that the people we surround ourselves with profoundly influence our life trajectory. If we desire greatness in our spiritual and personal endeavors, it is imperative to actively seek out and learn from those who embody the virtues we wish to develop. By doing so, we can ensure we are shaped by positive influences and remain true to our potential.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The choice of whom we follow significantly shapes who we become

Critical Interpretation: Imagine the incredible transformation that could unfold in your life if you made a conscious decision to surround yourself with extraordinary individuals—mentors who spark inspiration, instill wisdom, and encourage you to reach for greatness. By following the example of figures like Elisha, who relentlessly pursued his mentor, you can reflect on the powerful impact that relationships have on your personal and spiritual growth. Embracing the principle of seeking out and learning from those who exemplify the qualities you admire can propel you toward your aspirations, shaping not only your journey but also the legacy you leave behind. Transform your life today by actively choosing to follow those who lead in positive ways, and watch as their influence helps you become the best version of yourself.

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Chapter 4: 4. Dream Great Dreams

Summary of Chapters

The Power of Dreams

In these chapters, the narrative begins with a young man's unwavering pursuit of his dream to play professional basketball, inspired by the legendary player Pete Maravich, whose remarkable dedication and success illustrate the profound impact of dreams. As the young man thrives in college, consistently averaging over forty points per game, he realizes his dream: becoming the top NBA draft pick and a Hall of Fame inductee—accomplishments that were particularly extraordinary in an era without the three-point shot.

However, amidst this personal journey, the author reflects on how dreams shape an individual's life and purpose. Although his focus eventually shifted from basketball, the commitment to his dream opened unexpected doors, allowing him to pay for college while ultimately traveling and sharing his faith across continents. This leads to a broader discussion on dreams' power, highlighting that while some dreamers achieve their visions, others find new paths, shaped by divine guidance.

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The text emphasizes that dreams possess the capacity to influence not only personal lives but also history. The author illustrates this by referencing historical figures like Alexander the Great, Martin Luther King Jr., and Paul of the New Testament, each of whom had dreams that significantly altered societal landscapes. A dream, according to the narrative, provides direction and motivation, vital for accomplishing great things, whether individually or collectively within a faith-based context.

The Impossible Dream

As the narrative progresses, it transitions to a pivotal moment where Jesus commissions his disciples, ordaining them with the ambitious task of spreading the gospel worldwide. Within a century, they made impressive strides toward that goal, an endeavor fueled by their faith against all odds. The author reflects on how ordinary individuals, empowered by God, accomplished extraordinary feats without modern tools or resources, demonstrating the boundless possibilities of faith.

The discussion of divine capability is reinforced through biblical examples where God enables humans to achieve the impossible. The author outlines core beliefs essential to "sanctified dreaming"—include understanding God's power, desire, promise, and invitation to dream big. The author encourages readers to cultivate grand visions for God's kingdom, emphasizing that God delights in working through ordinary people for extraordinary results.

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Biblical Illustrations of Dreams

The text further delves into biblical characters, illustrating that dreams often stem from God's calling, a theme epitomized by figures such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and Paul. Each story highlights a unique progression from ordinary life to extraordinary outcomes. Abraham's journey into the unknown exemplifies stepping out of comfort zones, while Joseph's unexpected ascent from prison to power shows that outlandish dreams can come true. Moses's struggle illustrates the futility of attempting to fulfill dreams without divine assistance, leading him toward success when he learned to depend on God.

David's experience acknowledges the importance of perseverance in the face of adversity, emphasizing that relationships with God should drive one's aspirations more than the aspirations themselves. Paul's transformation from persecutor to apostle underscores that personal crises can often lead to profound clarity and purpose. Each of these narratives supports the premise that fulfillment of God-given dreams requires faith and resilience.

To Foster Great Dreams

Following these biblical examples, the author shares a personal anecdote about his overwhelming pastoral responsibilities, which led to a pivotal

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realization during a retreat. Here, he articulated a "big, hairy, audacious dream" involving a transformative vision for his ministry that emphasized impacting broader communities and empowering church pastors. This dream clarified his path forward and propelled his ministry into new territories.

The text stipulates that many of us harbor small, self-centered dreams rather than grand aspirations aligned with God's purposes. It challenges readers to dream audaciously, pointing out that such dreams may come at a cost, necessitating personal sacrifice and surrender—evidenced by the life and message of Jesus.

Developing Dreams

To help cultivate these dreams, the author suggests a practical plan, emphasizing the importance of writing down dreams, praying over them, and remaining vigilant for God's guidance. The process of dreaming involves right expectations, open invitations from God, and realizing that while dreams may be daunting, they can inspire action.

The author concludes by engaging readers in self-reflection, urging them to identify and write down their aspirations across various life dimensions, fostering a deeper relationship with God and a commitment to impactful living. The narrative not only serves as a testament to the potential of dreams but as a call to align those dreams with God's greater vision for life and

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ministry.

Engaging questions prompt readers to explore their barriers to dreaming big and encourage them to take actionable faith steps toward their dreams, ultimately cultivating a community of believers willing to pursue God-sized aspirations that contribute to His kingdom.

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Chapter 5 Summary: 5. Pray Great Prayers

In the chapters summarized, we follow the journey of Walt Baker, a dedicated missionary who has spent over two decades in Haiti before transitioning to a teaching role at Dallas Seminary, where he insists on spending every summer in Haiti. This chapter recounts an impactful trip to Haiti in 1982, where the author, reflecting on the extreme poverty encountered at a medical orphanage, experiences a transformative moment of prayer with Walt. It reveals Walt's deep intimacy and authoritative relationship with God, setting a standard for deeply personal, passionate prayer that inspires the author to yearn for a similar closeness to God.

The chapter delves into the nature of effective prayers, asserting that they originate from a passionate relationship with God and are characterized by personal intimacy, such as that exemplified in the lives of Moses, David, and Paul. Moses' audacious prayer for God's presence and glory, David's yearning to dwell in the Lord's house, and Paul's all-consuming desire to know Christ illustrate that great prayers transcend mere supplication; they emerge from a place of deep personal connection with the divine.

Furthermore, it highlights that great prayers arise from brokenness. A state of vulnerability and awareness of one's insufficiency before God compels believers to pour out their hearts earnestly. King David's heartfelt repentance in Psalm 51 and Nehemiah's desolation upon hearing of

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Jerusalem's plight exemplify this brokenness. Such cries for help reflect desperation and reliance on God's mercy, focusing on His attributes rather than human inadequacies.

The text also discusses how impactful prayers align with God's agenda, encouraging individuals to shift their perspective from personal desires to a greater vision of God's will. Practiced by figures like Moses and Nehemiah, prayers rooted in God's promises and aimed at furthering His kingdom exemplify this principle. Great prayers, therefore, seek to honor God's name and desires above personal needs.

A key point made in these chapters is the seriousness with which great prayers are offered. They are steeped in confidence in God's promises and activate His attributes. The narrative notes that prayers can sometimes falter into worries. However, those who focus on God's greatness and faithfulness, as modeled in the prayers of biblical giants like Moses and David, unlock the potential for divine intervention.

Finally, the chapter emphasizes that courageous prayers demand boldness and have the potential to shift outcomes. They push believers out of their comfort zones, urging them to become instruments of God's will. The examples of Abraham's audacious intercession for Sodom, Esther's brave plea for her people, and Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane highlight that faith-filled requests can invoke God's action and reshape destinies.

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Drawing on historical figures like John Knox and Hudson Taylor, it concludes by emphasizing that great prayers require reliance on Jesus, the ultimate High Priest, whose sacrifice empowers believers to approach God boldly. The chapter outlines a call to action for readers to embrace deeply personal, courageous, and focused prayers that not only seek individual fulfillment but also align with God's expansive kingdom purposes. Readers are encouraged to reflect on their prayer lives, actively pursue forgiveness, and transform their prayers into powerful declarations of faith—all rooted in a growing relationship with Christ.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of personal intimacy in prayer

Critical Interpretation: Imagine standing before God, your heart laid bare, longing for a deeper connection that transcends the noise of your daily life. This chapter nudges you to cultivate a relationship with the Divine that mirrors the intense intimacy exemplified by figures like Moses and David. By embracing this key point, you can transform your prayers from routine utterances into passionate dialogues filled with vulnerability and earnestness. As you lean into this intimacy, you will discover a profound source of strength and guidance, pushing you to pray not just for what you want, but for God's will to manifest powerfully in your life and the lives of others.

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Chapter 6 Summary: 6. Take Great Risks

Summary of Chapters on Risk-Taking in Faith

In 1976, I met Tom Randall, an extraordinary basketball player from inner-city Detroit, known for his unparalleled scoring at Judson College and his enthusiasm to serve Christ. As we prepared for separate missionary journeys—Tom to the Philippines and I to South America—I was unaware that Tom's radical choices would lead to a lifetime of impactful ministry. Having heard God's call, he not only declined a chance to play with the Chicago Bulls but also devoted himself fully to spreading the gospel, eventually establishing World Harvest Ministries, which has profoundly affected the lives of thousands.

Tom's story sparked profound questions within me regarding why some Christians live extraordinary lives filled with divine encounters while others lead seemingly mundane existences. The crux lies in recognizing the divine "windows of opportunity" that necessitate bold, faith-driven actions. Radical faith is characterized not just by knowledge or background but by one's willingness to embrace risk and act upon divine impulses.

God continuously invites individuals to confront moments demanding difficult decisions between security and faith. This was a pressing concern

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for the Jewish believers in the early church, urging them to act boldly in their faith to please God, as emphasized in Hebrews 11:6. A life consumed by safety, filled with mere compliance to norms, often lacks true fulfillment in God's purpose. Individuals must expect the supernatural and embrace risk as a pathway to spiritual breakthroughs in all aspects of life, be it career, relationships, or finances.

The chapter elaborates on how risk appears in many forms—leaving an unsatisfactory job, confronting personal issues, or even reaching out to others—emphasizing that faith requires stepping beyond comfort zones and facing potential backlash, even from loved ones. However, the essential takeaway remains that "where there's no risk, there's no faith."

Historical figures of faith serve as paramount examples. Abram (later Abraham) ventured out into the unknown at God's command, while Moses risked his life to confront Pharaoh for the liberation of his people. David's defeat of Goliath stemmed from his willingness to face overwhelming odds, and Esther's bravery in approaching the king to save her people highlighted her formidable faith.

In the New Testament, figures like Peter realized the gravity of their choices when called to follow Christ, risking their livelihoods for a higher purpose. Paul's radical transformation from persecutor to apostle exemplified the bold faith necessary to fulfill God's calling, as reflected in his daring actions

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despite physical threats. Even Jairus and the bleeding woman displayed remarkable risk-taking amid personal desperation, illustrating that faith often flourishes when one faces significant challenges.

To embody this faith and risk-taking, one must acknowledge and reframe their fears. Accept that fear is an inherent part of the human experience, yet must steer us toward the fear of God rather than the fear of people. This fear of the Lord fosters wisdom and courage, as seen in the life of Billy Graham, who, during the civil rights movement, chose to dismantle segregated barriers, risking his reputation to uphold God's love and truth.

To rejuvenate faith, begin by practicing faithfulness in small matters, such as finances, where giving can lead to increased reliance on God. Reflect on the “big things” in life, like the example of Enoch whose life transformation began with prioritizing his relationship with God after the birth of his son.

As believers, we must remember God's unchanging faithfulness throughout historical and personal contexts to embolden us toward future risks of faith. Each time we won a victory through reliance on Him, no matter how small, it establishes a narrative of faith that encourages further steps in our own lives.

Ultimately, faith is not a static belief but an active engagement—a verb rather than a noun—as demonstrated by the significant figures outlined in

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biblical accounts. Reflect on your own life experiences and ask God how to take your next step of faith, regardless of the fear or pushback that may accompany it. This is the essence of being a great risk-taker for God and living a remarkable Christian life.

Points of Reflection:

- Consider personal risk-taking examples from your past that led to God's blessings.
- Differentiate between radical faith and foolishness, and seek God's counsel in how to proceed when faced with risk.
- Regularly engage with Scripture, focusing on God's promises, and actively documenting past experiences to build faith for future endeavors.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace Risk as a Pathway to Spiritual Breakthroughs

Critical Interpretation: Imagine standing at a crossroads, where one path represents safety and the other, a leap of faith. This chapter reminds you that every great story of faith involves risk-taking, echoing the journeys of biblical figures who chose to step into the unknown. As you reflect on your own life, consider the divine windows of opportunity that God presents before you. When faced with a difficult decision—whether it's leaving a dead-end job, confronting personal fears, or reaching out to someone in need—embracing risk can lead to profound spiritual breakthroughs. Nurturing the courage to act on divine impulses opens avenues for God to work wonders within and around you. Just as Tom Randall's decision to forgo fame led to a lifetime of impactful ministry, your own willingness to step out of comfort zones can significantly alter the course of your life and those around you. Trust that God is with you in the unknown, and take that step—it's where true fulfillment and purpose await.

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Chapter 7 Summary: 7. Make Great Sacrifices

In these chapters, the narrative begins with a poignant conversation between a pastor from an underground house church in China and the author, who is leading a Bible seminar in Hong Kong. The pastor shares the difficulties his congregation faces due to government oppression of house churches, including having to move frequently and the personal toll of his evangelistic work, which takes him away from his family.

The story takes a distressing turn when the pastor reveals that during one of his trips, the police interrogated his wife, who bravely claimed to be the pastor in his stead. In a cruel display of persecution, the authorities took her to the police station and beat her severely. The author reflects on his emotions and imagined responses, feeling anger and fear for his own family. Yet, the pastor's response to this suffering is remarkable; he conveys that his wife views their situation as a privilege to suffer for Christ, demonstrating a profound understanding of sacrifice as an expression of love for God. This exchange prompts the author to reevaluate his own cultural perceptions of suffering and sacrifice, realizing that true commitment to faith often involves deep personal cost.

The dialogue evolves into a broader discussion on the nature of sacrifice in Christian life, suggesting that acts of great devotion often entail significant personal sacrifice. The author recalls how stories of resilience and

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selflessness—like those of Olympic athletes and historical figures such as Mother Teresa—truly inspire and evoke strong emotional responses. He argues that the depth of one's love is shown through the measure of one's sacrifice, stating, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Further, the text transitions to a theological exploration of sacrifice, specifically within the context of worship and biblical teachings. Drawing from the Old Testament, particularly the book of Leviticus, he illustrates how sacrifices were integral to worship in ancient Israel, with compulsory offerings for sin and guilt, and voluntary offerings reflecting devotion and gratitude. The narrative of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac serves as a pivotal example of profound faith and obedience. Abraham's readiness to follow God's command underscores the idea that true worship sometimes demands making painful sacrifices, a test of devotion that God asks of all believers.

Shifting from Old Testament examples, the author emphasizes the New Testament perspective, particularly focusing on Jesus' teaching about the cost of discipleship. According to Jesus, to follow Him means prioritizing one's relationship with Him above all, requiring believers to "carry their cross"—a metaphor for embracing the trials and sacrifices that come with true discipleship. The author asserts that genuine love and worship require this level of commitment, one that is willing to relinquish all for Him.

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Furthermore, he discusses the fear that often accompanies the surrender of personal desires to God's will, drawing an analogy between a child holding onto plastic beads while being offered a pearl necklace. This highlights the struggle to let go of worldly attachments in exchange for something far more valuable—an intimate relationship with God and eternal rewards.

The concept of being a “living sacrifice,” as articulated in Romans 12:1, is presented as a believers' response to God's mercy. The emphasis here is on the continual act of offering oneself to God, surrendering every aspect of life to His will and purpose. The plea for Christians is to not only fulfill obligations but to joyfully embrace the opportunity to give themselves entirely to God, mirroring the sacrificial love of Christ.

The motivation for such sacrifices is explored through four principles: understanding God's unconditional love, embracing His relational economy, recognizing eternal goodness, and acknowledging His sovereignty in ownership. Great Christians, according to the author, make sacrifices not from duty but from a heartfelt response to God's generosity and love.

Ultimately, the chapters challenge readers to reflect on their level of commitment and the sacrifices they are willing to make in their relationship with God. The author encourages believers to consider what they may be holding onto that prevents them from fully embracing a life devoted to God,

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suggesting that true fulfillment comes not from clinging to worldly possessions but from surrendering everything to a loving and sovereign God. This perspective reframes what it means to live a “great” Christian life, emphasizing that love and sacrifice are intertwined in a believer's journey.

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Chapter 8: 8. Enjoy Great Moments

In this chapter, the author reflects on the importance of balance in life, a lesson echoed by his former basketball coach, who recently reached out to share his newfound faith in Christ and a powerful reminder about enjoying life. The coach's message resurfaces the idea that spiritual vitality is enhanced by joy and enjoyment—elements that often get overlooked amid the seriousness of Christian responsibilities.

The author begins by discussing how life's heavy burdens can lead to an unbalanced existence where joy is absent. Many Christians remain so focused on obligations—such as duties, sacrifices, and spiritual discipline—that they forget the importance of enjoyment. To illustrate this, the author references a quote by the writer C.S. Lewis: “Joy is the serious business of heaven.” Despite the weighty issues surrounding sin and salvation, the text argues that true greatness in faith must include laughter, relaxation, and fun.

Drawing on wisdom from the biblical book of Ecclesiastes, particularly the verses that highlight the times for laughter and joy, he emphasizes that happiness is a divine gift. He also cites Solomon, known for his wisdom, who noted that enjoying life is God's intention for His people. The narrative advocates that many Christians live in a cycle of busy-ness, perpetually waiting for the right moment to enjoy life—a moment that seems to always

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be just out of reach.

The author outlines five vital reasons why enjoyment is biblically encouraged:

1. **Reminders of God's Goodness:** Enjoyment connects believers to God's blessings and reinforces His nature as a giver of good gifts.
2. **Sustaining Adversity:** Like the Israelites under Nehemiah, joy can provide strength amidst challenges and sorrow.
3. **Honoring God:** By enjoying life, we recognize God as the source of our joy and bless Him in return.
4. **Connecting with Others:** Shared joyful moments deepen relationships and affirm community—much like Mary's experiences surrounding the birth of Jesus.
5. **Renewal:** God intends for joy to rejuvenate us, both spiritually and physically, emphasizing the need for rest and celebration.

The chapter then poses critical questions to self-assess whether one is truly enjoying life and experiencing satisfaction. He highlights that many people mistakenly equate spiritual seriousness with a lack of joy, obscuring their enjoyment of God's gifts.

Next, the author tackles common barriers to experiencing joy: a distorted view of God, a warped theology regarding pleasure, and an inability to confront unhealthy behavior patterns. He illustrates with the parable of the

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prodigal son how one can miss the joys of a loving relationship with God by living in a performance-based mindset.

The chapter wraps up with practical steps to foster enjoyment in life:

- **Slow Down:** Eliminate hurry to experience God's presence and gifts.

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Chapter 9 Summary: 9. Empower Great People

Summary of Chapters on Greatness and Empowerment

The concept of greatness is deeply embedded in human nature, from childhood playground disputes to adult competitions in various arenas like sports, awards, and accolades. Humans continually seek to answer the question, "Who's the greatest?" The disciples of Jesus grappled with this question themselves. In a bold yet misguided request, James and John sought high positions in Jesus's coming kingdom, thinking it reflected true greatness. Instead of reprimanding them, Jesus redefined greatness, stating that true significance lies in servitude, stating, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Mark 10:43). Jesus exemplified this by serving others, ultimately sacrificing his life for humanity.

True greatness, according to Jesus, is the ability to uplift and empower others rather than seeking power for oneself. Paul echoes this sentiment when instructing Timothy to pass on knowledge to reliable people, creating a chain of empowerment across generations. Biblical figures like Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist demonstrated this principle by training successors who surpassed their own accomplishments. Great Christians leave a legacy by focusing on developing the potential of those around them, contrasting with simply living a life of faith without the intention to multiply

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their impact.

Leaving a Legacy for God's Glory

An illustrative story involves Edward Kimball, a Sunday school teacher who influenced Dwight Moody, a reluctant student who later became a pivotal evangelist. Kimball's dedication to one individual exemplifies how a single life invested in another can create a profound ripple effect. In contrast, Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, emphasized that "activity is no substitute for productivity; productivity is no substitute for reproduction," advocating the need for Christians to cultivate spiritual lineages rather than mere personal output.

To empower others effectively, one should help many but deeply train a few. This approach begins with prayer for God's direction, then extends to one's immediate family, as they are the first priority for mentorship. Identifying and investing in F.A.T. (Faithful, Available, and Teachable) individuals is essential for true legacy-building. Faithful individuals fulfill commitments, available ones prioritize growth, and teachable individuals are open to receiving new insights. By focusing on these characteristics, one can make impactful investments.

The Jesus School of Empowering Others

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Jesus's method of empowerment—bringing disciples into relationship, building them up, training them for action, and sending them out—serves as a model for effective mentorship. He brought his followers into close fellowship, nurturing their strengths while lovingly confronting flaws, leading them to a path of growth. Training involves not just knowledge, but shaping hearts and equipping hands for kingdom work. Finally, sending disciples out means clarifying their mission and offering ongoing support and mentorship as they take steps of faith.

Addressing Challenges in Leaving a Legacy

Despite the potential to leave enduring legacies, many Christians falter due to a lack of discipline, vision, or focus. Discipline demands living an exemplary life that embodies the teachings one wishes to impart. Vision encourages looking beyond one's life span to inspire future generations, while focus prevents the dilution of impactful efforts across too many scattered activities. Empowering others requires intentionality, as true greatness is rooted in the desire to see others achieve.

Reflection and Application

Greatness involves service and empowerment, with the aim of helping others achieve their full potential. The chapter encourages personal reflection on one's legacy, identification of individuals to invest in, and prayerful

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consideration of how to uplift those around us. By investing wisely, focusing on quality over quantity, and modeling a life that embodies the values of faith, availability, and teachability, individuals can leave a significant legacy that glorifies God and continues to impact future generations.

In conclusion, greatness is not solely in personal achievements but in enabling others to surpass us, enriching both their lives and the broader community. The challenge lies in actively incorporating these principles into daily practice, thereby leaving a lasting legacy that honors God's purpose for our lives.

Key Concepts	Description
Definition of Greatness	True greatness involves servitude and uplifting others, as taught by Jesus.
Jesus's Redefinition of Greatness	Greatness is not in seeking power but in being a servant (Mark 10:43).
Empowering Others	Great Christians focus on developing the potential of those around them to create a legacy.
Story of Edward Kimball	A Sunday school teacher whose influence on Dwight Moody illustrates the impact one life can have.
Need for Reproduction	Dawson Trotman's maxim emphasizes creating spiritual lineages rather than just personal output.
Approach to Mentorship	Focus on training a few individuals deeply, starting with family, and identifying F.A.T. individuals.

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Key Concepts	Description
Jesus's Empowerment Method	Jesus built relationships, nurtured strengths, shaped hearts, and provided ongoing support.
Challenges in Legacy Building	Lack of discipline, vision, and focus can hinder legacy leaving; intentionality is key.
Reflection and Application	Encouragement for personal reflection on legacy, investing in others, and living out values of faith, availability, and teachability.
Conclusion	Greatness lies in enabling others to surpass us, creating lasting impact and honoring God's purpose.

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Chapter 10 Summary: 10. Develop Great Habits

In this chapter, the author draws parallels between learning complex activities, like playing golf, and developing spiritual habits. Just as a beginner golfer struggles to integrate numerous movements into a smooth swing, individuals often grapple with incorporating various spiritual practices into their daily lives. The key takeaway is that great Christians transform their spiritual journeys into fluid, effortless lifestyles by developing strong, positive habits through repetition and discipline.

The Power of Habits

Benjamin Franklin's assertion that our habits define our contributions to society underscores the importance of cultivating good habits, which can lead to greater efficiency and positive outcomes. Ted Pollock emphasizes that while the initial phase of habit formation requires self-discipline, the long-term rewards are invaluable. Our future selves are shaped by our daily choices and habits, which can mold us into kinder, more generous individuals. The Bible supports this idea, with Paul advising Timothy to discipline himself for godliness, suggesting that spiritual maturity is achieved through consistent practice, akin to an athlete training for a competition.

Examining Your Habits

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Habits can be both beneficial and detrimental. The author shares personal anecdotes highlighting how small adjustments—like eliminating the habit of watching late-night news—led to significant improvements in his life. Likewise, he observed that limiting his children’s TV time enriched family interactions and fostered creativity. This illustrates the immense power of habit transformation; by addressing negative patterns, individuals can open doors to healthier routines and relationships.

Habits that Cultivate Grace

Titus 2:11-12 emphasizes that grace enables us to lead lives marked by righteousness and Godliness, suggesting that grace and effort should coexist. The author presents six essential habits that facilitate experiencing grace:

- 1. Put God First:** Prioritizing time with God—ideally in the morning—sets a positive tone for the day. The author recounts how he learned to wake up and spend time with God, transforming this practice into a source of motivation and joy.
- 2. Take Out the Trash:** Romans 12:2 encourages believers to discard worldly influences that conform them to negative patterns. Recognizing and eliminating toxic thoughts or actions allows for spiritual renewal and transformation.

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3. **Do Your Own Dishes:** Taking responsibility for one's actions is crucial. The author reflects on how past habits of blaming others stunted personal growth, and he shares a story illustrating the importance of accountability, urging readers to clean up their messes and help others do the same.

4. **Write It Down:** Clarity is essential for achieving goals. The author advocates for writing down dreams and objectives, using tools like three-by-five cards and calendars to turn intentions into actionable steps.

5. **Do It Now:** Overcoming inertia is about taking immediate action. The author discusses the importance of addressing tasks proactively to avoid the burdens of procrastination.

6. **Turn It Off:** The principle of restoration is vital for maintaining balance. Observing a Sabbath and taking regular breaks allows individuals to recharge and reconnect with God.

Practical Steps and Discussion

To cultivate these transformative habits, the author encourages readers to identify a negative habit to break and a positive one to adopt, employing accountability for success. The chapter closes with thought-provoking

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questions and actionable steps for personal growth, such as committing to early morning quiet times and writing down goals to foster clarity and intentionality in spiritual practices.

By emphasizing the intertwining of grace and discipline, the author presents a compelling case for the role of habits in shaping a vibrant Christian life, urging readers to take steps toward a more fulfilling and productive spiritual journey.

Section	Summary
Introduction	Parallels drawn between learning complex activities like golf and developing spiritual habits; emphasizes transforming spiritual journeys into fluid lifestyles through positive habits.
The Power of Habits	Benjamin Franklin's quote highlights the importance of habits in defining contributions to society; Ted Pollock stresses self-discipline in habit formation leads to long-term rewards, shaping character through consistent practice.
Examining Your Habits	Illustrates the impact of habits on life; personal anecdotes show how eliminating negative habits like late-night news benefits relationships and creativity.
Habits that Cultivate Grace	<p>Based on Titus 2:11-12, outlines six essential habits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put God First: Prioritize time with God. Take Out the Trash: Eliminate negative influences. Do Your Own Dishes: Be accountable for actions. Write It Down: Set clear goals through writing. Do It Now: Take immediate action to avoid procrastination. Turn It Off: Maintain balance through restoration and breaks.

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Section	Summary
Practical Steps and Discussion	Encourages breaking a negative habit and adopting a positive one; emphasizes accountability, early morning quiet times, and goal setting for personal growth.
Conclusion	Stresses the combination of grace and discipline in forming habits that result in a fulfilling Christian life, urging actionable steps towards a productive spiritual journey.

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