



and that's...
The Gospel Truth!!
with Pat Corn

a brief message of encouragement to make your day just a little bit brighter

When I was just a boy growing up in the hills of Western North Carolina summers were filled with one thing....BASEBALL! My cousins and friends in the neighborhood lived to play baseball everyday. We all idolized the "Greats" of that era like Whitey Ford, Yogi Berra, Roger Maris, and Ted Williams. Now those were real heroes.

I can remember playing the All Star Game on the 4th of July. Our team was undefeated and our opposition was the Dana team. Now, these Dana boys were tough, corn fed boys, who could work in the apple orchards, and practice at the same time... throwing apples. They were gonna be hard to beat. Wade Collins was their pitcher and he had a wicked, side arm, curve ball that seemed to fade in the light of day. Whew! He was fast!

Now, I am not about to imply that I was any kind of great hitter, but in the last inning, with men on first and second, we were behind by one run and it was the bottom of the last inning. And who comes to the plate? Oh yeah, ME! I was shaking like a leaf. Everyone in the community expected us to win and I have to be the one in line to bat. Is there really a God???

Wade wound up with that pretzel like configuration he got himself into and unleashed a fast ball I couldn't even see. But I, like the potential pro I was...yeah right!..., closed my eyes and swung at that invisible ball and all of a sudden, WHACK! I felt the sweetest crack I'd ever heard or felt in my life. That ball shot up in the air like a rocket and cleared the fence at Dietz Field, went over Church Street, missing all the traffic, and landed somewhere in Boyd's Park putt-putt golf course somewhere near the sixth hole. I had hit a home run supreme!!!

When my teammates met me at home plate, I was a hero. It felt great to be great!! What would Whitey, Yogi, Roger, and Ted think of me??? I was in a surreal mode at that moment. That hit netted me a story in the local paper, the respect of my team, and most of all, a brand new Rawlings ball glove with Ted Williams' autograph on it. I had truly arrived.

When my oldest brother saved enough money from working at Brock's, a local drive in like Arnold's on Happy Days, he came home one day with the most advanced stereo system of the day. He had gone to Joy Hi-Fi and bought two huge Frazier speakers, an HH Scott stereo amplifier and tuner, a Garrard turntable, and a set of Koss headphones. I was ten or eleven years old and I had never experienced this awesome thing called "stereo" sound. I was mesmerized as I listened to a stereo demonstration album called "Bongos Flutes and Guitars". Oh my heavens, I could hear the bongos go from the left ear to the right ear and back. This was incredible! But the real clencher was the five free albums that Junior was given with his purchase. Three albums by a guitar player named Chet Atkins, one by a piano guy named Floyd Cramer, and one by a group called The Ventures. That did it! New heroes that were the greatest!!!

I can remember those album covers like it was yesterday. That beautiful brown Gretsch guitar placed in front of the Hollywood skyline..."Chet Atkins Goes To Hollywood" was an entire album of then current

movie themes. I wore those albums out as I sat endlessly listening to those guitar melodies and riffs. I was totally hooked. Oh yes, NEW HEROES!. The “greatest” players in my stereo musical world...What about baseball? Roger WHO? Yogi WHO? Ted WHO? Whitey Who?

I no longer cared about being a great baseball player. Now, I wanted to be a great musician like this new drummer guy...Sandy Nelson. Oh, how my list of greats was expanding.

I wanted to be great. Whatever I did, it was imperative that I be great at it. This was an attitude that was fostered by our educational system in Henderson County. If you couldn't be the President of the United States then at least one should be the president of Duke University. Of course!!

For years “GREATNESS” was my constant goal. But in one fell swoop, my “greatness” vanished. In reality there is always someone greater at doing, what it is that you do. It just seems to be the natural course of events.

Tim Lavender has a wonderful book entitled “Developing Personal Greatness”. Now I know that sounds a little snobbish, but it isn't written with that kind of an attitude or spirit. True greatness comes from “who you are” not “what you do”. The latter is “notoriety”. Many people who are well known are not “great” people. This has been proven over and over. There is an old adage that says, “Never meet your heroes...they'll disappoint you”.

Greatness doesn't come from a positive self image, but from the image of Christ showing through you and it developed from the small circle of people that surround you. This begins at home as you are a great spouse and a great parent, a great Christian witness, a great employee, a great servant to others, a great friend, and a great member of the community. It doesn't matter how far reaching the circle is, as long as Christ is seen in you, and your greatness gives Him the glory for it's existence, then you are becoming “great” in someone's eyes.

For a work book of how to be a “great” individual just read the 2nd and 4th chapters of Philippians in the Bible. Follow the plan. Dare to be great to those who love you, and a great witness to those who don't.

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