

How Greatness Is Measured

Sir Winston Churchill – Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955 – led Britain to victory over Nazi Germany during World War II.

But the British politician and statesman was notoriously hard to work for. He was demanding, impatient and oftentimes downright rude. On one occasion, a servant was bold enough to stand up to the man, taking strong issue with Churchill's behavior.

Churchill – it is variously reported – responded by saying, "You were very rude to me, you know."

"Well," replied the servant, "you were very rude to me, too."

"Yes," said Churchill, "but I am a great man."

While some explain the comment was made, at least to some degree, tongue in cheek, others, like Churchill biographer William Manchester, suggest that it was serious and in keeping with Churchill's difficult temperament.

Churchill was, indeed, a great man by any worldly standard. He is rightly reputed to be one of the greatest wartime leaders of the modern era. But "greatness" does not necessarily translate into "goodness."

"Many," said English Particular Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon, "wishing to be great have failed to be good."



In God's Kingdom, greatness is not measured by accomplishment, but by character – character marked by humility, servanthood and most importantly, love.

No doubt, Churchill, though flawed by perfectionism and impatience, was at heart a deeply caring and compassionate man. Nevertheless, accomplishment and position are no excuses for thinking oneself "better" than any other.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter