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Sent: Friday, August 15, 2008 8:30 AM
Subject: Friday Fragments | August 15, 2008



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The polls were still open, the commentators were still speculating and the candidates were debating their positioning with intensity and passion. They had spent enough time with the incumbent to mimic a portion of His behavior and lifestyle. It was simply the right moment to discuss placement. Who was leading the pack? Who had most effectively embraced the recipe for success?

Jesus interrupted the posturing with the skill of a surgeon slicing through an obstacle. *"What were you discussing on the way?"* ~ Mark 9:33 The answer stuck in their throat as embarrassment washed over them. He didn't wait for a reply... He knew the answer as clearly as they did. On their hike to Capernaum they had been transfixed on the subject of greatness, and more specifically, which of them was emerging as the favorite.

Without overt rebuke Jesus opened His figurative dictionary and thumbed to the page on Kingdom greatness. He used words like "last" and "servant" to describe front-runner status.

Then with precision and impeccable timing He placed a child in the center of their pompous discussion and within a few moments He had scooped the child into His arms. The tenderness and focus of His action breathed life into His words. *"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."* ~ Mark 9:37

Jesus didn't chastise their desire to be "the greatest," He simply put a job description in front of their application.

In doing so, He spoke into the lives of every one of His followers. He inverted the corporate ladder, He flipped the pyramid of success and He obliterated the strategy of self-promotion. Jesus didn't dismantle the metal stand. Instead He shed light on what a top performer would do... and more importantly, on why he or she would do it.

With this encounter Jesus positioned every individual that we are tempted to ignore squarely in our path. He highlighted what we would typically erase. He valued what we would generally round off.

Today, within a few minutes of reading this, you'll have the opportunity to live what Jesus defined. There will be a "child in your midst," and you'll have a decision to make.

Keep your Kingdom dictionary close. Embrace the insignificant. Welcome the outsider. Serve. For when you do, you are "receiving" God Himself.

The polls are still open indeed.



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