

DVD PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

DREAM **BIGGER.**
START **SMALLER.**
IGNITE GOD'S VISION
FOR YOUR LIFE.

GREATER

**STEVEN
FURTICK**

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with ERIC STANFORD



MULTNOMAH
BOOKS

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Welcome

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

—JOHN 14:12

For most of us, the experience of our daily lives is a far cry from the greater works Jesus talked about in John 14:12. We've had some big dreams about what God might want for our lives. But so many of us are stuck in the starting blocks. Or are dragging along at the back of the pack.

We know we were meant for more. Yet we end up settling for less.

We're frustrated about where we are. But we're confused about how to move forward.

I think we all know instinctively, even if we can't articulate it exactly, that something isn't squaring up. There's a huge gap between what God said in His Word and the results we see in our lives.

I wonder if you can relate.

If so, you need to know that the frustration that's simmering on the back burner right now might boil over one day, and you'll be bitter about the opportunities you missed. Opportunities to be used by God, to touch lives, to get outside yourself and be a part of something greater. I know it's not easy. But don't tell me it's not possible. Jesus Himself said it was.

The fact is, we have the potential to be so much better than we've become, because God is so much greater than we're allowing Him to be through us.

That's why we've developed this *Greater Participant's Guide*. It's a tool for you and a group of others to use in diving deep into the message of *Greater*—and not just considering this message on a conceptual level but wrestling with what it means for *you*. Offering discussion questions combined with personal reflection topics and suggested action steps, it's a guidebook to take with you on the way to the greater life.

Here, as in *Greater*, the prophet Elisha shows us the way. Through four key incidents from his life, we'll be learning four

Welcome

key truths that we've got to know if we want to embark on the greater way.

The DVD that goes along with this participant's guide is strategically designed to present the concepts and enhance the content in a multidimensional way. The teaching sessions on the DVD were filmed at the famous Abbey Road Studios in London. Additionally, each session features support footage that was filmed on location at the actual sites where Elisha performed his miracles in the Holy Land. And each video session on the DVD ends with an original worship song written just for that session and performed at Abbey Road.

We pray that these elements will stir your passion and incite your imagination to seek God for greater things. And I hope you'll bring lots friends, family, or fellow church members with you on the journey.

How to Use This Guide

The book *Greater* wasn't designed to stand alone. Instead it was intended to serve as just one piece in a whole set of related resources. I didn't want the message to exist merely as a book that people would read and set aside. I prayed that God would use it to spark a movement in the hearts of men and women everywhere, helped along by every format that's appropriate. I'm grateful to God that He's allowed it to happen.

The participant's guide you hold in your hands is an important part of the *Greater* resources. Our vision is that people will use this participant's guide. . .

- in adult or youth small groups, Bible studies, Sunday school classes, or ministry team meetings
- on a church-wide basis along with a four-week series of sermons

- for leadership training and personal development in business and community settings
- as individuals or couples

However you choose to use this participant's guide, I hope you will maximize your experience by using it in conjunction with the core book, the *Greater* DVD, and the *Greater* collection of worship songs. Also check out the greaterbook.com website for more information and updates.

This participant's guide doesn't simply cover all the same points the book does. Instead it builds on the foundation of the book, offering expanded biblical and practical reflections on the principles in *Greater*. It focuses on four images from the prophet Elisha's life—how he burned his plows, commanded some kings to dig ditches for water, raised a boy from the dead, and struck the waters of the Jordan River with his mentor's cloak. In exploring these four images, it also presents four key



This icon identifies a quote from one of the video sessions on the *Greater* DVD.



When you see this icon, it identifies a quote from the book *Greater*.

ideas that are crucial to pursuing the greater life. Here's how we've broken them down:



Burn the Plows: To pursue a new life that is greater, we first have to make a decisive break with our old lives. (See also chapter 4 of *Greater*.)



Digging Ditches: We can start small as we seek a greater life, but we need to make practical preparations that demonstrate our faith. (See also chapter 5 of *Greater*.)



Upon Further Review... We can't let ourselves become discouraged as we advance toward God's greater purpose, because our faith is never wasted. (See also chapter 8 of *Greater*.)



Strike the Water: For each of us, there comes a time to step out on the word God has spoken to us about a greater life. (See also chapter 12 of *Greater*.)

These are the truths I talk about on the DVD, which includes five video sessions. The first video session is introductory, and I suggest you watch it before the first group session to

get an idea of the flow of the study. For example, if you're in an established weekly small group that's going to be using this participant's guide, you could watch the introductory video session as a group the week prior to starting your *Greater* study. The four numbered video sessions go along with the four group sessions, one after the other.

Obviously, many using these resources are already experienced group leaders and have a clear sense of how your meetings should be organized and conducted to fit your context. But for those who want a little more direction, here are some suggestions to get you started:

Group Use

If you're using this participant's guide in a small group of some kind, try to keep the size to no more than a dozen people so that everyone can share easily. You'll need to meet in a place where you can watch a DVD on a large screen and then sit comfortably to discuss the questions. There's enough material for about an hour's worth of meeting time, though you can shrink it or stretch it, if you need to, depending on how your group manages the discussion time.

The Sessions

The sessions are designed to follow a simple format. You'll find an introduction you can read and an opening question that will

help to establish how the session topic applies to your life. Then you'll watch the video for that session, taking notes on your own as you watch. Each teaching will conclude with a portion of an original worship song inspired by the message of *Greater*. Hopefully, this will establish an atmosphere for a productive extended time of group discussion that breaks down the key idea for the session and starts to apply it in the participants' lives. Look for the discussion questions in italics. Finally, you'll conclude your time with prayer.

Group Leader

One person should serve as the facilitator of the group sessions. This isn't a formal class, and there's no need for anyone to lecture or dominate the group, but someone should take responsibility for keeping the discussion rolling. See the Leader's Helps at the back of this book for more information.

Community

Make these sessions an opportunity for relationship building. Spend time getting to know each other, encouraging and praying for each other. You might want to serve food. Maybe you'll want to put on some Beatles music when your group is gathering—if that fits the vibe you're trying to create. Consider sharing contact information and keeping in touch between sessions.

Basically, have fun together. There's nothing like pursuing the greater life in the company of people you know and trust.

After the Session

Each chapter ends with a section called After the Session, which includes reflection questions and action steps you can do at home in your spare time. They're optional, of course, but they're also recommended. If you'll give them a try, they will help you further personalize the message of *Greater*. They'll keep the momentum going in the transformational process of believing God for greater things.

Recommended Reading Schedule for *Greater*

If you haven't already read *Greater*, you should do so as you work your way through these sessions.

- Chapters 1–4: read *before* Session 1.
- Chapters 5–6: read *before* Session 2.
- Chapters 7–8: read *before* Session 3.
- Chapters 9–12: read *before* Session 4.

For a review of all these chapters, see the *Greater* Recap at the end of this participant's guide.



SESSION 1

Burn the Plows

This session's key idea: To pursue a new life that is greater, we first have to make a decisive break with our old lives.



Jesus said, “Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these” (John 14:12). So if God has called all of us to do great things, then why do most people not experience them? If everyone is called to that which is *greater*, why do so many people stay stuck?

Elisha's story suggests it's because too often we pick the wrong place to begin pursuing the greater things God has for us.

One day the senior prophet Elijah, having heard a specific instruction from God, came to Elisha and threw his cloak over

the younger man's shoulders. This was a well-understood symbolic act of the day. It simply meant, "I designate Elisha as my successor." The two men were in this prophecy thing together now, and someday, after Elijah was gone, Elisha would take over the top spot in Israel's prophetic corps.

So what happened next? Elisha took off with Elijah on his journeys in representing God to the people, right?

No.

Well, yes. But not at once. Elisha knew there was something else he had to do first, something that would burn his bridges to the past.

Scripture Passages Mentioned in Video Session 1

- 1 Kings 19:15-21—the call of Elisha
- Romans 11:33-12:2—living sacrifices
- John 14:12—doing greater things than Jesus
- Matthew 14:22-33—Jesus and Peter walking on water
- Ephesians 3:20-21—"immeasurably more"
- Hebrews 3:7-8—hearing God's voice

And it's this example in Elisha's life that shows us how we can keep from getting stuck before we even set out on our journey to what's greater.

Opening Question

Do you feel as if something is holding you back from pursuing God's design to do something greater in your life? If so, what is holding you back?

Video Viewing

If your group hasn't already watched the introductory video on the *Greater* DVD, go ahead and watch it now. Then watch Video Session 1. Use the spaces below to record key points you hear or thoughts you want to remember while watching Video Session 1.

Elisha's availability to God—and our availability

Steven burning his CD collection

Jesus borrowing Peter's boat



The real risk isn't
in launching out
into a new life of
greater things.
It's staying in
your old life of
the ordinary.

Steven getting a Nintendo when at most he was hoping for an Atari

Having a “ringing in your spiritual ears”

Group Discussion

1. *What challenged you most in Video Session 1, and why?*

2. Read about Elisha's calling to prophetic ministry in 1 Kings 19:19–21:

Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-by," he said, "and then I will come with you."

"Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.

In the video Steven talks about Elisha's burning of his plowing equipment—the tools he used in his former career—as being a sign that he was surrendered to God's will and ready to sacrifice his control over his life. He wasn't ever going to go back to being a farmer.

“Surrender.” “Sacrifice.” What do you think makes those two words appropriate in describing how we’re to be ready to do whatever God asks?

3. *Would you say that, at this point in your life, you are surrendered to God and ready to sacrifice to fulfill His will? Why or why not?*



The first step that Elisha made toward God was not to follow after Elijah, which represented God’s purpose for his life, but to burn his plows so he had nothing to go back to.

4. A lot of people don't go after greater things because they think they're no good to start with. What they're forgetting is that none of us does great things for God in our own power. God does great things through us.

Do you struggle with feelings of self-condemnation? If so, where are these feelings coming from? How do they interfere with your obedience to God? How could a clearer understanding of God's greatness help you move toward a sense of affirmation?



Before God can begin to make something greater out of our life, we've got to give all of the life that we have, because He gave it to us to begin with.

5. *What are you worried about losing if you surrender your life to God for His purposes?*

6. Recall Steven's story about the Christmas when he got a Nintendo instead of the Atari he asked for. God may take things away from us, but it's not because He's hateful; it's because He wants to give us something more.

When has God surprised you by giving you something greater than you expected? Describe the experience.

7. Sometimes God tries to tell us something, but because we have developed "spiritual ringing of the ears," we don't hear Him.

Considering the questions Steven asked in his “spiritual hearing test,” how acute would you say your spiritual hearing is?

___ *Very good*

___ *Good*

___ *Below average*

___ *Practically deaf*

Explain your response.



Because God is so great, He can take someone like me—who apart from Him can do no good—and do greater things through me.

Spiritual Hearing Test

- When was the last time God told you to encourage somebody and you did?
- When was the last time God showed you a trouble spot in a relationship with somebody where you weren't necessarily wrong but you went to that person anyway and tried to make the relationship right?
- When was the last time God showed you something you were doing that wasn't necessarily bad but wasn't completely what He wanted for your life and you stopped it just because He said so?
- When was the last time God told you to stop committing a certain sin and you gave it all you had in trying to quit?
- When was the last time God told you to have a hard conversation and you had it?
- When was the last time God told you to take a bold risk for Him and you took the risk?

8. *If our spiritual hearing is not what it could be, how can we go about improving it?*

9. *Are you starting to have a sense yet of what God's greater call might look like in your life? If so, what is it? Where are you at in pursuing it?*



Before you journey any further into this experience, you need to acknowledge how great God is, how He surpasses everything else in the world you could aim for, and how you'll never be great on your own.

10. Steven says that if you're going to have a greater life, you've got to burn your plow—make a decisive break with whatever's keeping you stuck in your old life. (For examples of the kinds of plows you might have in your life, see page 40 of *Greater*.)

What plow do you think God is calling you to burn? How do you think burning it will help you pursue the goal of greater things in your life?

11. Sometimes it helps to have a symbolic sign or ceremony marking a change you're making in your life, like Elisha burning his plow or Steven burning his CD collection. (See pages 46–47 of *Greater* for other examples of ways to break symbolic connections to one's present life.)

If you can think of one, what sign or ceremony would help you mark the change you want to make in your life?

Closing Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, offering yourselves to God for Him to use in whatever greater way He wants.



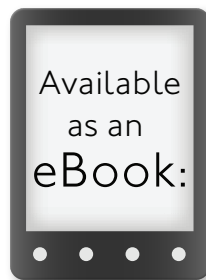
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