

“How To Be A Real-Life Super Hero”

Introduction:

From the book:... *most, if not all, first-run and prequel superhero movies (as well as most first-person adventure video games) contain what is known in the screenwriting biz as “The Transformation Sequence.” This is the part of the movie where our (typically scrawny or nerdy or otherwise misfit) protagonist discovers he or she can do things other people can’t. This usually happens in a moment of passion or stress when the young hero is being bullied or someone they love is in danger, and this sudden strange phenomenal ability saves the day (and usually freaks out our hero). I’m sure you’ve seen it a thousand times...whether it’s Peter Parker’s incredible arachnid-inspired agility caused by a spider bite, or simple freak genetics of mutants like Wolverine that cause super strength and claws to grow out of knuckles, or even the fairly unexplained digital talent of Neo in the Matrix, most of us have seen this play out repeatedly in the last several decades. In fact, some of these movies have been remade with nearly the same story lines and characters but with different actors - and only a few years apart! It’s a near obsession in our culture, honestly. It’s almost hard to believe, but, according to IMDB, as of the writing of this book and since the aforementioned character of Neo first appeared in the Matrix in 1999, there have been a total of 165 feature films released into theaters that follow a superhero theme, and it’s likely that the vast majority of these have some aspect of a transformation sequence in their plots. That’s a whole lot of supernatural gift discovery!*

Of course, there’s likely a shelf-life to this pattern in our popular media. (But, it’s actually hard to say when that might be!) Personally, I think the long-standing run of these sorts of stories speaks to an innate and unrealized desire within humans. We want to participate in something extraordinary. We each have a subconscious remnant of our eternal connection to God, which manifests in the belief that there must be something beyond living and dying in a reality that is completely confined by human limitation. I would argue that for those of us whose consciousness of God has awakened to where we worship, love, and serve Him as our all-powerful and supernatural Father, we should actually lead the way in this belief.

Main Idea: Our spiritual gifts are awakened by childlike faith.

Text: Matthew 18:1-4

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. 3 And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you

will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

1. Becoming the greatest requires becoming the least.

4 Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

- There is only one use or meaning of the greek word 'tapeinos', and that is "humble"
- Correlating instances:
 - *Matthew 23:11 The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*
 - *Luke 9:48 "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."*

2. Spiritual Gifts also require childlike, bold faith.

- Children believe what is told to them. Santa Claus, tooth fairy, "Dad is the strongest man alive", etc...
- Humility is also recognizing you don't know everything, so you're open to learning from and accepting the truth from a trusted source.

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Cor 12:7

- You can't say you "trust" the Holy Spirit but you don't believe He has given you Spiritual Gifts. He said He did. Refusing this because it makes you feel awkward or brings attention your way is 'false' humility, which is a sinful resistance to how God wants to use you.

3. It is absolutely good to want to be 'the greatest.'

- Before the passage in Matthew, Jesus had just sent out the disciples two by two. They cast out demons, healed the lame and sick- saw all sorts of miracles.
- In response to their question about who was the greatest, Jesus never rebuked them for wanting to be great. He simply showed them how to actually do so.
- If you want to receive a spiritual gift, ask with confidence like a child asks a good parent for a birthday present.
- If you truly desire to use this gift to love and serve others and bring God as much glory as possible while on earth, you will participate in 'greatness.' And, in fact, your heart will become more and more humbled as you see lives touched and transformed.