

Of Great Place Summary

Writer: Francis Bacon | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Background

Francis Bacon's essay "Of Great Place" was first published in 1597 as part of his famous collection *Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral*. Later, it was revised and expanded in the editions of 1612 and 1625. The inspiration for this essay came from real experiences of politics, power, and administration. Bacon himself was a high-ranking official in the royal court and government of England. His personal experiences of rise, success, and downfall are deeply reflected in this work. The essay explores the complexity of power, the burden of responsibility, and the question of morality behind authority.

Of Great Place Summary

The Life of Three Servants: Francis Bacon wrote "Of Great Place" during the rule of King James I. This essay talks about power and leadership. It explains what happens when someone holds a high position. Bacon says that powerful people are not truly free. They have to serve others in three ways:

- They serve the king or state,
- They serve public fame (what others think),
- They serve their duties.

This means they do not control their own time or actions. They lose personal freedom. People desire power, but they forget the pain it brings. One may rule others, but one loses power over oneself. Bacon says, This is a strange kind of desire.

The Four Vices of Authority: Bacon warns about four dangers that come with power. These are delay, corruption, roughness, and facility. He calls them the "vices of authority." Each one can harm both the People in great places and the people.

- **Delay:** People in great places should not delay work. They should allow people to reach them easily. They must keep their time and finish work on schedule. Delays make others suffer. They stop progress. They also harm an official's image. Bacon says people in great places must act quickly and wisely.

- **Corruption:** Corruption is a big danger in high positions. It includes taking bribes or unfair gifts. Bacon says a good 'high person' should never accept bribes. He should also stop others from offering them. Being honest is not enough. People in great places should make others honest, too.
- **Roughness:** Roughness means being rude or harsh. Some people in great places become angry and cruel. Bacon says harshness creates fear, but also hate. A good person in a high place should correct others in a calm way. He should speak with seriousness, not insult. Respect earns more loyalty than fear does.
- **Facility:** Facility means being too soft or too easy to please others. Bacon says this is worse than bribery. Bribes come only once in a while. But if a person gives in to pressure or unimportant reasons, he will face it all the time. Such a person will never be free from demands.

The Advantages of Great Place:

Holding a high position has many benefits, too. Here is a list (based on real life) of how a great place can help a person and society.

- **Power to Do Good:** Leaders can do great things for the people. They can make laws. They can stop injustice. They can support the poor. They can lead the nation to peace and success.
- **Personal Growth:** High positions help a person grow. They gain experience and learn how to solve problems. They also develop leadership skills. Over time, they become wiser and stronger in both thought and action.
- **Respect and Honor:** People in great places receive respect. Society treats them with honour. Others listen to their opinions. They become important in both personal and public life.
- **Financial Rewards:** People in great places often earn a good salary. They get benefits and comforts. They can take care of their families. They do not need to worry about money.
- **Access to Resources:** High officials have access to special tools and support. They receive secret information. They get help from smart people. This makes their job easier and more powerful.
- **Ability to Make Difference:** Most importantly, they can make a difference. They can use their power for good. They can help people who have no voice. They can build a better

future for all.

The Disadvantages of Great Place:

Holding a high position has many problems, too. Here is a list (based on real life) of the problems that come with a great position.

- **More Responsibility:** Leaders carry a heavy load. They must solve big problems. They have to make hard decisions. They cannot relax like others.
- **Isolation:** Powerful people often feel alone. They are not close to common people. Powerful people may forget what real life is like. This makes them disconnected from real life.
- **Constant Criticism:** People always watch people in great places. The media, the public, and other officials judge their actions. Every mistake becomes big news.
- **Stress and Pressure:** People in great places must always do well. They work under pressure every day. This causes mental tiredness.
- **Risk of Failure:** One mistake can cause big damage. Failure can ruin their name and work. Many people suffer from one wrong step.
- **Attraction of Corruption:** Power may lead to greed. Some officials use their posts for personal gain. This causes unfair actions and loss of trust.

Final Suggestions for You:

If you have colleagues, respect them. Invite them to join you when they least expect it. Do not leave them out when they deserve to be included. Do not always show off your position in conversations. Do not act too proudly when replying to people in private. Instead, let people say, "When he sits in place, he is another man."