

## **SPIRITUAL SUCCESS**

It is very easy to look your life, compare yourself with others and wonder how well you are actually doing. We can look at the level of material blessings in our life and wonder if God is pleased with us at all. These are issues that many of us struggle with and I personally do, so I wanted to offer a biblical perspective on success.

**Act 1:15-26** Choosing of Matthias to be an apostle in place of Judas who betrayed the Lord. Peter, quoting Psalm 109:8 decided that someone needed to take his place. Through a process called casting lots, they chose Matthias to be an Apostle. Of course, only God appoints apostles through spiritual gifts. Likely that Paul was the apostle who replaced Judas but think about Matthias.

- From that moment on Matthias was part of the leadership team, included in every meeting, allowed to contribute his ideas, took responsibility for ministries, etc.
- But after his choosing, his name is never mentioned again, he is known for nothing.

Was he a success? How would we determine if he was successful in his life? Who decides if any of us are successful? Is it God alone who decides? Does it matter what we think about our self?

### **1. Mankind as designed by God is a worker, a doer & meant to accomplish things.**

**Gen 1** – In the garden before Eve, before the fall, Adam had a job – to tend God’s garden

**Gen 3** – After the fall, the man was to till the ground and the woman was to rear children

- So easy to think of our life as a doing & think of ourselves as human doings – not beings
- We falsely consider success to be what we pike up & what we visibly accomplish

### **2. The world measures success by comparing the self and accomplishments with others.**

**2 Corinthians 10:12** For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

- Wealth** – Lk 12:16-21 Rich Fool; Lk 18:18-23 Rich Young Ruler
- Respect** – 2Cor 12:11 Paul comparing himself with the “super” apostles; His insecurities about himself drove him to do more and claim credit for it – trouble in Jerusalem
- Fame** – reputation, recognition from others giving the sense we are desirable, successful
  - Social Media has made people very well-known and some very rich.
- Relationships:**
  - **Marriage:** many/most believe that not being married is an indication of a lesser person, undesirable; general design for mankind
  - **Family:** many women feel lesser if their bodies are unable to reproduce or if they never have the privilege of raising kids.
- Education** – some part of the population considers level of education as an indication of worth & success; others take pride in having little education but able to make a living
- Accomplishments** – visible, measurable achievements added to your resume

### **3. Jesus was and is the epitome of spiritual success & spiritual self esteem**

- Nowhere do we see Jesus pursuing any of the traditional methods of success
- He was born with a unique & specific mission to resolve sin/death issue in A/C
- He remained single, construction worker, owned only the clothes on His back when He died, remained private & obscure until God, the Father promoted Him for the world to see.
- He was focused on God, the Father & God, the Holy Spirit from birth; spiritually advanced age 12; successfully resisted every scheme of the devil; obeyed God, the Father at every single moment of

His human existence; maxed out spiritual maturity age 30; surrendered Himself to be tortured, endured the cross to pay for the sins/world, experienced death & resurrection.

- e. His total surrender & obedience to God, the Father resulted in the greatest promotion in history

**Heb 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author & perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, & has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

#### 4. The biblical approach for Christians to succeed in the plan of God

- a. **God, the Holy Spirit** – divine mentor & empowerment to comprehend & live out the truth of God
- Indwelling – Filling – Walking – Enlightenment – Empowerment – Leading/guiding
  - Fruits – empowerment to develop mind-sets giving us love, joy, peace, patience....
- b. **Shama** – to hear; Deut 5:1 Moses "**Hear, O Israel**, the statutes & ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may **learn them and observe them carefully**."
- Greek: akouo – to hear; listen to learn, understand so that we can implement God's plan
- c. **Spiritual growth** - Eph 4:11-16 – bel's speak truth to one another grow to maturity to the measure of stature of Christ, holding to Him as the head and His body the church.
- Brephos, nepios, pais, teknon, huioi – stages of growth unto an adult → mature adult
- d. **Purification** – removal of previous programmed demonic/kosmos sourced belief system
- Confess/sins; recognizing old patterns; break old habits; remove false beliefs
  - Recognizing false images – eyes of heart & false ideas – inner dialogue
  - Requires adversities of life flushing out wrong thinking – journeys in the desert
- e. **Develop New Man** – practicing New Man thinking, strengthening spiritual skills (Faith Cycle; Enduring under pressure); defeating devil's world; develop confidence & tranquility
- Replace old beliefs & patterns with New Man beliefs, perspectives and habits.
  - Intentional NM images – eyes of heart (Eph 1:18-); Intentional inner dialogue – truth
- f. **Love & Intimacy with God** – life beyond mechanics, love life with God in your soul
- Only God in your soul with you, never leaves you, always loves & comforts us
  - True blessing is God filling the empty place in our hearts (Jn 7:37-39)
  - Love for God is the ultimate motivation for living life – inspires our loyalty
- g. **Virtue Love for all Mankind** – Jn 17 – basis for world seeing the reality of Christ in us
- Committing our every resource to mission of edifying others, as much as they allow, whenever they allow, needing nothing in return, holding nothing back from the Lord
- h. **Victory in Angelic Conflict** – reaching place of maturity where God allows us to be confronted by the forces of evil seeking to discredit & destroy us.
- God calls us to the witness stand in the courtroom of the Angelic Conflict – witnesses for grace
  - Our faithfulness under extreme pressure proves what fallen angels could have had

Mt 25:14-30 Parable of the Talents: those who made the most out of the resources God allowed in their lives was the basis of: **WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT**