

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, September 22, 2013

Series: Living in Godly Success!
Message: What are you aiming for?
Scripture: Genesis 39:1-23

- I. Success is defined as the accomplishment of an aim or purpose.
 - a. “Success” as a principle is not inherently Godly or ungodly. What differentiates Godly or ungodly success is how we define it. Not everything that we consider a “success” is Godly success.
 - b. The desire to succeed and to be successful address an innate need that God has placed within us – the desire to utilize our existence to do things well. We were created with a purpose and long to fulfill those purposes in our lives. The desire to do things well affects every area of our lives: where we work, where we live, how we spend our money, what we have, and who we associate with.
- II. The challenge for us, as Christians, is how to reconcile our desire to do things well with our identity as children of God.
 - a. Our identity comes from our creator. Pastor Mark Driscoll said it this way: You have to realize that there’s only one God, and you’re not God.
 - b. Our identity constrains where we place our time and energy in doing things well. The desire to succeed must align with our Christian identity.
 - c. If success means the accomplishment of an aim or purpose, the difference between worldly success and Godly success is what we aim at. How do we measure success in every area of our lives? Our aim must be God’s aim.
- III. ***“Godly success is to continually delight in God so that every area of our lives reflects whom God created us to be, and that in every pursuit, Christ’s power is at work within us to achieve the goals that God has helped us set.”***
 - a. Living in Godly success recognizes 4 essential elements: Delighting – Becoming – Surrendering - Doing
- IV. In Genesis 39, we are presented with the life of a successful biblical hero, Joseph. Despite the external circumstances that Joseph faced, “the Lord was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did.”
- V. **1 - Joseph demonstrated that living in Godly success requires perpetual diligence in delighting in God (Genesis 39:1-2)**
 - a. Success in one endeavor can easily be marked by immediate failure in another area when our focus is on short term accomplishments that supersede our understanding of lasting success.
 - b. In every pursuit and station of life, Joseph had to be diligent in delighting in God and in doing God’s will.
 - c. It is easier to focus on delighting in God when our success hasn’t been noticed by others. However, when others notice our success, we have to be more vigilant in keeping the main thing – the main thing – “God”.

- VI. 2 - Joseph demonstrated that living in Godly success requires us to understand that obstacles cannot prevail over Christ's power at work within us to achieve Godly success (Genesis 39:20-21)**
- a. We often associate people who are successful as those who have the favor of God all over them. What is the favor of God? It is the power of Christ demonstrated in the earth.
 - b. Success is not based on the immediate obstacles that are present but the everlasting presence of God that is with us through the obstacles. Joseph was considered successful by God while he was in Pharaoh's household, in prison and when he got out. His success was based upon his willingness to delight in God and God's plans for his life.
- VII. 3 - Joseph demonstrated that living in Godly success enables us to thrive in any environment (Genesis 39:22-23)**
- a. Joseph found a way to be successful in every environment that he encountered. The apostle Paul similarly said that he learned how to be content no matter the external circumstances.
 - b. Godly success thrives despite the external circumstances. The Christian who lives in Godly success doesn't use external conditions as a limitation to what God can do.
- VIII. 4 - Ultimately, Joseph wasn't considered to be successful just because he did things well, but because he fulfilled the plan that God had for his life and in every area of his life, reflected the person whom God created him to be. (Genesis 45:4-7 and 50:20)**
- a. *GENESIS 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!"⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping.⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*
 - b. ²⁰You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.
 - c. At the end of Joseph's life, he fulfilled the purpose that God created him for. He was a successful husband, deliverer, son, brother, leader, and Godly servant.

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- 1) Name a person in your life that you consider to be successful? What are some of the qualities/traits that they possess?
- 2) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp? Were you challenged in any area of your personal walk with God?
- 3) Before this week's sermon, how did you define success? What concepts you were aiming for in finding success. Write them below.

- 4) How has your drive for "success" dictated your decision making? For example, Pastor Joseph mentioned that our desire to do things well can dictate where we work, where we live, how we spend our money, what we have, and who we associate with.
- 5) Pastor Joseph defined Godly success as *"continually delighting in God so that every area of our lives reflects whom God created us to be, and that in every pursuit, Christ's power is at work within us to achieve the goals that God has helped us set."* How does this definition of success change you aims for in life? How does it convert your idea of success from one-dimension to multi-dimensional?
- 6) Where does material success fit within Godly success? How do we reconcile our desire to succeed with our identity as children of God?
- 7) Name a biblical hero that was successful in their life. Why were they considered successful? How did they show perpetual diligence in delighting in God? How did they overcome obstacles? Throughout the week, you might benefit from a further Bible Study on this individual's life and their journey to living in Godly success.