

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, September 29, 2013

Series: Living in Godly Success!
Message: The Lord watches over the path to Godly success
Scripture: Psalms 1:1-6

- I. Christians often struggle with the question of whether God desires for us to be successful. Is success a God-given right or is success an ungodly passion? Or neither?
 - a. To answer this question, we must first define how to measure success. Success that is measured entirely by fame, fortune, and material wealth will never be a true indicator for/against Godly success. There are people who have fame, fortune, and material wealth, yet their achievements do not amount to Godly success. There are others who may have the same resources and they have done it in a Godly way.
- II. In Psalms 1, the psalmist paints two distinct pictures of life that are determined by a critical choice that we make: our choice to rely on God for our successes or our reliance on our own strength.
 - a. It is easy to believe that the most important choices towards achieving success are based upon earthly norms: the choice of the best mentor; the choice of the most prestigious company; the choice of the most rigorous education for my child, etc. While these are all important decisions, they are all superseded by ONE choice that we make: Whether we will do things our way or God's way.
- III. The greatest advantage of following God's way is that God is working on our behalf to see us accomplish all that He has planned for us. Psalms 1:6 declares, *"For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction."*
 - a. Our definition of Godly success starts off with *"continually delighting in God"*. It starts with the choice to trust the Lord's way of successful living, rather than our own way and thoughts of successful living.
- IV. What does successful living looks like?
 - a. **Is it riches?** 1 Timothy 6:17 states *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."*
 - b. **Is it possessions?** Luke 12:15 states, *"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."*
 - c. **Successful living is rooted in a relationship with Christ Jesus.** In John 10:10, Jesus boldly declares that He has come that we may have life, and have it to the full.
- V. What are the advantages of the Godly life of success? God is watching over every aspect of our lives to ensure that we reach our goals that He has helped us set. There are 5 areas that the *"the LORD watches over."*

VI. 1- The Lord watches over the heart of the righteous

- a. Living in Godly success means that in every blessing our hearts remain steadfast toward the Lord and our hearts are not corrupted by the deceitfulness of riches, the worries of this life, or the desire for other things.
- b. The Bible tells us to guard our heart because it is the wellspring of life. It is possible to achieve seeming success without God, yet have a bitter, cold, and calloused heart.
- c. Ultimately, God balances reward and humility to ensure that our heart is not destroyed in the process of achieving Godly success. When we live in Godly success, the success we receive is accompanied by love and compassion towards others, and Godly integrity with no regrets.

VII. 2- The Lord watches over the needs of the righteous

- a. Living in Godly success means that we do not strive to meet our needs in our own strength. Rather, we work with diligence and a thankful heart, realizing that God has already made provision for us.
 - i. In the Garden of Eden, God orchestrated the resources necessary to meet Adam’s needs. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. Although Adam had all of the provision that he needed, the Lord still put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
 - ii. When we try to achieve success on our own, we are left with the responsibility of sustaining that success by ourselves. Though we may be able to climb the ladder quickly, we are susceptible things that are ultimately not in our control.

VIII. 3- The Lord watches over the steps of the righteous

- a. Living in Godly success means that the journey to success is just as important as the achievement of success.
- b. Those who trust solely in their own success are not concerned with the journey but only getting to the top of the mountain. They are willing to push, cheat, sacrifice, and dishonor God because they believe that the ‘ends’ justify the ‘means.’
- c. However, the Scriptures condemn this behavior: “Better the poor whose walk is blameless than the rich whose ways are perverse.” (Proverbs 28:6)
- d. We are reminded that “There is a way [of success] that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

IX. 4- The Lord watches over the work of the righteous

- a. Living in Godly success means that whatever the Lord has placed in our hands to do, we are able to be fruitful and prosper in it
- b. *In John 15:16, Jesus declared to us that we were chosen and appointed to “bear fruit—fruit that will last”*

X. 5- The Lord watches over the inheritance of the righteous

- a. Living in Godly success ensures that along with all of our earthly gains, we secure our eternal inheritance through Christ Jesus.
- b. MATTHEW 19:29 *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.*
³⁰ *But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.*

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Scripture: Psalms 1:1-6

- 1) What encouraged you the most this past week? Was it something that someone said? Or did? Or that you read?
- 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) How has your understanding of Godly success affected your actions in the last week?
- 4) How would you answer someone who wants to know whether God desires for us to be successful. What scriptures would you use to define success? How does 1 Timothy 6:17-19 and Luke 12:15 affect your answer?
- 5) Living in Godly success means that the journey to success is just as important as the achievement of success. What are the pitfalls of achieving success without paying attention to how you get there? On a practical level, what does it look like when you let the Lord order your steps to success? What are things that we are to avoid?
- 6) **Read** Psalms 146:9 and Ezekiel 34:11-12. What do these verses say about God's watchfulness over the ways of the righteous? How has God watched over your own life journey? Do you feel that God is watching over every aspect of your lives to ensure that you reach the goals that He has helped you set? How do you reconcile God's watchfulness and difficulties that you may experience along the journey?
- 7) Part of the blessing of living in Godly success is that we receive an eternal inheritance. What is that inheritance? Why should we long for that inheritance? **Read** Matthew 19:29; Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 25:34; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.