

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 Reflect on a time when success brought out your best qualities. What did you learn from that experience?
- 2 Reflect on a time when success revealed a weakness in you. How did you address it?
- 3 What steps can you take to ensure success helps you grow spiritually and personally?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!


If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.





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HOW TO HANDLE SUCCESS

What are we thinking about when we experience success? Who are we praising? Who are we giving credit to? How are we responding? What do you say when someone congratulates you or offers you a prize or reward? What do you do when you experience success? How does God want you to respond in situations like that?

The dictionary defines success as achieving one's aim or goal. It's a simple definition but broad and yet, so many people have the wrong understanding of it. For Christians, success can never be measured by money. When people say, "That man is worth 10 million dollars", that means he is wealthy, but it doesn't prove he is successful. In some cases, it could even mean the opposite.

The measurement of success is simply the ratio of talents used to talents received. In other words, success is what you do with what you've got, plus who you are becoming. Are you a growing, maturing Christian? Whether you are in the business, in the ministry, as a laborer, a professional, or in academics, if you are a maturing Christian, using a large percentage of your talents or doing the most with what you've got, then you are successful. So be glad. Not the one who becomes the richest or most famous, but the one who has the closest ratio of talents received to talents used.

Why do we need to manage or handle success? Because there's that danger inherent in success. The more successful we are whether in business, work, or ministry, the more chances for pride to set in. Prov 27:21 "Fire tests the purity of silver & Gold but a person is tested by being praised." They said that the true test of a person's character is how he behaves in difficult situations, setbacks & failures. His character can also be tested at the pinnacle of success.



Who are you becoming when you are successful? The moment pride sets in because of human praises received, we become guilty of idolatry because we tend to put ourselves above God. Idolatry is trusting anything that takes the place of God in your life. While we always seek God in our lowest times, we tend to forget Him when we are on cloud 9 enjoying the blessing of success.

HOW TO HANDLE SUCCESS

1. Go Back to the True Source to Give the Glory and Honor

Text: Genesis 14:14-24

As background of the story, an alliance of kings and their armies from Mesopotamia are on military campaign against the kings and city-states of Canaan. The Kings of Canaan had been serving a powerful king in Mesopotamia named Chedorlaomer. For 12 years they served him but then they rebelled. So Chedorlaomer along with 3 other Mesopotamian kings formed an alliance and went on a campaign to Canaan in order to crush the rebellion. They were unstoppable army, defeating everyone they fought against. Eventually, they arrived at the Valley of Siddim, which was on the south of the Dead Sea, where they met in battle with an alliance of 5 Canaanite kings-these were the same kings that had rebelled against Chedorlaomer. The battle was fierce; 4 Mesopotamian Kings against 5 Canaanite kings and once again, the Mesopotamian army was successful they defeated the 5 kings that had rebelled against them and they plundered the city-states of Sodom and Gomorrah and went on their way. The problem was that Abram's nephew Lot, had settled in Sodom, after separating from Abram. So, he and all his people and possessions were also taken by the invading army. Within a couple of days, Abram heard word of this and he faced a major dilemma. His very own kin had been taken by this dominant army that no one could stop. What would he do? How could he stand any chance of rescuing them from such a formidable enemy?

So Abram heroically decided to go after them with his men who were trained to fight for the protection of their community. Surprisingly with 318 trained men, they were able to defeat them run them out of Canaan, and rescue the people and possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, along with Abram's nephew Lot and his family.

This was a huge military victory that would have gained Abram recognition throughout the land of Canaan. By defeating the Mesopotamian kings that none of the Canaanite kings could stand against, Abram suddenly had the status of being the dominant military ruler in that area- the kind of ruler that other kings would pay tribute to so he wouldn't attack them. In status, he became the Canaanite equivalent of Chedorlaomer. He goes from being an unknown underdog to having the status of the dominant military leader in that area. A huge success for Abram. Let us see how he responded to this tremendous success and newfound fame.

So when he returns from the battle, two kings go out to meet him. One of them was expected – the king of Sodom – the man whose kingdom Abram had just rescued. The other was not – the king of Salem. These 2 kings were extremely different. The king of Sodom was a very wicked man who led his people into great sin. Sodom had a reputation for their wickedness. When he went out to meet Abram he said, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself". Given the situation, he's at the mercy of Abram at that moment. Abram didn't owe him anything. Abram had every right to keep both the people and the possessions for himself. That's what other kings would have done in his position to grow and strengthen their city-state. The king of Sodom had failed to protect his people and city and had lost everything and Abram had defeated the very same enemy. The king of Sodom was probably thinking or hoping Abram would be satisfied with the possessions and would let the people go back with him.

So Abram had a real opportunity to add a lot of wealth and strength to himself. But notice what he did- he refused to take anything. He told the king of Sodom that he had sworn an oath to his God that he wouldn't take even the smallest possession for himself, other than what his men had eaten. One of the reasons is that he didn't want to be known as the beneficiary of the king of Sodom. He didn't want the king to be able to say that he had made Abram rich. I don't think he wanted anything to do with that wicked king. Abram never forgot the people who supported and helped him to become victorious. He showed his appreciation and honored them with the share of the plunder they deserved. Abraham had enough so he didn't want more but he was thoughtful to give credit where it is due. How about us? Do we easily forget those who have helped us succeed?

Abram's responses reveal that when it came to his tremendous success and victory over the Mesopotamian army, he didn't believe the victory came from his attack strategy or the strength and skill of his men. He believed as Melchizedek stated in his blessing, that it was God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, who delivered his enemies into Him. And when the king of Sodom told him he could keep the possessions for himself, he refused. They were not his to keep. The victory, the success, the wealth, the possessions – it all belonged to the Lord. So Abram gave glory and honor to God and wouldn't take the credit for himself.

2. Wise Stewardship

2 John 1: 8 "Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully."

Success is wise stewardship; so do not take it for granted. God has blessed you for a purpose and success is part of His purpose for you. However, if you do not steward wisely and responsibly the blessing of His success, you may very well lose it. Success means you have the attention of your peers and other people, and you have gained the respect of many. Your family respects you, your church respects you, and your friends and officemates respect you. But success is not designed to lull you into apathetic work and lazy living. In other words, don't be complacent once you become successful.

Complacency is the moment you think you are now right all the time because of what you have attained, then you also stop learning new things because you refuse to be taught. Success is an opportunity to seek God for His wisdom regarding a new set of problems and opportunities. Accountability and wise counsel are big parts of stewarding success. So surround yourself with the right people for guidance and to sustain or even succeed more. Luke 12:48 "To whom much is given, much will be required". We should be responsible for what we have been blessed with, such as talents, wealth, knowledge, time, and skills. We are expected to benefit others through these gifts.

Proverbs 22:4-Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life. The higher we are placed, the more humbly we should walk. We should always remember that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). We should stay humble because if God gives, He also takes.

So don't lose what you have worked for through wise stewardship. His reward is your greatest success. (Mat 25:21) His Master replied "Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come & share your master's happiness."

