



Recipe for Success

*Hold tightly what is eternal;
hold lightly what is temporal.*

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

We are obsessed with success. We read books written by successful people on how to succeed. We attend seminars to learn from them, because we want to succeed. No one wants to fail.

King Solomon, possibly the most successful man on earth by most upheld standards, laid out the yardsticks of success in ancient Jewish society: wealth, honor, possessions, a very large family, and a very long life. Today, a large family and long life would be deemed by some as more of a burden and trouble than success. But wealth, possessions, and honor are definitely contemporary yardsticks of success. However, Solomon discovered that they do not automatically bring joy and contentment. There is a missing important element, or rather, Person.

These articles from *Our Daily Bread* are specially selected to help you discover the recipe for success. If you enjoy these articles and would like to receive this devotional, just complete the request form on this leaflet and send it to us. There is no subscription fee.

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DEFINING FAILURE

Today's Bible Reading

HEBREWS 11:24-34

During the Great Depression, many people in the US lived in shantytowns made up of plywood, tarps, and blankets. These decrepit dwellings, known as “Hoovervilles,” housed those

By faith ... their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong.

HEBREWS 11:33-34

who had been evicted from their homes. Many blamed President Herbert Hoover for the economic woes.

Ironically, Hoover’s apparent ineffectiveness as a leader was in sharp contrast to his previous record. Earlier, Hoover’s expertise in geological engineering led to successful mining projects in Australia and China. He also effectively spearheaded humanitarian efforts. But when the stock market crashed in October 1929, President Hoover was in circumstances beyond his control. He would be forever tied with the economic depression of the 1930s.

One major fiasco, however, does not mean one’s whole life is a failure. What if we remembered Abraham only as a deceiver (Genesis 12:10-20), Moses as disobedient to God (Numbers 20:1-13), or David as a murderer (2 Samuel 11)? Despite their sins, these men are remembered for their persevering faith: who “by faith . . . their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong” (Hebrews 11:33-34).

Our life is not a failure if we’ve repented of our sins. God can still use us to serve Him. —*Dennis Fisher*

Success often rises out of the ashes of failure.

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Today's Bible Reading

REVELATION 3:14-22

One of my favorite stories is about the Texas rancher who was doing agricultural consulting for a farmer in Germany. He asked the German farmer about the size of his property, to which he replied, "About a mile square." When the German asked the Texan about the size of his ranch, the rancher

explained that if he got in his pick-up truck at dawn and drove until sunset he would still be on his ranch. Not to be outdone, the farmer replied, "I used to have an old truck like that!"

All joking aside, it's important to have the right perspective. Unfortunately, the Christians in Laodicea had the wrong perspective about wealth (Revelation 3:14-22). By all appearances, they were rich. They had plenty of earthly goods and thought they needed nothing—not even Jesus. But Jesus had a different perspective. In spite of their material prosperity, He saw that they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (v.17). So He invited them to become truly rich by seeking what only He could provide: purity, character, righteousness, and wisdom.

Let's not make the Laodicean mistake. Instead, let's keep our perspective right about what it means to be rich. True wealth is not measured by what you have but by who you are in Christ. —*Joe Stowell*

**The poorest person is he whose
only wealth is money.**

**You say, "I
am rich. I have
everything I want.
I don't need a
thing!" And you
don't realize that
you are wretched
and miserable and
poor and blind
and naked.**

REVELATION 3:17

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Today's Bible Reading

JOSHUA 1:1-9

Wrinkled noses and puckered lips—sometimes this is my family's reaction to my cooking, especially when I'm trying something new in the kitchen. Recently, I had a breakthrough with a unique version of macaroni and cheese. I jotted down the ingredients and tucked the recipe away for future reference. Without that set of instructions, I knew the next batch would be a flop.

Study this Book of Instruction continually . . . be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

JOSHUA 1:8

Without God's instructions, Joshua would have failed at leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. The first step was to "be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:6). Next, he was to continually meditate on the Book of Instruction, and finally, he was to do everything it said. As long as Joshua followed the directions, God promised him success (v.8).

God's "recipe for success" can work for us too, but His idea of success has little to do with money, popularity, or even good health. In the original Hebrew, you will "succeed in all you do" means "then you will act wisely." Just as God called Joshua to walk in wisdom, He wants us to "be careful how [we] live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise" (Ephesians 5:15).

As we take courage in the Lord, feast on His Word, and obey Him, we have a recipe for godly success that's better than anything we could cook up on our own. —Jennifer Benson Schuldt

**Obedience to God's Word is
the recipe for spiritual success.**

LOOSENING OUR GRIP

Today's Bible Reading

MATTHEW 6:19-24

An American tourist traveled to Poland to visit with a respected religious teacher who was known for his wisdom. The visitor noticed that the man's room had nothing but a table, a chair, and some books. Puzzled by such austerity, he asked, "Where is your furniture?" The teacher answered, "My furniture? Where is your furniture, my friend?" The American protested, "Furniture? But I am only a tourist passing through." "So am I," said the man.

Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.

MATTHEW 6:20

And so are all of us.

Because it's true that we're just passing through this world, we need to learn to loosen our grip on our earthly possessions. This declaration from Jesus should help us: "Life is not measured by how much you own" (Luke 12:15). Rather than acquiring and holding tightly to earthly things, we should be obeying this directive given by Jesus: "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19-20).

If you're overly concerned about your car, house, clothes, or bank account, ask God to help you learn what it means to lay up treasures in the world to come.

—Philip Yancey

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hold lightly what is temporal.**

TOXIC LIVING

Today's Bible Reading

I SAMUEL 13:7-14

Picher, Oklahoma, is no more. In mid-2009, this once-bustling town of 20,000 went out of business. In the first quarter of the 1900s, Picher was a boomtown because of its abundant lead and zinc.

Workers extracted the ore, which was used to help arm the US during both World Wars.

The town faded as the ore began to run out—but the biggest problem was that while the lead and zinc brought wealth, they also brought pollution. Because nothing was done to deal with the pollution, Picher became a toxic wasteland, and the government condemned the land.

What happened to Picher can happen to people. Prosperity can look so good that it's hard to think about possible downsides. Actions that are detrimental to long-term spiritual health are accepted, and unless the problem is corrected, destruction follows. It happened to King Saul. He began as a good king, but in seeking success he failed to see the damage he was doing. Turning his back on God's commands, he acted foolishly (1 Samuel 13:13) and lost his kingdom (v.14).

In our attempts to find success, we need to watch out for spiritual pollution that comes when we fail to follow God's clear scriptural guidelines. Godly living always beats toxic living. —*Dave Branon*

**“How foolish!”
Samuel exclaimed.
“You have not kept
the command the
LORD your God
gave you.”**

1 SAMUEL 13:13

No one can be a real success without God.

FALLING SHORT

Today's Bible Reading

ROMANS 3:19-28

One of the fads of 1970s America was the motorcycle jump. This trend reached its high (and low) point on September 8, 1974. Thousands of spectators gathered around the Snake River Canyon in Idaho to see if Evel Knievel could jump across the chasm in a specially designed “sky cycle.” In the end, however, it was unsuccessful. Knievel made it only part of the way across the gulf before his parachute deployed and he dropped to the canyon floor below. Some spectators asked, “How far across the canyon did he get?” But that wasn’t the point. He didn’t make it all the way across, so he fell short of his goal.

**For everyone
has sinned;
we all fall short of
God's glorious
standard.**

ROMANS 3:23

This scene is a good illustration of sin. The Bible talks about sin in Romans 3:23, where Paul declared, “For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.” No one is capable of bridging the gap between God and ourselves by our own efforts, but Jesus Christ came to do just that on our behalf. Christ perfectly fulfilled God’s standards, then gave His life on the cross to pay for our failure and wrongdoing. Where we could only fall short, Christ’s work, offered in love, accomplished all that was needed.

Our response is to trust Him and receive this matchless gift of salvation. —*Bill Crowder*

**The cross of Christ bridges the gap
we could never cross on our own.**