

10 Essentials for True Happiness and Success

The song “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” was clever, cute and catchy but lacked substance to help us be happy.

Wherever we find ourselves on our spiritual journey, deep down inside we want to be happy and successful. Surveys show they’re the top priorities of people of every age in every season of life.

What are the principles that God reveals in Scripture that guide us in these areas? Obviously for Christians, everything is based upon a dynamic relationship with Jesus as Lord. We willingly obey, aligning with Scripture in every area of life and are confident in the reality: “Happy is that people whose God is the Lord” (, KJV).

Multitudes are robbed of happiness and success because of disregarding the wisdom revealed in the Bible given for His glory and our good. It’s imperative we follow His Word as a decision not an emotion, trusting Him for success and blessings that follow living as overcomers by faith.

“This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may act carefully according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise” (Josh.1:8).

“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well” (3 John 2).

“The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Essentials for Happiness and Success

1. Take time daily for prayer, thanksgiving and reflection.

George Mueller, towering father in the faith who miraculously fed thousands of orphans through his ministry in the 1800s, said, "I consider it my first duty every day to get my soul happy in God!"

Daily devotional time is essential not optional to maintain peace and vibrant communion with God. Counting your blessings instead of complaining keeps you centered on a pathway of victory as you filter out negative thoughts and needless worry as you "cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

2. Read your Bible consistently plus challenging books.

Readers are leaders! You will be the same person a year from now that you are today except for two things: the materials you engage and the friends you enjoy. Frittering away time on mindless video games and silly sitcoms, endless sporting events or wasteful conversations can derail you from your destiny.

The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible. Make a quality decision to be a man or woman of the Word, especially in our sex-saturated society. "How shall a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Ps. 119:9, 11).

3. Determine to develop a disciplined lifestyle for personal growth and greater productivity.

Discipline means not doing what you want to do but doing what you have to do to advance in life. You delay gratification so you're a winner and not a loser. Example (so no debt): Always pause and ask, "Do I need (versus want) it?" and "Can I afford it?"

Success comes from choosing to do a few priority things consistently every day. "Do you not know that all those who run in a race run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain it. Everyone who strives for the prize exercises self-control in all things" (1 Cor. 9:24-25).

4. Keep your life simple and orderly.

It's been said for centuries, "Order is heaven's first law." Order brings peace; that's why the same Greek word is used for both in Scripture. If you keep your car keys in the same place, you avoid unnecessary stress.

God is not the author of confusion, but He is the revealer of it! Cultivate an atmosphere of peace by making your bed first thing in the morning; decluttering your room; setting a flexible schedule and adhering to it; allowing yourself ample travel time for appointments, avoiding stress, speeding and being perpetually late as inevitable unexpected things occur like accidents, slow-moving traffic and bad weather.

5. Keep learning to mature and serve others.

Jesus said, "Blessed [happy] are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). When we stop learning, we stop growing. "I'd rather teach a man to learn than to teach him all I know" a wise mentor once told me.

For every person passionate for personal growth, discovering his unique God-given giftings and desiring to make a difference with his life, I strongly recommend the book, *StrengthsFinders*. It's been the No. 1 hardback business bestseller for years!

Through an easy-to-read book and accompanying assessment, readers identify the top five strengths God custom-designed for them to stay focused and succeed in life. I just gave away another copy to a young man trying to figure out what career

path to pursue. It's by far the best book I've ever found to steer people to success in life.

6. Pursue honest and constructive feedback and correction.

Did you know that there is one time in the Bible where God labels someone "stupid?"

Proverbs 12:1 (BSB) states, "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid."

We all have blind spots. Why do you think they're called "blind?" The answer is simple: We can't see them and need others to speak the truth in love to help us to grow. Take the initiative with people who love you and invite them to both encourage and correct you.

7. Establish and cultivate meaningful friendships.

The Bible lists 10 characteristics of biblical friendship. May I offer you a brief and helpful commentary I've done as a checklist for developing authentic friends?

It's been said that there are four types of friends:

- Just friends: casual acquaintances.
- Rust friends: old relationships; some keep/some leave behind.
- Trust friends: counselors and encouragers.
- Must friends: small circle of lifelong, God-given gifts.

8. Persevere amidst inevitable setbacks and mistakes.

An often-quoted saying about failure and success reads, "Failure is rarely fatal and success is rarely final." This is why Scripture encourages us, "...a just man falls seven times and rises up again" (Prov. 24:16a). Trials come to us all. Remember that pressures reveal the person!

Almost all the most successful people who have inspired us from the past and present have blown it, but they picked themselves up to press on for the prize. Again I commend to you a commentary I've written to inspire you to persevere in this area.

Another well-known success quote reads as follows: "Champions don't give up, they get up!"

9. Maintain good nutrition and regular exercise.

"Temple maintenance" must be a priority if we are going to reduce stress, stay healthy, maximize creativity and productivity plus maintain an attractive appearance.

One of history's most famous Christian leaders and the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, said when he was 88 that a primary reason he lived such a healthy life was due to making exercise a priority.

10. Take time for regular rest and relaxation.

God worked six days, and on the seventh day, He rested. One of the reasons He set the Babylonian captivity for 70 years was because Israel violated the Sabbath principal for 70 years.

In a world that neglects the command for a specific day of rest and relaxation, Christians should stand out for honoring this beautiful and wise principle. Chick-fil-A is closed on Sundays, and God blesses them every year as America's No. 1 fast food restaurant in terms of revenue per store.

Here's the deal: The road to happiness and success is dotted with many tempting parking spaces. Shake off the past and any procrastination to be the overcomer God called you to be for His glory.

Check out Larry's new 15 minute Mon-Thurs podcast on Charisma Podcast Network to be encouraged daily!