

How God Defines Success in Your Walk With Him

We live in a culture that idolizes success and demonizes failure.

But in God's kingdom, the outcome isn't the issue. Success isn't winning or losing; it's obeying. It's honoring God whether you're in the red or the black. It's praising God whether you win the election or lose it. It's giving God the glory whether you're in the win column or the loss column.

I've never met anybody who doesn't want to be successful, but very few people have actually defined success for themselves. So by default they buy into the culture's definition of success instead of God's definition. In God's book success is spelled *stewardship*. It's making the most of the time, talent and treasure God has given you. It's doing the best you can with what you have, where you are.

Here's my personal definition of success: when those who know you best respect you most. Success starts with those who are closest to you. At the end of the day, I want to be famous in my home. And by the way, it's hard to be famous in your home if you're never home. If you succeed at the wrong thing, you've failed.

If you fail at the right thing, you've succeeded.

A few years ago I was on vacation at Lake Anna, a hundred miles southwest of Washington, D.C. I walked into a little coffee shop and noticed a piece of wall art that said "Chase the Lion." As it turns out, the owner was inspired to quit her job and pursue her dream of opening Not Just Mochas after reading my book *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*. I popped in every time I was in the area, but the shop closed down less than two years after it opened. Not only did I miss the

caramel macchiato with a shot of cinnamon, but I also felt partially responsible.

However, in my eyes Linda didn't fail. Her dream was *going into* business, and she did just that. Going out of business wasn't part of the plan, but she is no less a lion chaser because the shop closed.

Just as courage is not the absence of fear, success is not the absence of failure. Failure is a necessary step in every dream journey. I've written books that have been disappointments, and I've started businesses that have gone belly up. But in each instance I've tried to learn the lessons those failures are trying to teach me. Then I've mustered the courage to try, try, and try again.

If you don't try out, you'll miss out. Then you'll have to live the rest of your life wondering, *What if?* Don't let the fear of failing keep you from trying.

Given our locale in Washington, D.C., I pastor a lot of professional politicians. Outside the beltway there is a great deal of skepticism toward politicians, and much of it is merited. But public service in the form of politics is a noble profession, even if every politician isn't.

The way I see it, running for political office is chasing a 500-pound lion. I've met some politicians who have run and won, but I might admire those who have run and lost even more. They might not have won the popular vote, but they threw their hat into the ring.

God doesn't always call us to win.

Sometimes He just calls us to try.

Either way, it's obedience that glorifies God. {eoa}

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