

Your Spirit-Powered Secret to True Success

'Tis the season of graduations ... and graduation speeches. And almost every speech will encourage the graduates in their pursuit of success.

A recent search for the word "success" in the Amazon books category yielded more than 60,000 results. At the click of a button, 60,000 books are available today on how to become successful!

Let's face it. No one wakes up thinking, *today I will strive to be a failure*. Yet we often search for the secret to true success in all the wrong places. For the Christian, the key to real success is a simple, four-part instruction found—where else?— the Bible.

Second Corinthians 5:7-10 (NIV) tells us: "For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

The answer to a successful life is all there, spelled out in easy-to-follow details:

1. Live by faith: "For we live by faith, not by sight" (v. 7).

Everyone lives by faith in *something*. Even if you consider yourself to be an atheist, you still live by faith. When you set your alarm clock to wake up at a certain time, you have faith it will work. When you flip the light switch, you have faith the light will turn on without sparking a fire inside your walls. When you place the key in your car's ignition, you

have faith the car will start.

According to the Bible, the first key to success is found in living by faith. And the object of our faith is the Lord who created us to glorify His name.

2. With an eternal perspective: “We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (v. 8).

Is this life all there is? Is this the best life we can expect? Even if we don’t believe that, we often live as if we do. We make the pursuit of comfort and convenience a priority. But everything about this life is temporary. Every earthly pursuit will fade into the obscurity of extinction.

Doesn’t it make sense to maintain a perspective that values things that will last? That’s true success. Anything less will fail because it will pass away.

3. With a right goal: “So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it” (v.9).

Advice on obtaining success usually mandates the inclusion of goals. When I worked in the corporate world, one of the first things I learned about goals is that they must be .: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. So how does the apostle Paul’s goal to please the Lord stack up against the . standard?

– **Specific:** *We’re to please the Lord first, before we please ourselves or other people. And the details of what this looks like are laid out in God’s instruction book for life: the Bible.*

– **Measurable:** *How do you know if you’re succeeding? The commands and exhortations in Scripture describe how we are to live. And they become our standard. More on this when we look at the next verse.*

– **Attainable:** *Is it possible to please the Lord? Yes, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us because of our relationship with Jesus Christ.*

– **Relevant:** *What's the point of having goals if they're not relevant to who you are and what you hope to achieve? Since Christians are children of God, it matters that they would desire to please their heavenly Father.*

– **Time-bound:** *Is there an end date in mind? The life of every person is limited to a finite number of years, so we all have an end date for living in a way that will please God. So, since none of us know when we will cease to be time-bound, let's take every opportunity to please our heavenly Father in the days we do have.*

4. Using a right measure: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (v. 10).

Here is the final measure of our success: the final evaluation. What have we done with the life given to us? The ultimate judge is Jesus Christ, who will determine if the things we have accomplished have eternal value (1 Cor. 3:12).

There's no need to read thousands of books on the subject of success. And you can spare yourself the need to compare the graduation messages of hundreds of thousands of speakers. The secret to true success is living by faith, longing to be with the Lord, desiring to please Him and doing it all in view of the judgment seat of Christ.

How did your definition of a successful life stack up against the apostle Paul's definition?

Is there a graduate in your life who needs to hear this secret to true success? {eo}

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