

The True Measure of Success

What does real success look like? How can you be truly successful?

Jesus, Our Role Model

How did Jesus measure success?



In His day, worldly success was measured much as it is today. Society considered Roman rulers and centurions, elite religious leaders, and prosperous traders and craftsmen to be successful. In contrast, by society's standards Jesus was considered a total failure—a penniless, itinerant rebel who was



rejected by His own countrymen and then stripped naked, mercilessly beaten, and executed by the Romans.

But, Jesus' success isn't defined by this world's standards. In fact, by God's standard His life was totally successful.

Jesus wasn't interested in gathering multitudes of followers, getting rich, or building His political power. His success was defined by achieving His Father's will and purpose—becoming the sinless Lamb of God who voluntarily sacrificed Himself to take away the sins of the world.

Worldly Success

In this world, riches, possessions, power, rank, skill, intelligence, and prestige qualify a person as successful. These people have been successful by the world's standards:

- Barack Obama
- Leonardo Da Vinci
- Bill Gates
- Nelson Mandela
- Mao Zedong
- Constantine
- Donald Trump
- Richard Branson
- Julius Caesar
- Queen Elizabeth
- Paul McCartney
- Plato
- Thomas Edison
- Wright Brothers
- Steve Jobs
- Walt Disney
- Henry Ford
- Alexander the Great



- J.K. Rowling
- Michael Jackson
- Usain Bolt
- Steven Spielberg
- Oprah Winfrey
- Michael Jordan
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Lech Walesa
- Pope Francis
- Albert Einstein

Godly Success

But, true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ don't define success by the world's standards. Their goal isn't to get rich, live in luxury, gain power over others, or to be famous.

How should we define success?

To be successful, a Christian disciple must be (1) holy, and (2) a witness of salvation.

1. Holiness

In God's kingdom, holiness is a prerequisite to success. What is holiness? Holiness is the character of God, exemplified in people by "the fruit of the Spirit"

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

(Galatians 5:22-24)

Some examples of Godly success are:

1. Past examples:

- Jesus
- The apostles of Jesus
- Watchman Nee
- Richard Wurmbrand
- David Wilkerson
- George Mueller
- Hudson Taylor
- Smith Wigglesworth
- John G. Lake
- Eric Liddell
- Keith Green
- A.W. Tozer
- George MacDonald



- C.S. Lewis
 - ‘Heroes of faith’ in Hebrews chapter 11
 - Thousands of others listed in [Foxes Book of Martyrs](#)
2. Living examples (in my opinion, as of June 2016):
- [Dr. James Dobson](#)
 - [Andrew Wommack](#)
 - [Jonathan Cahn](#)
 - Thousands (possibly millions) of ‘unknown’ saints who aren’t celebrities

Holiness is achieved by:

1. Being born-again through faith in the blood of Jesus. (John chapter 3, 1 Peter chapter 1)
2. Being transformed by the renewing of the mind. (Romans 12:2)
3. Dying to the old nature; putting on the resurrected nature. (Romans chapters 6-8)
4. Walking (or living) continuously in the Spirit (Romans 8:1,4; Galatians 5:16, 25).
5. Abiding in Christ. (John chapters 14-17)

2. Witness to Salvation

In becoming holy, a disciple’s life shows (the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places) the power of God’s salvation to change a person from sinner to saint, and of the power to live in righteousness and moral victory in a fallen, sinful world. This fulfills the eternal purpose of God in creation:

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. (Ephesians 3:8-12, NASB)

(I am only briefly mentioning this mystery in this article, so if you’re interested in studying it further you can find much more detail in my *free* book entitled [The Overcomers Role in the Apocalypse.](#))

Salvation

All of mankind have sinned (Romans 3:23) and become slaves, or prisoners, under ‘the power of sin’ (Galatians 3:22). But, through Jesus, God has provided a way of salvation whereby disciples are freed from the power of sin and have the potential to become children of God (John 1:12).

However, the process of salvation requires our intentional effort. As the apostle Paul wrote,

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.
(Philippians 2:12, New Living Translation)

How Sin Works



When a person inevitably sins as a child, that child's conscience experiences the defilement and shame of sin, and that person becomes a slave (or prisoner) of sin.

Contrary to popular belief, it's not God who separates Himself from each child who sins. It's the shame in the child's conscience that separates him from God, just as Adam hid (in shame) from God in the garden of Eden.

God is closer to you than the breath in your lungs, and He loves every sinner. But no amount of religion or good works can cleanse our minds from our conscience's defilement. Only the blood of the sinless Lamb of God can wash your conscience clean, so that you can allow yourself to be reconciled to Him.

How to Overcome Sin

Those who have washed their conscience in the blood of the Lamb—those who identify with His death, burial, and resurrection through faith—are dead to the power of sin and alive to God. Since they're 'dead,' they are free from the power of sin over their lives. (Romans chapter 6 explains this.)

Someone will ask... Why then are there so many Christians living in sin?

If you tie a rope to a baby elephant's foot, it can be tethered by the rope. After the elephant grows into a huge beast, it could easily snap the small rope, but you can still tether the elephant by the same small rope because the elephant was trained to think the rope was strong enough to hold it captive. In the same way, most Christians have been incorrectly taught that they're still 'sinners saved by grace,' and 'nobody is perfect,' so they don't realize they're capable of breaking free of their sinful nature. As a result, they stay enslaved to sin, just like the adult elephant tethered by a small rope.

Every Christian's Mission

Jesus fulfilled His mission as the Lamb of God so that people could be reconciled to God and break free of the power of sin. Since AD33, when Jesus was resurrected and the Holy Spirit came to disciples on Pentecost, **every Christian's mission is to break free from the power of sin and demonstrate** (to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places) **that it's possible to live in holiness on the earth.**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

(Hebrews 12:1 New Living Translation)

Why is it important to demonstrate to these (celestial) witnesses that it's possible to live in holiness on the earth? It is the catalyst that causes the transformation of the world, from Satan's kingdom of darkness, to the heavenly kingdom of God.

But the court will sit for judgment, and his (the Antichrist) dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the

whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him. (Daniel 7:26-27, NASB)

When men demonstrate (to the court in heaven) that it's possible to live holy lives on the earth, the kingdoms of this world will be forever destroyed, and the millennial, Sabbath reign of Christ will begin on the earth.

The indented sections below are from my *free* book entitled [The Overcomers Role in the Apocalypse](#). (Please refer to it to answer any questions you may have about the rationale, terms, or concepts in this indented section.)

A Great Cloud of Witnesses

Hebrews 12:1 tells us that we have 'a great cloud of witnesses' surrounding us. Preachers like to say this is an invisible multitude in grandstands around us, cheering us on as we run our race. But, these witnesses aren't cheering spectators; they're witnesses in the heavenly court, who watch us for evidence they can testify to.



The Greek word translated 'witnesses' in this verse is *martyron*, from which we get the word martyr. By the lives they lived on earth, these celestial witnesses earned the right to present testimony in the court of heaven.

Evidence in the Heavenly Court

The great cloud of witnesses is looking for evidence that people on earth have been transformed from sinners into saints. When they observe evidence of people being transformed, so that their actions show the fruit of the Holy Spirit within them, they testify to this evidence in the court of heaven.

What kind of actions are the witnesses looking for?

1. Being morally flawless according to the Word of God.
2. Hebrews chapter 11 (the faith chapter) provides a list of righteous deeds by ancient saints.

The witnesses' testimony will also include the exploits of godly saints up to the modern time, when the heavenly court sits and pronounces judgement in favor of God and the saints, which I believe will happen in our lifetime.

The Archons' Destiny - Cast Down from Heaven

The witnesses' testimony will continue to accumulate until it results in the heavenly court's judgment against the archons. (The archons are the 'rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.') When this happens, the archons' will be stripped of their authority over the nations, and Jesus Christ will replace them as King of Kings and Lord of Lords over the 70 nations on the earth.

Conclusion

Worldly Success



This world's riches, possessions, and fame are temporary, insecure, and fleeting. They all end when you die, and **the only thing you'll carry from this world into the afterlife is your spirit**. If your spirit is not born again and transformed into the likeness of Christ, all the world's riches, possessions, and fame will be worthless to you. You'll even forfeit your own soul.

*For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"
(Mark 8:36)*

Godly Success

If you invest in transforming your spirit now, according to the Bible and the Spirit of God's teaching and leadership, your holiness and testimony will be unto you an invisible crown of heavenly glory during this life, providing you God's shalom (peace, blessing, wholeness, etc.) during your remaining time on earth.

Your holy life will demonstrate (to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places) that it's possible to live in holiness on the earth, providing testimony in the court of heaven, and expediting the day when God's kingdom will be established on the earth.

Afterward, your crown of holiness will be visible to all creation as long as God's kingdom endures. This is the true measure of success.

