

Five Bible Principles for Success
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“As a man thinks so is he”
Prov. 23:7, 12

7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is. (NAS)

12 Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge. (NIV)

Ideas do have consequences. Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer reminds us of this truth in his thought provoking book, about the rise and decline of western civilization “How Should We Then Live.”

I. Introduction

A. Most people would like to be successful – right. How about you?

1. Brief introduction to Earl Nightingale.

As a Depression-era child, Earl Nightingale was hungry for knowledge. From the time he was a young boy, he would frequent the Long Beach Public Library in California, searching for the answer to the question, “How can a person, starting from scratch, who has no particular advantage in the world, reach the goals that he feels are important to him, and by so doing, make a major contribution to others?” His desire to find an answer, coupled with his natural curiosity about the world and its workings spurred him to become one of the world’s foremost experts on success and what makes people successful.

In the words of his good friend and commercial announcer, Steve King, “Earl Nightingale never let a day go by that he didn’t learn something new and, in turn, pass it on to others. It was his consuming passion.” (He Died March 28, 1989). He wrote a book, “The Strangest Secret.” “We can let circumstances rule us, or we can take charge and rule our lives from within.”

2. Have you ever seen a straight river? Do you know why rivers are crooked? Flowing water takes the path of least resistance and can’t rise higher than its source.

3. So many people are like crooked rivers – they go through life taking the path of least resistance. Or like an automobile in neutral, coasting downhill through life – not using the motor and gears to take them where they would like to go.

B. When we say "nearly five percent of men and women achieve success" then we have to define success. The following is the best definition we've found: "***Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal.***" (*Earl Nightingale*)

C. Who then will be successful spiritually – Biblically Speaking?

II. OUTLINE

A. Set a Goal – Phil. 3:12-14

1. “One thing I do...” Paul’s goal
2. Some of us may have too many fingers in too many pies, or too many irons in too many fires to stay focused on one thing long enough to give it our best and accomplish it.
3. If you have a goal – not a wish, or some dreamy idea, but a real and attainable goal you are probably in the top five percent of society. The following Bible principles will help you reach that goal.

B. Put First Things First (Prioritize) – Matt. 6:33-34

1. What is most important for me to do TODAY? Make sure you know, and don’t let lesser things take the time that the most important deserves. Procrastination is a thief of excellence.
2. Less important things may be more interesting, fun or...
3. How do you see the Bible/Scripture? Like a target or a basket of tennis balls all equal in size, weight and importance? **(Draw this example on the board)**
4. Bible Examples:
 - a. I Cor. 15:3-4
 - b. Matt. 23:23-24
 - c. Matt. 22:37-39

C. And Then Some (The Second Mile Principle) – Matt. 5:41

1. Do more always than can be reasonable expected of you. Examples, teacher assigns reading of 20 pages read 30. Mom asks you to wash the dishes, dry them too.
2. See historical background of Matt. 5:41. The first mile is a commanded mile. The second mile is loves’ mile – the more than expected mile. Imagine the effect on the one who commands.

D. Enthusiasm (Gk. en Theos – God in you) Eccles. 9:10

1. We who are Christians, with God the Holy Spirit in us, should be the most enthusiastic people on earth. It is Contagious like the Measles and Chicken Pox.
2. We know for whom we do what we do and should do it enthusiastically and with excellence, Col. 3:17, 23-24.
3. “The work that you do is a signature of your character, sign each task with excellence.” (Author unknown to me)
“Excellence is not an act...it’s a habit.” (Aristotle)

E. Work -

1. The fifth Bible Success principle is such a dirty four letter word that I won’t speak it, I’ll just write it on the chalk board.

2. Laziness is not a successful habit. It is in fact condemned in Scripture.
3. It saddens me that in our country and many others that have become welfare states and entitlement society's non-workers who could be working are rewarded for their laziness and in some cases receive more money for not working than those who do. That is not being successful in God's eyes.
4. Work is honourable if it is an honourable work.
5. Prov. 14:23; Rom. 16:12; I Cor. 4:12; I Thess. 5:12; 2 Thess. 3:7-10

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Remember:
 - Set a Goal
 - Prioritize – put first things first
 - Second Mile – the love mile – and then some
 - Enthusiasm
 - Work
- B. Success is progress toward a worthwhile Goal (Paul, Phil. 3:12)