



Measuring Success

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Mark 10:35-41

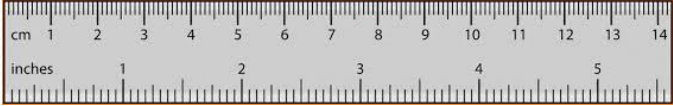


What is the American Dream?

It's the belief that one of the greatest things that makes this country great is that it is a place where everyone, regardless of race, religion, or economic status, through hard work and determination, can have a successful life!

*(John D. Rockefeller, Matthew Henson,
Oprah Winfrey, Condoleeza Rice,
Walter Payton)*

The “American Dream” Can Be Dangerous To Christian Growth!

- Our culture ingrains in our DNA that “the one who has the most toys in our group wins.”
- Also there is no clear marker to tell us “when enough is enough!”

- We end up like those little hamsters you see spinning a wire wheel, always striving for *worldly* progress but never feeling like we have achieved enough or that we are “*alright*” now.



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- We become worriers, obsessing about our academic status
- Obsessing about our salary
- Obsessing about our material image
 - In one group of people we feel superior
 - In another group we feel inferior
- So we buy things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people we don't like, to look successful

Observations

- We fail to appreciate God's provisions because we become **GLUTTONS** who always want **MORE!**
- *So the American Dream can be detrimental to our faith because we pursue it instead of God and Holiness*



“J.W. ,there is no way I would pursue something instead of God!”

*But What We Do Is Pursue Something Ahead Of God
(2Kings 16:10-16)*

- The king of Israel (Ahaz) was in Damascus and saw and awe inspiring altar there
- The Bible says that he sent a model of what he saw and its details back to Uriah, the high priest, to have one built just like it
- When he got back, Uriah had built the new altar for his inspection
- He fell in love with the new one, and had the old one (that signified the presence of God) put aside

WE DO THE SAME THING!

We Don't Stop Worshipping God Or Forget Him!

(We Just Move Him More To The Side!)

- We still love God, but after a long day at work, we just push regular Wednesday evening bible study **aside**
- We won't commit to ministries in the church (*where God uses groups of us to help others, and ourselves, Mark 6:43*) because of the overtime at work that is available to do
- Our church contribution has to take a **back seat** because of the new SUV we just purchased

In Effect, We Are Putting Our Dreams Ahead Of God!

Don't Miss The Point!

There Is Nothing Intrinsically Wrong With Being Successful (many of God's servants were)

- Abraham and Lot became so wealthy they had to divide the family business
- Joseph in the Old Testament became Vice President of Egypt
- Ruth, the Moabite woman married into money

It's Not The Past But The Drive/Pursuit For Future Success That Presents Problems

What We Are Willing To Do To Be Successful
Is Where Temptations Come About

- The drive for *straight A's* or to make "*the team*" can cause one to miss worship consistently
- The drive for a promotion can cause one to drink with, party with, sleep with, lie on or lie with (*the casting couch*) some influential people
- Some forsake quality time with their children for the *almighty dollar*
- Remember, success for Judas meant, "*money over the master!*"

Remember Jesus' Quote in Mark 10:43-44

“....but whoever desires to be great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Observation for Christians Only

- **Your secular occupation or position is not as important to God as is your willingness to use the talent you've developed, coupled with the Lord's character you've asked him for, to serve in His kingdom(see Galatians 5:22 for God's character)**
- **Jesus told His followers, and is telling us, that the key to success is servanthood, because the only Godly reason to achieve success is servanthood!**
- ***“Let your light so shine before men that men will see your good works and glorify the Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16***

Two Suggestions For Christians Challenged With The World's View Of Success

- #1 As you become successful in a particular field, pick out some duty in God's kingdom that is ***undesirable but necessary***

Example: Jesus (Mr. Successful) in John 13 decided to wash all 12 of the disciples' feet, which was a job usually reserved for the lowest servant in the household (cleaning up after fellowshiping, helping people to and from their vehicles, helping zone members acquire their needs, helping the bereaved stay on track, etc.)

#2 Look For Opportunities to Do Servanthood In Secret

Matthew 6:1-4

“Take heed that you do not your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father heaven. Therefore when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men.”

“..... Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.”

*If you are pursuing success, don't allow your good deeds to DEGENERATE into spiritual stardom;
“Look how good I am!”*

The Plan Of Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38