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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: ***What constitutes "success"?***

When I graduated from high school in Missouri our student body voted for the student who was "*most likely to succeed.*" This brings up the question of: ***What constitutes "success"?*** Most people would say "success" is:

- Going to college and getting at least a "Masters" degree. If you get a "Doctorate" that would be even better – more successful. But this is not enough.
- To be successful one has to then get a prestigious job – one that not only pays well, but a job which is considered honorable, impressive, esteemed.
- To be successful, one has to live in a nice house in a nice neighborhood – drive a nice car.
- To be successful, one has to become well-known. You have to be so important that when you're dead a building is named after you – or better yet – a city street is named after you.

If you do these things, the world say you are "successful."

Many people look at their lives and begin to feel rather depressed. They haven't achieved any of these things which makes one successful. Furthermore, it looks like they never will. When they die, very few will even remember who they were. Consequently, they feel they have been failures.

I'll go even further and say that some people should feel like a failure – for they have no purpose in living. They get up in the mornings and may or may not go to work. They never try to improve themselves. They come home and spend their evenings sitting in front of a television set. They never do anything for anyone but themselves. When they die, no one sorrows for them because they lived such a self-centered life.

The Bible speaks of a king of Judah named Jehoahaz. Listen to what is said about his life:

## **2 Chronicles 21:20**

20 He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, **to no one's sorrow, departed**. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Here is someone who, when he died, no one regretted it. No one missed him. No one was sad that he died. Think about this:

- Even though he was the king – his life was a waste.
- Even though he was rich – no one regretted his departure.
- No one has even heard of Jehoahaz today – he was a failure even though he was a king.

Jesus said this:

## **Matthew 16:26**

26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

The most valuable thing you have is your own soul. In a hundred years from now it will not matter what salary you made at your job. It won't matter what house you lived in. It won't matter what degree you earned in college. It won't matter if a city street is named in your honor. ***If you die and lose your soul, you were a failure – an eternal failure.***

My friend, you must come to realize that spiritual things, although they cannot be seen, are just as real as physical things that can be seen. Material, physical things eventually will pass away. Job said:

## **Job 1:21**

21 ... "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. ..."

Everything around you will eventually be taken away when you pass on to the next life. Only those things which are spiritual will matter once you are gone. If you gain the whole world, but lose your soul, Jesus said you are a failure.

My friend, invest in your soul and in spiritual things while you have time. Don't waste your life on earthly success to the neglect of your soul. In a hundred years from now it will not matter how much you accumulated, but it will most definitely matter if you served God.

### **Matthew 22:37-40**

37 Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Here are the things that matter. To "*love the Lord*" with all your heart, soul and mind means to obey what He has commanded with sincerity of heart. To love your neighbor as yourself means to treat your neighbor as you would like for him to treat you.

This does not mean to treat your neighbor like he treats you, but like you would want him to treat you.

All the other commands of the Bible are built upon these two great commandments.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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