

A Return To Basics

A long-time friend confided in me saying that for years he had sought success in his life but now at 45 years of age he was looking back on his life and realised he would now never achieve what he, when young, had visualised.

*“It was like patiently following a rainbow, only to discover that there was **not** a pot of gold at the end.”*

He had been forced to accept his limitations and realistically re-evaluate his gifts and talents.

My friend was not complaining but his daydreams of being a great success had turned out to be unrealistic.

Maybe God has been telling my friend that we don't have to do everything we planned in our youth, we don't have to reach all our goals in order to qualify for “success” in God's eyes.

My friend had been forced to re-evaluate his priorities.

What did his Creator God want him to do in the earthly life?

What should we be seeking in this life as a number one priority?

Saul was a well-educated man who had accomplished a great deal in his life before he became the apostle Paul.

Saul was a wealthy Pharisee, serving on the Sanhedrin, the ruling body in Palestine. He had been educated at the best university of his day.

Yet he, at the peak of his success, had to re-evaluate his life after a dramatic meeting with Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Philippians 3:7-9 [NIV] *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. **I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.**”*

Paul's single passion was now to know Jesus Christ.

Paul didn't want anything, even his former prized achievements, to distract him from this new goal.

Matthew 6:33-34 [NIV] *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

While in theory we like to think we put God first, our daily schedule does not often show this to be true.

Are the few moments each day we use to contact our Creator God wedged between other deadlines?

If so, then some adjustment is needed.

We all need block out at least 30 minutes each day for one purpose, to come to know God and to thank Him for all the many blessings that being alive has brought us.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 [NIV] *“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Throughout the Christian Bible are scores of direct references to praising God, and thanking Him for all our personal blessings.

All too often we take so many of our blessings in life for granted and forget to thank God for them.

For example; sight, hearing, touch, taste, mobility, our parents and friends, etc.

Psalms 103:1 [NIV] *“Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.”*

To bless God is to praise and thank Him.

The rest of this Psalm is a magnificent illustration of how to praise and honour God.

There are at least two promises of success in God’s Word, and in each case the formula is the same.

Joshua 1:8 [NIV] *“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”*

Meditation on God’s Word is something we can do at any time or circumstance, when we have read it often enough to be able to bring it to mind.

Psalms 1:1-3 [NIV] *“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”*

We don’t have to ask God for success, it is the natural result of meditating on God’s Word.

The prosperity that God will bring us may **not** be the same as this society sees prosperity.

Time spent with God is never wasted.

Isaiah 40:28-31 [NIV] *“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no-one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”*

When we place our hope in God we will find the physical goals we have in life become secondary to our growing relationship with our Creator God.

John 14:25-27 [NIV] *“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

This is the only place we can find true peace of mind, when we are in a close relationship with Jesus Christ and the Father, through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

This relationship with God is the last thing that the majority of people would consider as the pathway to success in life.

This is the way the apostle Paul found contentment and lasting fulfilment in his life and it can be the same for anyone else.

We need to look at our lives, analyse our priorities.

Until we do this we may **not** be accomplishing as much in our lives as we think we are, and **not** accomplishing as much as we can.

This is the success in life I wish all people would be seeking, for such success is eternal in nature.