

4-2-2011, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Secret of Success

Purpose: Provoke people to be successful by allowing the Word of God to grow deeply in their heart.

Spiritual Truth: My success will be determined by the way I allow God's Word to impact me.

Text: Josh 1:8, Mk 4:2-10

Topic: Success, Bible, Maturity, Word of God

The Secret of Success

I. Introduction

A. Everybody wants to be successful

1. We want to be a success in school, at work, marriage, our ministry, raising kids, making money, sports, sharing our faith, hobbies...
2. The Bible tells us how to have a successful life:
3. Joshua 1:8 (The Message) [Moses advice to his successor Joshua]
⁸ And don't for a minute let this **Book of The Revelation** be out of mind. Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written in it. Then you'll get where you're going; then you'll succeed.
 - a. The Book of Revelation was God's Law given to Moses; It is God's Word. His Revelation to mankind about life.
 - b. God's secret for success: Know what God's Word says, think about how it applies to your life, talk about it and do what it says.
4. There are reasons why God's Word can't produce success in people's lives. Jesus talked about it in the Parable of the Sower or the Parable of the Soils. The parable is an illustration of the impact God's Word has on our hearts. It tells us why some people fail and why some people succeed.

B. You Tube Video: Parable of the Four Soils (2.17) from Mark 4

C. Today we'll look at what Jesus said about success in this parable. He called it bearing fruit. We'll see how God's Word has the power to put us on the path of success and how to avoid pitfalls that make people fail.

D. Title: The Secret of Success

E. Purpose: Provoke people to be successful by allowing the Word of God to grow deeply in their heart.

F. Spiritual Truth: My success will be determined by the way I allow God's Word to impact me.

II. The Parable of the Soils is a picture of how God's Word impacts our heart

A. Mark 4:3-8 (NIV)

³ ...A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ ...some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places... ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns... and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

1. The seed is the Word of God. The soil is the heart of man. The goal is to be fruitful or successful by allowing God's Word to impact every area of our life. 3

people failed and only one found success.

B. The seed of God's Word has spiritual power to transform our life

1. Mark 4:14 (NIV) ¹⁴ **The farmer sows the word.**
 - a. The seed is the Word of God. It is the Revelation of God to man; The Holy Bible/ The Scripture; Words spoken by the Holy Spirit.
2. The Bible isn't just information and history. It has power to transform/ change us. It is like a battery. Hidden within is the potential to make us successful.
3. Hebrews 4:12 (NCV)
¹² **God's word is alive and working...**
4. It is alive because it is spoken by God and therefore has power to change us and cause things to happen.
5. We can be impacted by God's Word in 3 ways.
 - a. God's Word tells us the difference between right and wrong.
 - i. John 17:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ **... your word is truth.**
 - b. God's Word activates our faith. It gives us hope and inspires us to believe.
 - i. Romans 10:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**
 - c. God's Word from the Holy Spirit can tell us what to do in any situation. He can make the written Word a "rhema"/ now word or speak to us through prophecy, dreams, visions, spiritual gifts, etc

III. 3 spiritual barriers to stop our success

A. Barrier #1: Theft...If Satan steals God's Word from our heart we won't be successful

1. Mark 4:15 (NIV) [Jesus interprets the parable]
¹⁵ **Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.**
2. Satan knows God's Word has spiritual power to transform us and make us successful. He wants to stop the Word from taking root in us.
 - a. How does he steal the Word? He tries to influence the way you think.
 - b. Satan knows that the thoughts you think will control the way you act.
3. Romans 12:2 (NLT) ² **Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...**
4. There is a battle in your mind is between reason, feelings and revelation.
5. Illustrate: you're not happy in your marriage. You read in the Bible about wives honoring their husband and forgiving them. You don't feel like it. Your friends say the kids won't suffer from divorce. You have this thought, "God wants you to be happy. Lots of people get divorced and live happy lives". You get divorced.
 - a. There is a battle in your mind. Satan is trying to pull up every seed of God's Word in your mind.
6. Reason and feeling began to replace revelation and faith in The Age of Enlightenment/ Age of Reason in the 18th century. Reason became the primary source for legitimacy and authority. At its core was a critical questioning of the Bible and the Church and a strong belief in rationality and science. Wikipedia.
7. Most spiritual warfare is fought in the mind.
8. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV)
⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.⁵ **...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

B. Barrier #2: Immaturity...If we don't grow spiritually we won't be successful.

1. Mark 4:16-17 (NIV)
¹⁶Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.
 2. Your success is dependent on your spiritual growth and maturity.
 3. Illustrate: When you're not happy in your marriage you've got trouble. A spiritually mature person knows what God wants them to do and does it. A shallow believer quits because it's too hard.
 4. Most people never grow up spiritually. They remain spiritual babies all their life. They pray at the altar but don't become a disciple.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV)
²as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,
 5. If you will adopt the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, Bible study, prayer and church involvement you will become successful. Most people live by feeling and experience and never grow up spiritually. They quit when it gets hard.
 6. Discipline will make become mature. Deep roots will make you successful.
- C. Barrier #3: Distraction...If we don't stay focused we'll miss what's most important.**
1. Mark 4:18-19 (NLT)
¹⁸The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, ¹⁹but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.
 - a. Mark 4:19 (The Message)
¹⁹but are overwhelmed with worries about all the things they have to do and all the things they want to get...
 2. This is the greatest challenge we face as modern Americans. We're overwhelmed by what we have to do and want to do and what we want to have. As a result we have no time to do what the Word of God calls us to do.
 3. Illustrate: working 40+ hours, raising kids and having a little fun leaves little time to serve God.
 4. What is real success? By the world's standard it is a nice house and car and money in the bank. It is a trophy for winning and mastery of technology. But real success includes something more.
 - a. It's a strong family, missions trips and money invested in the KOG. Lasting success is a mature relationship with Jesus and a lifetime of good works.
 - b. Sometimes we can't have both. Make sure you keep your priorities in order.

IV. Conclusion: Successful people let God's Word grow in their heart

A. Mark 4:20 (NIV)

²⁰Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.”

1. God wants us to be successful at school, at work, in ministry, marriage, raising kids, winning souls, making money, sports, hobbies...Success will happen if you let God's Word grow in your heart.
2. God's Word will grow when we read, hear, meditate and apply it in our daily life.
3. Joshua 1:8 (The Message)
⁸And don't for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind. **Ponder and meditate on it day and night**, making sure you **practice everything written in it**. Then you'll get where you're going; **then you'll succeed**.

- V. Response: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?**
A. Prayer/ Souls