

The Correspondent



SUNDAY

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM & 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study (Adult) 1:30 PM
Bible Study (All Ages) 7:00 PM
www.collinsvillecoc.org
(618) 667-6708

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

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TRUE SUCCESS

- Renn Ferguson

What is success? For most people success revolves around money. A person's yearly salary or the value of their house and car is what deems them as successful. Our view of success has become so distorted. Thankfully, there is a place to which we can go to figure out what true success is - the Bible. God has quite a bit to say about priorities and in Matthew 16:24-26 our Savior said, "Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 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?" This passage is fairly well known and in it Christ gives us a couple of points about a successful life.

Let us begin by looking at the first point, desire. Looking back at Matthew 16:24 Christ said, "If any man desires to come after me..." If we do not have a longing to follow God nothing else will fall into place. Even if we go through the motions but do not do it out of love for God, it is not acceptable. I am reminded of what is written in 1 Peter 2:2, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby". If we want to please God we must first have a desire. Just as a child longs for milk or as a deer pants for water (Psalm 42:1-2) we are to long for God. So, the first thing that we must do if we wish to be successful is have a desire to serve Christ.

The second thing Christ mentions is denial. This one is also mentioned in verse 24, "...let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Sometimes our will and desires do not match up with His. I think about Romans 12:1-2 on occasions like this, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." In order to be successful we, at times, will have to deny ourselves. As Paul wrote to Titus, "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12). Sometimes the things we may desire contradict the law of God (James 1:14). On such occasions we must practice self-control, and self-denial. So, the second thing we must do in order to be successful is deny ourselves and submit to the will of Christ.

This world is so very confused on what success is. It has absolutely nothing to do with your job, money, house or cars. It has everything to do with being in a good standing with God. If you desire to follow Christ, and deny yourself you will be successful.