
SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2023

Blueprint for Success

The opposite of choosing failure is . . .

The Big Picture

*But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

Psalm 33.11

- The plans and purposes of God began before human history and have an ***eternally determining fulfillment*** at the conclusion of human history.

*The books were
opened . . .
And anyone
whose name
was not found
recorded in
the Book of Life
was thrown into
the lake of fire.*

Revelation 20.12, 15

- God does not deviate from His plans and purposes; He views the “end from the beginning”— always working in every moment of time and always measuring each person and what is being done according to the end, even if it is thousands of years in the future.

*“I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say, ‘My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.’”*

Isaiah 46.10

*“My Father
is always
at his work
to this very day,
and I too
am working.”*

John 5.17

- Every generation and every person within each generation has a God-assigned role to fulfill.

*Who has done this and carried it through,
calling forth the generations from the beginning?
I, the LORD—with the first of them
and with the last—I am he.”*

Isaiah 41.4

*The books were
opened . . .
[all] were
judged
according to
what they
had done,
as recorded
in the books.*

Revelation 20.12

- At the end, every generation and every person will be accountable for what they have done according to God's purposes.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5.9-10

Pursuing Success

- If failure is a choice, what makes a generation successful in accomplishing the purposes of God? Equally important, how do we define success?
- We love to claim a promise such as Psalm 20.4: *"May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."* What does it mean for God to give us success, to make all our plans succeed?

*Our greatest fear
should not be
of failure
but of
succeeding
at things in life
that don't
really matter.*

—Francis Chan

Blueprint for Success

- After dealing with a generation that horribly failed, God gave Joshua this blueprint for success—

Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

Joshua 1.7-8

The Opposite of Failure

- What is the opposite of failure? It is not success; it is obedience—being careful to obey all that God has commanded. It is careful and conscientious obedience and not “assumed” obedience. “Assumed” is the opposite of deliberate and intentional. It is fictitious; it looks like something real but, in reality, it is a hollow representation with no actual substance.

*Their work
will be shown
for what it is,
because
the Day
will bring it
to light.*

1 Corinthians 3.15

- We readily affirm love for God and obedience to His commands but diminish their absolute nature and their applicability to our own lives—as though certain aspects of faith, obedience, and commitment are intended for other people, but not us. A true disciple of Jesus, however, is measured by his obedience to all that Jesus has commanded.
- What are some of the areas in which we diminish the absolute nature of God's commands in their application to our own lives?
- What are some of the ways in which we practice "selective" or "discretionary" faith, commitment, and obedience?

The Mirage of Success

- Anyone can be successful—especially in America! Hard work opens doors of opportunity and advancement.

Do you see someone skilled in their work?

They will serve before kings;

they will not serve before officials of low rank. (PROVERBS 22.29)

- Many of us are successful, but not because we have put God first; *we are successful because we are serving the world system in the manner that it rewards.*

- For example, the world system rewards the time you invest in study and sports by conferring good grades and scholarships. In the eyes of many— parents, teachers, coaches— this will make you a success. Will God look at those achievements and call you successful? Does He say that your first priority is to study hard and do well on your SAT? Will He affirm you for your good grades and call you a success— even if you do not make His word and obedience the priority of your life?

The 24 / 7 Priority

- Our busy lives and pressing priorities seem to have determined that God's revealed priorities are obsolete—that we can only compete in this world on its terms, not according to God's priorities.
- That is a lie— a satanic lie. Christ himself faced this lie in his temptation by the devil. His response emphasized the truth that we are no better, no stronger, no more successful than we are in loving and obeying the Word of God.

- Love is revealed by commitment; commitment is evidenced by priority; priority is proven by the investment of time and effort. How do you and I measure up to God's 24/7 priority?

And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6.5-8

God's Measure of Success

- Success by any other measurement, no matter how important or necessary it may seem, is, in the verdict of God, failure.

“In the future your children will ask you, ‘What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the LORD our God has commanded us to obey?’ And the LORD our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the LORD our God has given us.”

Deuteronomy 6.21, 24-25

- The blueprint for success that God gave to Joshua is the same blueprint followed by Jesus. Take it to heart for it will be the basis of whether or not we hear Christ say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

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