

God's Unfailing Success Formula

Proverbs 3:5-6

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the businessman and his son figuring the profit, Illustrations Unlimited, p. 467, #7.
- B. This son and his father measured success differently. I can't help but wonder if God doesn't measure success much differently than we.
 - 1. We know that God looks at things quite a bit differently than we do.
 - a. "The LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
 - b. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD" (Is. 55:8).
 - 2. There are various ways we measure success.
 - a. A student who gets straight "A's" is considered a success, regardless of how much he learns.
 - b. The more money an athlete earns the more successful he is, regardless of how well he plays.
 - c. The more well-known an actor is, the more successful he is, regardless of how well he acts.
 - 3. God cannot measure success that way.
 - a. Financial strength is not a measure of success — "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mk. 8:36).
 - b. Fame and popularity are not a measure of success — "The world is passing away" (1 Jn. 2:17).
 - c. Doing his will is what God considers successful — "He who does the will of God abides forever" (1 Jn. 2:17).
- C. Tonight, we want to examine how to have success in God's eyes.

RELY UPON GOD, v. 5

- A. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart."
 - 1. The phrase "Trust in the LORD" occurs some 180 times in the Old Testament; therefore, we know it's an important part of God's success formula.
 - 2. The Hebrew word for trust expresses that sense of well-being and security which results from having something or someone in whom to place confidence.
 - 3. In the Old Testament, the reason one could have such confidence in God was faithfulness and trustworthiness.
 - a. "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that he promised. There has not failed one word of all his good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses" (1 Ki. 8:56).
 - b. "Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds" (Ps. 36:5).
 - 4. The idea in God's faithfulness is that God keeps his promises.
 - a. Notice what Solomon said in his prayer of dedication at the temple — "There has not failed on word of his good promise."
 - b. We can place our confidence in God, because God does not change.
 - 1) He is not going to be here for us one minute and forget about us the next.
 - 2) He is constant in his love, in his concern, in his watchfulness.
 - c. "He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5).
- B. We are to trust in the Lord with all of our heart.
 - 1. This confidence we are to have in God should be whole hearted.
 - 2. If we do not trust in God with our whole heart, we really do not trust in him at all.
 - a. If we just place part of our confidence in God, we will try to solve all of our problems ourselves, instead of allowing God to play his role.
 - b. We and God cannot both be in the driver's seat of our lives — there's room for only one there.
 - c. Why wouldn't we want God to be in the driver's seat of our lives?
 - 1) He is the one who knows what the future holds.
 - 2) He is the one who truly understands what it in our best interest.
- C. Are you placing all of your confidence in God?

READ THE WORD OF GOD

- A. "Lean not on your own understanding?"

1. "Understanding" refers to insight, prudence, and intelligence.
 2. Human wisdom and understanding cannot be the standard by which we live, for human wisdom is so often faulty.
 - a. "It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23).
 - b. "We were born yesterday, and know nothing, Because our days on earth are a shadow" (Job 8:9).
 3. There is so much that man does not know — How does the sun operate? What were the dinosaurs like? What is the surface of Jupiter like?
- B. Because man does not know much, he needs guidance, and God gives the guidance man needs in Scripture.
1. Solomon tells us here not to lean on our own understanding. How can we do that if it's not through reading/studying Scripture?
 2. The Bible provides God's guidance for life.
 - a. "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation" (Ps. 119:99).
 - b. "Through Your precepts I get understanding" (Ps. 119:104).
 - c. "The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple" (Ps. 119:130).
 3. If we want answers to the questions of life, we need to look no further than the Bible.
 - a. In the Bible, we have everything we need to know about how to live lives acceptable to God — "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).
 - b. There is nothing that we absolutely need to know that the Bible does not tell us.
- C. Andrew Young, former US Ambassador to the UN, told the University of Maryland's graduating class to get a Bible. "It won't hurt you at all," he said, "and it will give you more illumination and purpose in life. It's better to invest fifteen dollars in a Bible now than twenty-five dollars an hour for a psychiatrist later."
- D. Are you leaning on your own understanding or are you studying the Bible to obtain God's understanding?

RECOGNIZE THE HAND OF GOD

- A. "In all your ways acknowledge
1. We are to acknowledge the God's work in our lives.
 2. God works in our lives through providence.
 - a. The idea in providence is that God works in our lives through non-supernatural means.
 - b. Although this idea is not well-explained in the Scriptures, the Scriptures do point to this idea.
 - 1) "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt. 5:45).
 - 2) "He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17).
- B. God works in our lives today through providence.
1. "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28).
 2. The best example of providence in the Bible is the case of Joseph who was sold as a slave into Egypt but ended up saving his family from extinction — "It was not you who sent me here, but God" (Gen. 45:8).
 3. Going to Pikeville after not being able to raise funds for Canada was the will of God, for I met Tammy.
 4. Papaw's cancer was an answer to our prayers that he become a Christian.
- C. We need to recognize the hand of God, the providence of God, at work in our lives.
1. When things are not going the way we want them to, we may not see the hand of God, we may not know what God has in store for us. It's after the fact that we can look back and say, "God had a hand in that."
 2. If we recognize God's providence at work in our lives, we'll have reason to hope, rejoice when things aren't going as we planned.
 3. We'll have something to look forward to, because we know that God will work everything out.
- D. Do you recognize the hand of God in your life?

CONCLUSION

- A. God wants us to be successful. He doesn't care about our being successful in the ways of the world, but he cares about our being successful in the way he views success?
- B. Are you a success in God's eyes or do you need to come to him tonight?