

**6 - Greater Success**  
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We're in a series called Greater and today I'm preaching on Greater Success. I want to begin by asking you if you want to be successful. Some of you think it's a trick question. Like I'm going to say – "Oh you evil person, don't you know that the devil has seduced into believing a lie that you should succeed in life."

And then some Christians get into false humility where we don't want to admit we want to succeed – like success is something bad.

Some people have a problem with believing that God wants them to succeed. Some even put down any teaching about success. I want to ask them:  
 Do you actually believe God wants you to be a failure in life?  
 Do you believe God wants you to fail in business and live broke?  
 Do you believe God wants your marriage to fall apart?  
**No! God wants us to succeed in life.**

God wants me to succeed as a pastor, a husband, and a father. God wants our church to succeed in accomplishing our vision of Touching Heaven – Changing Earth.

He wants you to succeed as a believer – minister - spouse – parent – student – employee – boss. I believe God wants you to succeed – but do you believe it? Does God want your marriage to succeed or fail? Does God want your career or education to succeed or fail? 1 Samuel 18:30 gives us an example of greater success:

***The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.***

Saul's officers had success, but David had greater success. Why is that?  
 1 Samuel 18:14 says:

***In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him.***

**That's the main key to greater success – the Lord must be with you!**

Also, you must know God's definition of success.

Here's how the dictionary defines it: Success is attaining a desired outcome, to reach a goal – so far, so good. But then it goes on to say that success means to attain wealth, fame or power. **The world usually defines success in terms of wealth, fame or power. But you can be wealthy, famous or powerful and not be successful in God's eyes.**

There is success that is greater than money or fame! You can have no wealth or fame and still be successful in God's eyes. How is that? Well – it all depends on your definition of success!

Here's my definition of success: becoming who God wants you to be and doing what God wants you to do. **It doesn't matter what else you accomplish in life – if you miss the will of God – you are not a success.** Matthew 16:26 says:

***For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?***

You can own every single thing in the world, but if you lose your soul because you are not right with God, that is certainly not success! Success is knowing and doing the will of God.

**I've got some great news for you! God wants you to succeed!**

God wants you to succeed in knowing and doing His will!

God wants you to succeed in becoming who He created you to be!

He wants you to be successful in every area of your life.

He wants you to be successful in your family life and financial life.

He wants you to be successful in your spiritual life.

He wants you to be successful in your work and business.

He wants you to be successful in your relationships.

He wants you to be successful in your health and fitness.

God wants you to be successful in every area of your life.

How do I know this? Because He tells us so. 3 John 2 says:

***Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.***

God tells us in this passage that He wants His children to prosper in all things! The word here for prosper is another biblical word for success. The word prosper is a compound word in the original Greek language. It comes from two words: One means good - the other means a road or a journey. When you put them together you get good road or a prosperous journey.

**You see - success is a journey, not a destination.** And God wants your life journey to be a good one, a prosperous one, a successful one. He wants us to get where He wants us to go. And God wants to help us get where He wants us to go.

By the way – **God is not obligated to help you get somewhere He doesn't want you to go!** God will not help you become someone He doesn't want you to be!

God wants us to succeed in life. And **one of the major roles of the church is to help you succeed in life!**

We need to get past thinking of church as a place where we go on Sunday to do our religious obligations! Yes, the church is a place where you worship and hear the Word. But the church is also an equipping center – a training center. We're here to help you discover God's destiny for your life. And we are here to equip you – disciple you – coach you – mentor you – to help you succeed in every area of your life!

We have a vision for a church full of mentors, disciple-makers and coaches who help other people succeed in life! Life coaches – faith coaches – marriage and family coaches – finance coaches – business coaches - All working to help you succeed in life!

But we need people willing to do that! Some of you here could be greatly used by God to help many people succeed in life! But many people always think they themselves need more coaching.

There are many people in churches who feel stagnant - they are not growing or changing or succeeding. Usually, they blame the church, so they change churches. But eventually they feel stagnant at the new church and they stay in this cycle of changing churches, not realizing that the problem is not the churches.

They don't need to hear something new! They need to start doing what they already know! **Believers who are not growing are usually taking in, but never giving out. That's what causes stagnancy!**

You will experience growth and success by having a mentor – someone pouring into you - but you will receive greater growth and success by having a mentee – someone you pour into. Remember 2 Timothy 2:2 -

***Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim in the presence of many witnesses, and teach them to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also.***

We all need a Paul who pours into our life. And we all need a Timothy – someone we pour our lives into. To grow in faith, we must not only "take in" all we can, but we must also "give out" all we can to others! Here are some ways to do that at Grace Fellowship:

Children and youth ministry

Grace Journey

One on one discipleship

Men's and women's breakfasts

Serve on a ministry team like pastoral care, prayer, ushers, safety

Small groups are a great place to find a mentor and be a mentor.

If you tried groups and think you don't get anything out of it – maybe you need to be putting something into it!

Maybe it's time for you to get out of the receiving mode and get into the giving mode! As Jesus said in Matthew 10:8

***Freely you have received, freely give.***

We will never have greater success if we stay in a consumer mindset. We need to grow by receiving and then giving. That results in greater success!

Do you believe that God wants you to have greater success? Some Christians get a super spiritual attitude that acts like all this talk about success is somehow beneath them. But God wants us to prosper in all areas of life as our soul prospers. That means He is indeed interested in spiritual things first, but He is also interested in all areas of our lives – natural and spiritual.

Yes, God's first concern is that we be right with Him. Until that is right, nothing else will be right. But **being right with God is not the only key to success!**

You can be right spiritually and still be wrong in a lot of other ways! To succeed in life – we must do what God said in Joshua 1:7-8

***Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.***

***This Book of the Law shall always be on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.***

Who will make your way prosperous and successful? YOU WILL!

Is it you by yourself? No, it is the Lord's strength operating through you. But God's strength does not make you successful apart from you! On your own you can do nothing, but through Christ you can do all things!

And notice that God wants us to have good success! Evidently, **there's a difference between bad success and good success.**

You can be successful doing illegal, immoral or unbiblical things – but that will not be good success. That is bad success.

If you succeed by stealing or defrauding others – that is bad success.

If you succeed but you lose your marriage and family in the process - that is bad success.

If you succeed but lose your health in the process - that is bad success.

If you succeed but lose your soul in the process - that is bad success.

God wants us to have good success, which is greater than bad success. And God gives us the path to success, but we must walk it. Success doesn't just show up! I like what Thomas Edison said: **Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.**

Success is missed by most people because they don't want to walk the road to success - they just want success to show up at their door! But you must work the work and walk the walk for good success.

The Bible says in Joshua that you will be successful when?

- When you are strong and courageous.
- When you read the word of God and meditate on the word of God.
- When you speak the word of God.
- When you obey the word of God.

Not just part of it. All of it. When you are careful to do everything in it. Some folks want to pick and choose what they obey. For instance, take finances. They may hear the principle of tithing and start doing it. That's great.

But they can't keep a job, can't stop spending, they are over their heads in debt, they pay their bills late and then they wonder why they aren't blessed because - after all - they are tithing.

I like the way my friend Robert Morris describes it. He says that if you tithe - but you ignore all other biblical principles of finance - you are like someone who reduces personal hygiene down to combing their hair. They comb their hair all the time and a hair is never out of place. But they never bathe or shave or use deodorant. And then they say - "I don't understand it - I combed my hair, why do I still stink?"

Many of us are like that person. We obey 1 or 2 financial principles, but we break all the others and wonder why our finances stink so bad! Yes, we should tithe - but if we want to keep our finances from stinking - we need to follow God's other financial principles.

If we want our marriages and families to be successful - we must follow all God's principles of marriage and family. If we want our careers and businesses to be successful - we must follow all God's principles of business.

I'm sure there's a measure of blessing that comes when you follow one principle, but all these laws work together. We must obey all God's principles in order to have greater success. **If you want biblical results in your life - you must live your life in a biblical way.**

In order to succeed, we must believe God wants us to succeed and we must do things God's way. We will not succeed if we don't believe God wants us to succeed. We won't succeed if we believe we are failures. Proverb 23:7 says:

***For as he thinks within himself, so is he.***

The most important thing about you is what you believe about God!  
The second most important thing is what you believe about yourself!

**You will never go above and beyond what you believe about yourself.  
You will never go above and beyond what you believe God wants for you.**

God told Joshua that He would succeed by knowing and doing the Word.  
And we will succeed the same way - by knowing and doing the Word!

But notice the first thing God told Joshua – Be strong and courageous! In fact – three times in the first nine verses of the book of Joshua – God told him to be strong and courageous!

What is courage? Courage has several synonyms: bravery, valor, confidence. There's one especially important thing we need to notice about courage. **You will never see courage in someone doing nothing.** Courage is seen in the person whose back is against the wall, when the odds are against them, when the pressure is on.

We see courage in David when he took his stand against Goliath.  
We see courage when Moses told Pharaoh, "Let my people go."  
We see it in Elijah when he challenged the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.  
Courage can only be seen in the midst of conflict and struggle.

Why did God tell Joshua that he needed to be courageous?  
It takes no courage to live in a peaceful time.  
It takes no courage when you have no enemies to fight.

But Joshua would soon lead his army to drive out the enemy occupying the Promised Land. And there were giants in the land!

**Success always requires courage because success always has enemies.**  
And God has a promised land for you. A destiny, a future.  
But you have an enemy who wants to keep you from getting there!  
And when you get there – there will be enemies there.

That's why you need to be strong and courageous! To overcome fear – passivity – and every circumstance that is against you. There are many times in our lives when we need to hear God's command to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous."

Always keep this in mind. Even though Joshua and his nation were small in comparison to the enemy, they had Somebody on their side who would tip the scales in their favor. And we have Somebody on our side who will tip the scales in our favor. If God is for us, who can be against us!

Real success is not a matter of strength and courage alone, but strength and courage that comes from the knowledge that God is with us. **Success always requires courage because success always has enemies.**  
Success requires work!

Success requires God's word!

As Christians, we want to succeed God's way – according to God's word.

But **the Word only works when we put it to work!**

Many men have the tendency to put things together – like children's toys at Christmas – without looking at the instructions. Then we get it put together and there's an extra piece! And it won't work without that piece! So you have to take it apart, read the instructions, and put it together according to the instructions.

God has given us an instruction manual for life, for marriage, for parenting, for work, for good success. It's called the Bible! Mistakes are made when we don't read the instruction manual.

When we don't put our lives together according to God's instructions, there's always something missing!

When we don't put our families together according to God's instructions, there's always something missing!

Many of our failures could have been avoided if we had saturated ourselves in God's word and then did what His word said. The wisdom we need is available for greater success!

But **there are no shortcuts on the journey to greater success!**

It calls us to be strong and courageous.

It calls us to saturate our spirit with His word.

It's not just about reading it; it's about meditating on it and letting God's word saturate our lives.

And then it's about doing it!

When we do – we will have good success! Greater success!

And one day we will hear the Lord say, Well done good and faithful servant!

So my prayer for you today is Psalm 20:4.

***May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.***

If you have no desires in your heart – there will be no success.

If you have no plans – there will be no success.

So, pray for godly vision and godly plans and believe that God will give you greater success than you've ever experienced in Jesus' name!