

How to succeed in the Christian Life.
Part III

Intro: I trust that this series has been a help and encouragement to you but above all else I do not want us to look back on this series as just another list of rules.

Instead, more as ingredients of a recipe that God wants to use, so we don't go thru our Christian lives half baked and disappointing both to God and to ourselves.

Today I would like to close this short series by looking at a couple more principles to help us.

I. Forget self and live for others.

I John 3:16 says that like our example, the Lord Jesus, *we ought to lay our lives down for our brethren.*

Someone once wrote about a man who came home from the war with an empty coat sleeve, and one day a neighbor who didn't possess very much tact said to him. I see you lost your arm, the veteran quickly snapped back I didn't lose it, I gave it.

Speaking about sacrifice, Matthew 10:39 says, *He who is so concerned about his life will lose it but if you give it up for my sake you will find it.*

We have mistakenly gotten the idea that success and happiness comes as we seek to find a life, that is full of these. Yet Jesus said you must lose your life for His sake in order to find spiritual life and success.

Instead of being helped to find success, **we find it**, as we help others.

In the words of CT Studd missionary servant to China, India, and Africa "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.

Question: How can we be a servant? First, Like Jesus we need to have a servant's attitude and desires.

Philippians 2:5 says, *Have this attitude in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus.* He had a servant attitude, do we?

Concerning desires Philippians 2:4 says, *don't just seek your own desires or the things you want but instead, practice looking out for the things others desire.*

Don't forget, Colossians 3:23-24 says, *Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord, rather than for man knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*

Jesus says in Matthew 25:40 as *You do unto one of the least of these my brethren you do it unto me.*

Then there is Hebrews 6:10 where it says, *God is not unfair and will not overlook your work and the love you have shown towards Him by helping your fellow Christian as you still are doing.*

Are you empty because you are waiting for someone to serve you and to fill you up,
Or, are you being filled up and successful because you are being emptied out in service to others?

TS Then there is another principle for succeeding in the Chr. life and that is

II. Grow in grace and knowledge

II Peter 3:18 says *but grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Question: What is this grace and knowledge we are to grow in?

Grace comes from a word meaning a kindness granted, a favor done W/O expectation of return.

So we need to grow in the realization of what God has freely done for us and that realization should change our lives and with that change it should help us be gracious to others. When this happened we are on the road of success

Knowledge comes from a word, which means to know experientially.

We need to remember what God **did for us** and to know, in our experience, what He is **doing in us**. Then we should transfer what we know, **into how we act**.

We find Christians who are not successful or they are not fulfilled because they aren't growing in the realization of what Christ has done for them.

But I also believe growing in grace means to become gracious. **John Ruskin said** He is only advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, his blood warmer, his brain quicker and his spirit entering into living peace.

Question: How gracious are we becoming? The word gracious means Godly, marked by kindness and courtesy, tact, gracefulness, mercy, compassion. Sadly it seems as though often when Christians grow older they become less gracious as they more often seem to speak bluntly without love. They demand their rights without considering the needs or desires of those who will follow them.

Too many times, instead of becoming more gracious, older Christians become short sighted and think that once they are gone the church will cease to exist so I want every thing done my way now. I would suggest that this is not growing in **grace** but growing in **grump**. Sadly grump does not lead us to success

God wants us to be successful and the more we act like Christ, the more success and fulfillment the Father lavishes upon us in honor of His son.

We act like Jesus, when we talk to others in kindness. When we are courteous to others. Yes, a lot of courtesy has to do with how we talk to others.

- When it comes to growing in grace think about and answer these questions:
- What would happen to me If God judged me as I judge others?
- What would happen to me If God thought of me as I think of others?
- What would happen to me If God spoke to me, and of me, as I speak to and of others
- What would happen to me If God cared for me as I care for others

Finally for us to be successful we need to

III. Witness and give attention to missions.

The world is a mission field we are either missionaries or we are the mission fields.

David Livingstone said, "God had an only son and He was a missionary and physician"

Question: I was wondering, who ever had a more successful and fulfilling life than our Lord.

Let's look at witnessing for a moment. What is witnessing?

It is not necessarily going door to door with a canned program and the expectation

that people are going to fall to their knees and accept Christ, although that may happen.

Thought: Witnessing is the development of a relationship with another person where opportunity is provided to present the reason for your hope and encouragement that is in Christ.

I Peter 3:15 says we should be ready with an answer for the reason we have hope when people ask us.

Witnessing is as one person said, one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

Question: Who are we to witness to and who is the mission field? It is the world.

Missions is looking at the world thru the eyes of Christ and witnessing is telling those you see that, there is hope and there is help. We see it in the words of this song

 "Let me see this world, dear Lord,
As though I were looking through Your eyes.
 A world of men who don't want You Lord,
 But a world for which You died.
 Let me kneel with You in the garden,
 Blur my eyes with tears of agony;
For if once I could see this world the way You see,
 I just know I'd serve You more faithfully.

 Let me see this world, dear Lord,
Through Your eyes when men mock Your Holy Name.
 When they beat You and spat upon You, Lord,
Let me love them as You loved them just the same.
 Let me stand high above my petty problems,
 And grieve for men, hell bound eternally;
For if once I could see this world the way You see,
 I just know I'd serve You more faithfully."

Giving attention to missions is seeing the need, and witnessing is helping fulfill our work and the result is, lives changed for the better, including even our own life.

In closing, we find then that over these past weeks God wants us to be successful in our lives and ministries

But He does not want necessarily just follow a set of rules. Instead, He has given us principles we should seek to apply.

These principles teach us to focus on something or someone besides ourselves so we will learn to become other people conscious

Are you enjoying all God has for you? If not, won't you consider these principles and put God to the test to see if these are part of the blessings he wants you to enjoy, as you do it His way.

Above all, don't give up. Just remember, past failure often furnishes the finest material from which to build future success.

Just as we closed these last messages I want to remind you that if you want to be on the road to success in your Christian life, be sure first of all you are on the road.

To get there, read these next few lines and follow the directions and hop aboard. God loves you and is looking for you.

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God.
Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)