

Week 6: WGSU: Success vs. Failure

Good Morning and welcome to week six of our When God shows up series.

Today we will be talking about the difference between Success vs. Failure. We live in a world where people are trained from kindergarten to be successful and to aim for success. By doing a simple google search of the definition of success, we discover that success is the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. And yet so many graduate, get careers and are still wondering... why don't I feel successful yet? Maybe that's you this morning.

Might I propose one feels a lack of success because they are looking at success from the wrong perspective? I believe we will never fully experience success until we define what success looks like from God, the great designer himself. He is the one who created us and would best know what purpose for which we were created. After all, if God created an apple corer to core an apple, how successful can it be in peeling a potato. I'm just saying.

When God shows up success has more to do with staying (abiding) in a vital, and real connection with Him rather than ministry performance, moral perfection, religious observations, Bible knowledge, or even degrees or pedigrees. Can I get an amen? How many of us know you can say the "right" thing but still be totally wrong because of the way you said it! Just ask my husband Glenn! He can testify to this truth! Number one challenge for us has always been my tone! What can I say, I'm a work in progress. Hallelujah.

How about this one: You can know a lot of Bible but still live a fruitless Christian life.

On the flip side, A Christian can appear to "fail" but in reality be a huge "success" in the eyes of the Father. You say Pastor Theresa how is that possible? Well, look at the death of Jesus on the cross. The Pharisees and even the disciples at one point thought Jesus had failed. Little did they know His obedience is what led to the greatest victory and success story of all times!

So how does God define a "successful" life versus one that is a "failure?"

Romans 8 instructs us on how to live successfully rather than failing. The apostle Paul describes this life of success as a life ruled by the Spirit and the life of failure as a life ruled by the Flesh. Simply put success = spirit; failure = flesh.

Everyone has a problem, challenge, and battle to overcome. That battle is our sin nature. Romans 7:18-24 NLT - describes this sin battle like this:

And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?

Anybody ever feel like that? I know I did and sometimes still do! Almost feels at times like there's two people living inside of me; just keeping it real people.

The good news we all have the same answer Romans 7:25 NLT - JESUS

Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we came to Christ and put our faith in Him, we received the Gift of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, as the first deposit of our inheritance. (Ephesians 1:4 The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.)

God knew we could never do what is right in His eye through our own power. So "He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4).

So the key to our success in this life: **DON'T FOLLOW YOUR FLESH, INSTEAD FOLLOW THE SPIRIT.** - The choice is yours.

"Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die [or fail]. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live [be successful]. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (Romans 8:12-14).

We certainly will face a physical death at some point or another and the decision you make to follow the spirits leading will determine what happens after death for you. But this morning consider that you could be dead or dying right now. That's right..a dead man walking of sorts. Physically you are alive but inside you are dying of complacency, apathy, and settling for the "good life" instead of living God's "best life". To Someone who is very much physically alive but spiritually, and emotionally dead. That person who seems to have everything they need and yet feels so empty and unfilled. Why? Because they have yet to discover that which they were created for; their purpose. On the other hand I know success to be that person who seems to not have all the things this world could offer and yet is so full of life, joy, peace and passion because daily they live out their God ordained purpose. To me, in the eyes of the Father, that is success.

To be clear this kind of success will bring praise and glory to God and will always include serving, equipping, discipling and adding value to people.

Example - me with women's ministry; girlfriend's unlimited

Example - Giscelle and her decision to leave Princeton

You say okay, P. Theresa that seems easy enough but why am I still struggling? What do I need to do from here? In one word - Surrender. You will surrender everyday. The question is to what will you surrender? Will you surrender to your flesh or will you surrender to the Spirit! Will you surrender to good ideas or will you surrender to the God ideas? In every moment, with every decision you surrender to something! Instead of just following your human nature pause and pivot! That's right **PAUSE AND PIVOT!**

You want to binge watch your favorite show but you know it would be more life giving to read a book that will feed your soul and spirit... **PAUSE**, reflect on what the Lord would have you do and **PIVOT** in the direction of the Lord!

This is the journey we must take to go from Self Speak to God Speak. We all have things we say to ourselves but is it God's truth? **NO!** How will we know God's truth? By feeding on HIS Word which is **TRUTH!**

It all begins with your first step of surrender - Making Jesus the Lord and savior of your life. So if you want to live that life of Success in the Spirit, would you repeat this prayer after me: Father, thank you for the forgiveness of my sins through the death and resurrection of your son Jesus Christ. I choose to believe He is my Lord and savior and that His spirit will now live in. As I follow him, I know I will live a life of success in You and for You. In Jesus name I pray! Amen!!!

Well if you said that prayer I would like to welcome you into the Family of God! Be sure to fill out a connection card so we can rejoice with you. And we are so excited to watch as God continues to Show up in your life!

For us all I pray that we would take the time to PAUSE, PIVOT and PURSUE the Spirit's leading in the coming weeks so that we will live the Life of Success the Father intended for each of us, His precious children!