

Dealing with Success

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Gen 39: 1-6a, 20-23, 41: 15-16, 33-46, 50-52

Welcome by Roger who involved everyone with thinking about what the Holy Spirit is like!

Celebrations (Anyone been a success?!) B'days: Sun 23rd Claire, Mon 24th – Tracy Ellis, Sat 29th Keith Boxall

SONGS x 2 Be Thou my Vision & Open the eyes of my heart Lord

Intro – Speaking on a subject I know little about...! Don't ever be misled by the fact of someone stood at the front of a Church! I wasn't able to eat a banana for my school lunch at infant school because I couldn't open it, couldn't ride a two-wheeler bike before secondary school, didn't get into the school football team, couldn't swim until a teenager, and in a biology exam labelled the digestive system as the sexual reproductive system of a hen! The first girl I ever asked out said, "No". I got kicked out of one my 'A' levels and failed the other two. I didn't pass my driving test first time, had several prangs in the first few years following, and have been on 2 speed awareness courses since. I don't do heights, can't understand car engines, struggle with computers and social media, and if anything goes wrong in the home with either water or electricity then I've got to call someone else out to fix it. I've always found it hard to read the Bible and to pray. Not great if you're the Pastor of a Church! I've messed up situations, made bad decisions, and often feel I'm operating more out of stress than I am from a place of peace... but in terms of 'Dealing with Success' I'm generally good with a ball, can dance OK, make a mean chilli and am pretty good at wrapping up Christmas presents! These are my positive contributions to the world! More importantly, I know that God is with me, that He loves me, and has even used me. Wow! What grace! With God with me I cannot fail – neither can you

We're going to look at very diverse parts of Joseph's life, starting when he was in his late teens as a slave with nothing, and finishing with when he was 30 years old and had everything, being Prime Minister of Egypt.

What was his secret? How did he 'get' such success? What is success, and if it comes our way then what should our response be to it? What does it mean to be successful for God

Gen 39: 1-6a, 20-23, 41: 15-16, 33-46, 50-52 read by Val Weir

Community Kids slot by Laura

SONG – I will boast in Christ Michelle then shared a word following this...

Definition of success...?

a: degree or measure of [succeeding](#)

b: favourable or desired outcome, also : the attainment of wealth, favour, or [eminence](#)

Success has nothing to do with status

Joseph would have been on the top of our prayer lists, and rightly so. Remember he'd been thrown into in a deep, dark pit, fearing for his life, and was then sold into slavery by his very own brothers! Read 39: 2-4.

Joseph had nothing materially, yet even before his wealth came he was a success. Temptation is to look at how things developed and when he ended up as second highest in the country, we do the same. Feel good about what you have...? Proud of your children for what they've achieved...? This is not how God determines success otherwise we wouldn't have this record of Joseph being a success here!

Why did he flourish...? "The Lord was with Joseph" (39: 2), so he became successful.

Did Joseph give himself to God...? Did he recall his dream...? Did he trust that God had a plan for his life...?

Jesus said, "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" (Luke 16: 10-11)

Joseph was Potiphar's slave, he then became his p.a., and then was "in charge of his household" (4) => some sort of oversight role and responsibility.

Why did he get such quick promotion...? How he learned the language...? How he transitioned...? How hard he worked...? His attitude...? His honesty...? Faithfulness...? Problem solving ability...? Potiphar could see that "the Lord was with him" (3) and this set him up above the rest. Whether we are running our own business, a Chief Executive, or a shop worker or garage mechanic, God's people not only should stand out but we have the potential to be noticed as being different. (Don't expect promotion immediately this gets noticed!)

As a Church, one of the biggest compliments we received as a Church was when I met up with 3 Town Councillors and, one after the other, they each testified / admitted, "You have changed peoples' minds and made such a difference to the people of Poundbury." We ought to hope that people see that God is with us. For some of you, that's the reason you've given as to why you wanted to a part of this Church! The only way that people will see that God is with us... is through YOU... because YOU are the Church.

Success can be found or experienced anywhere

As a result of a gross injustice Joseph suddenly ends up in prison. The narrative highlights a great way to avoid succumbing to sexual temptation. Say no. Get out of the situation. Run away!

Now in prison, he must have questioned his dream from God about his brothers one day bowing down to him... read Gen 39: 20b-23. Joseph knew success even in prison. We can achieve in the least likely situation. The difference was that "the Lord was with him", it is this that is the main ingredient for success - not money, influence, or popularity. 2 years follow. Another dream needs interpreting. Could have bypassed this due to where his last dream got him! Could've thought that here was a chance for recognition? He does neither but in terms of who can give the interpretation, Joseph demonstrates true

success, "I can not do it but God will" (v.15)

Genesis equivalent of "Its all about Jesus" - easier to say than to mean. How we love - even need - recognition

Success has everything to do with humility

Joseph uses his gift of interpreting dreams, whilst in prison, and then after he gets out since Potipher has a dream. He is then promoted to be in charge of all of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no-one so wise and discerning as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you" (41: 39-40)

What a change in 13 years...!

Would we still have Joseph at the top of our prayer list...? We need people in high offices who are Christians. They need our prayers just as much as those who are hurting or those who are without.

"I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tim 2: 1-2)

What happens to Joseph challenges us to think about how we feel about the success of others over ourselves.

Do we rejoice or resent...?! Colin Ed, "I'll never be jealous of your success, I want you to be the best you can be for God, and to achieve the most you can for God". I understand this now.

Do we want God to do something great... or great in our Church alone. What about other Churches...?

Joseph did not allow success to go to his head. Read 41: 50-52. He named his sons Manessah = "God made me forget", and Ephraim = "God made me fruitful where I suffered". Joseph's testimony is that it is God who enables us to forget, and it is God who enables us to focus on what fruit has been born over and above our own pain. "We can't embrace grace and still hold a grudge", see Rom 5: 20 (The Message)

Maybe true success relates to our being people of grace.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph 4: 32)

SONG - Goodness of God

SONG - Great is the Lord

Prayers led by Tabitha Smith who also shared how Joseph is so like a type of Christ for us...

Conclusion - The late Zig Ziglar was one of the most respected modern day experts on success, motivation, and leading a balanced life. I know nothing about him, or I didn't until I read a brief summary of his book [Born to Win!](#), where he argues that success cannot be defined in one sentence, but instead it is comprised of many things. One could argue that the definition depends on the individual and that one size does not fit all.

Here are 19 different definitions of success. Not all of these will resonate with you, but chances are at least a few of them might. Use these or find inspiration or to encourage yourself with you being the

person you already are.

Success is always doing your best... setting concrete goals... having a place to call home (which could be a country, a village, or even a person)... Success is understanding the difference between need and want... it is believing you can... remembering to balance work with passion... taking care of your needs... learning that you sometimes have to say no... it is knowing your life is filled with abundance and seeking to be grateful for that.

Success is understanding you cannot keep what you don't give away... it is overcoming fear... learning something new each day... learning that losing a few battles can help you win a war... it is loving and being loved back. Success is standing your ground when you believe in something... it is not giving up... it is choosing to celebrate small victories.... It is never letting a disability hold you back. Success is understanding that you and you alone control your destiny. Take responsibility for your actions and their consequences.

The Bottom Line? Success can be defined in many ways. If you are experiencing happiness, love, or adventure in this moment, you've already found success. Keep it up.

Closing Prayer by Glyn