

How to Live life Successfully.

Philippians 3:12-21

A NASA official involved in space exploration was talking to a reporter about human beings being landed on Mars. The reporter was concerned about how they might return to earth. That involves a highly complex plan the NASA official said.. “It begins with *“Our Father who art in heaven”*...”



- Our ongoing planning for today and the rest of our lives ought to begin with the words .. “Our Father who art in heaven.. “ We need to constantly turn to our Heavenly Father and ask Him to direct our paths.. Colossians 1:9... *We continually ask God to fill you with a knowledge of His will..*
- There are many books out there on the topic of finding success in life. But there is no better source of finding success in life that the Bible. Who is our ultimate model of success? The Lord Jesus Christ is.. He accomplished all that our Heavenly Father asked Him to.. So we can *“keep looking unto Jesus”*.. Hebrews 12:2.. .. Jesus is the perfect model of success
- But we can also pick up some extra thoughts on this topic by looking at the Apostle Paul who also gives us a model of “success”.. *“Join with others in following my example, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”* vs 17.

In Philippians 3 Paul gives some of his spiritual journey...

his past (Phil. 3:1–11) .. Paul had great human credentials vs 5,6, 7... *“I now consider loss”*..

his present (Phil. 3:12–16), and .. *“press on toward the goal..in Christ Jesus”* vs 14.

his future (Phil. 3:17–21). *“our citizenship is in heaven”*.. Vs 20..

- In his letters, Paul uses many illustrations from the world to communicate truth about the Christian life— we can do the same—moving from the familiar to the less familiar
 - a). the military.. *Put on the whole armor of God...* Ephesians 6:10-18
 - b). architecture .. *You are the temple of the Holy Spirit* ..1 Corinthians 6:19..
 - c). agriculture ..*Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap* .. Galatians 6:7
 - d). athletics.. *“straining toward what is ahead”*.. Philippians 3:13...

- Now.. The illustration of “athletics”.. “*straining toward what is ahead*”.. Philippians 3:13... Athletics were part of Greek culture . The verb “reaching forth” in Philippians 3:13 literally means “stretching as in a race.”. It makes sense for us to use illustrations from the world to illustrate Christian life.—and how to live it successfully.



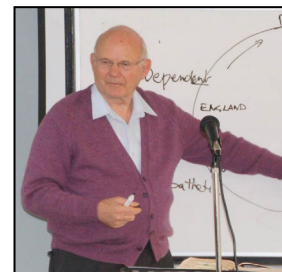
In this passage Paul touches on 4 keys to successful living:

1. E _____ facing my faults vs 12

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect ... I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it." vs. 12-13

- This is the statement of a Christian who never permitted himself to be satisfied with his spiritual attainments. Obviously, Paul was satisfied with Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10), but he was not satisfied with his Christian life. He was mature enough to know he still had much growing to do..

- Disciples of Jesus never stop growing. David Cummings... — still actively supporting LMC’s Leadership Matters Courses , instigated the “Aviation camp” working with ESA. He was the visionary behind Bethel Funerals.... and encouraging ”Wise Choices”. He was Australian Director of Wycliffe Bible Translators—as well as International Director. He remains a humble servant of Jesus backed by his wonderful wife Ruth..



- We look to Jesus—(Hebrews 12:1,2) as well as the example of Paul vs 17..”*join together in following my example*”. As Amy Carmichael said.. *We have a few short hours to fight the battle and all of eternity to celebrate the victory...*

"You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you." Prov. 28:13 (GN)...

- Successful people are honest about their faults. Transparency is a mark of emotional maturity. A lot of people are afraid to admit their weaknesses because they are more interested in having a “good” reputation than they are in being successful. Sometimes you have to choose between the two -- Keep asking the questions ..Where do I need to change? Admitting ... “I don’t have it all together”.. Be teachable, Keep following Jesus...

2. Forgetting what is _____ vs 13..



v. 13 *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.*

- Paul says if we are going to be all God wants us to be we have to let go.. we need to let go—with our Lord’s enablement—of my grudges, anger, bitterness (Corrie ten Boon) — some of my “strongholds”. I need to let go of the past so I can get on with the present.. For some deep issues we might need some help—but keep looking unto Jesus! eg “Undaunted”...

Isaiah 43:18 "*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing!*"

Two things we need to forget if we are going to follow Paul’s example

a). Our _____

- “Elizabeth” ... she let criticism hold her back... she needed to be “set free”. How do you forget? To forget, actually means, “don’t let the past affect you anymore”. Don’t let it control you or have power over you or manipulate you. Successful people learn from the past without dwelling on the past. Growth comes through a “*renewing of the mind*”. Romans 12:2.. Remember Philippians 4:8 helps demolish “strongholds”.. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5..(prayer, faith, hope, love, the Holy Spirit, God’s Word) the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world... We also benefit enormously by the input of people around us... encouragement, guidance..
- The Joseph principle - Joseph could have been consumed by hate for his brothers but... Genesis 50:20...*You (his brothers) intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*
- Satan’s favourite desire is to paralyse us with the past, deceive & manipulate us with negative memories. Offering forgiveness, confessing our sin and giving our lives to Jesus “sets us free”. Jesus said "*If you continue in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*" John 8:32..

b). Our _____

- Learn from our successes but let go of them. It's so easy to rest on our laurels, to live in the past, to base our security on past performance.. The problem with success is that it tends potentially to make us complacent and perhaps fills us with pride. “Lose graciously, win humbly”.

Luke 9:62 "*Jesus said, `Anyone who starts to plow and then keeps looking back is of no use for the Kingdom of God.'*" You can't drive a car looking in the rear view mirror.

3. Seek Jesus _____ vs 13

V. 13 "*But this one thing I do straining toward what is ahead I press on toward the goal.*"

- Paul is talking about concentration. It is too easy for us to spread ourselves too thinly - fragmentosis!
- Paul says, find out what counts. He's talking about the power of concentration. If a river spills over its banks you have a marsh, a swamp. But if that river is confined between certain banks it is a tremendous source of power. Light diffused is powerless, weak. If you take power and light and concentrate it you have a laser. It is powerful. That is the power of concentration. Life focusing on serving Jesus..

I Cor. 9:24 *"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to win the prize."*

- What was Paul's goal? 2 Cor. 5:9 *"So we make our goal to please Him."* WWJD. It is all about Jesus. Even winning an Olympic gold medal is not enough... Duncan Armstrong story

The question we ask ourselves is, What am I living for? Who am I living for? We have "an audience of One"

4. D _____

"I press on, straining toward the mark... I press on to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." vs 13,14..

- The principle of determination: Not much happens in life without effort and personal discipline. The great people in life are just ordinary people with extraordinary amount of determination. .. eg a faithful Sunday school teacher... a street cleaner or a Bible translator or Wilberforce.
- "Press on" in the Greek literally means "I over extend myself. -- I go for it with all I've got.. Enthusiasm and joy in serving our Lord Jesus. That's the way to live life successfully..
- *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I (Jesus) have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* John 10:10

Acts 20:24 *But I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me, in order that I may complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do, which is to declare the Good News of the grace of God.*

Press on toward the goal, keep growing in Jesus, forgetting what is behind—our failures and successes, live with determination.. And keep looking unto Jesus all the days of our lives.. All this helps us live our lives successfully..