

TEXT 2 Chronicles 26:1-15; Psalm 37:3-11

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE 2 Timothy 4:6-8

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that living a successful Christian life in the eyes of God is not necessarily the same as achieving success in the eyes of the ungodly. True success is found by trusting God and doing that which is right in His sight, and this will count for eternity.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? — Matthew 16:26

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. — Joshua 1:8

ANSWER

TITLE:

SEARCH

TITLE:

Good Success Success

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Uzziah, King of Judah, reigned fifty-two years. He was thought to have been part-time co-regent with his father Amaziah, and “he set himself to seek God.” As long as he sought God, God caused him to prosper. He had a huge army with the best military equipment and was victorious over the Philistines, Arabians, and Ammonites. He brought the nation to a time of great prosperity. After these successes he became arrogant and strayed far from God at the end of his life. God smote him with leprosy, which was with him until his death.

People have differing opinions as to what the word *success* means. We know success is the opposite of failure. But what is failure? A person may be a failure in the eyes of a materialistic society, while God looks at that person with commendation for what, in His eyes, is great success! Worldly success is one thing, while spiritual success is quite another. Worldly success is judged without reference to God or eternity. Spiritual success is judged by God from the perspective of eternity, without reference to the world’s evaluation.

YOUR OPENER

Success

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RESPONSES

1. Uzziah did right in the sight of the Lord and he sought God. God has promised that if we seek Him and do right in His sight, He will be found of us and give us the desires of our heart. Ask the class what they think good success is and how it is to be attained. The key verse fits in very well here. Also have the students read 2 Chronicles 31:21 and Psalm 1:3 to further establish the fact that those who do right in God’s sight and seek Him will have good success. Emphasize that this may not be good success from the worldly point of view, but it will be prosperity in God’s assessment and in eternal values.

2. As God gave Uzziah victory over his enemies, He has promised to give the Christian complete victory over sin and Satan. The Christian has been born into the family of God, which is distinguished by each one’s love for the other. As Christians we look to our new family for assistance in our Christian walk as well as help in time of need. While God has not promised the Christian vast material wealth, he has security within God’s Word for all his needs. God has provided an armor so that His servants may be able to wage a successful spiritual warfare.

3. The purpose of this question is to help the students relate Psalm 37 to life today. Ask your students to share some instances they know of personally. Bring out in discussion that it is in our everyday affairs that God has promised success if we truly trust and obey Him. The point should be made that success is not experienced through self-confidence or self-esteem, as is taught in many of our schools, but through the power of God. All glory for our successes and deliverances must go to Him.

Success is a word with a variety of meanings. To some, it means “a job, friends, a family, and enough possessions to meet their needs and gratify their desires.” To others, it signifies “recognition for superiority in terms of beauty, intelligence, or athletic or artistic talent.” These latter equate success with popularity, fame, influence, political power, or rare creativity. God’s value system, however, is just the opposite of the worldly viewpoint. God views success from the perspective of eternity, since we are all going to live forever somewhere! He sees us not as evaluated by the world, gauged by our public image or our private enterprise, but instead by the extent of our commitment to Him. Solomon, who sought success in every possible channel of life, finally came to this realization. After pronouncing all of his many worldly successes as vanity (without real meaning), he writes: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

1. Point out two things that Uzziah did early in his reign that brought him good success. How does Uzziah’s example apply to us today? See Matthew 7:7-8.

2. God gave Uzziah good success in that He gave him victory over his enemies; He gave him helpful, intelligent associates; He gave him much cattle and vineyards; He gave him weapons of warfare. How can we parallel these things to success in the Christian life today? See Luke 10:19; Ephesians 6:13-17; Philippians 4:19 and 1 John 1:7.

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

3. David, the author of Psalm 37, had proven God's care in both good and bad circumstances. God gave him success over the lion, the bear, Goliath, and in many other situations because David trusted in Him. Relate an example from your own experience or knowledge of someone whose success came directly through God's help.

4. Later, David endured much persecution and was hunted as if he were a criminal. In what way might this difficult experience have contributed to David's eventual success (Psalm 37:7-11)? How might dismal and disappointing circumstances contribute to our eventual spiritual success (1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:10)?

5. Psalm 37:3-11 may be spoken of as a formula for success—spiritually and materially. Very simply stated, this formula is: Our part performed + God's part guaranteed = success. From these verses, list the phrases which describe our part and God's part.

6. Arrange the following items in priority as to how you think they should be to assure success in your life: education, occupation, home and family life, recreation and social activities, individual spiritual life, church-related activities.

7. What was the Apostle Paul's main goal in life (Philippians 3:8-11)? What assurance did he have that he had attained this? See 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

4. It taught David to trust and commit his way unto the Lord. He was also persuaded that God would take care of Saul in His own way and time. As Christians, we can be sure that any situation the Lord allows to come our way will result in spiritual success if we take it patiently. Ask the students how we grow strong in faith and God's grace. Help them to understand that their testing time is a schooling for spiritual success. Help them relate their Christian trials to David's testimony of God's deliverance—the more dismal and disappointing the circumstances, the greater the victory and the more we learn to trust God and maintain faith in Him. It is in the school of hardship that we learn to depend heavily on the Lord.

5. Our Part Performed: "Trust in the LORD, and do good."
God's Part Guaranteed: "So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."
Success requires action. But action without direction can result in futility. No less a man than Paul the Apostle stated, "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air" (1 Corinthians 9:26). To determine direction for our actions requires setting priorities and goals.

6. This exercise should be a springboard for discussion on priorities in life. The order may vary. However, spiritual life must come first. Biblical rules must govern our priorities or spiritual success will always evade us. You could make reference to the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and brainstorm with the class a list of things that could be "gods" in our world today. The point should be made that many things, though not sinful in themselves, can lead us into sin if our priorities are wrong. And sin always leads not to success, but to failure.

7. The Apostle Paul determined to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering. He stated his assurance of attainment in these words: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." Summarize the lesson by bringing out the change of priorities in Paul's life. After Christ's call, the Apostle followed Jesus with all his heart. He was willing to suffer many hardships and privations that he might do the will of the Lord. Relate the readiness of Paul to face all obstacles in order to please Christ, to the attitude that we should have in order to obtain spiritual success today.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How would you define *success*?

How does the world gauge success?

Compare the rewards for worldly success and Christian success.

Explain the key verse, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

In the first part of Uzziah's life, why was he so successful?

What are some of the things that will help to make a person successful in this world?

What are some things that will help one to be a successful Christian?

Our ANSWER story mentions a promise for "good success." Can you find that promise in your Bible?

THINGS TO DO

Bring some pictures of Bible characters who would be classified as successful in God's eyes but not in man's, and discuss these. Also bring a few pictures of famous, successful people in the world today who obviously aren't serving God, and discuss how their success is only temporary while godly success is eternal.

To illustrate that no one is too small, too big, too young, too old, too sick, or too busy to be successful, show your students a paper chain with links of different sizes and textures. God can use all ages, sizes, and types of people in His Kingdom—all have important jobs to do. Each link holds the chain together. Each supports the other and, as long as they hold on, they are a success. In the Sunday school, the church, or in God's Kingdom, each person is important. Don't ever be tempted to let go or give up!

What is success? How do you achieve it? Follow the rules and trust the "creators" to know what they are talking about. (Show a cookbook.) How do you make a "successful" cake? Measure ingredients correctly, blend

as stated, use correct pans, bake at correct temperature. If you do everything right except one, you will not have success. (Show a map.) A person skilled in making maps can help you get where you want to go. But, if you won't turn where you should, you will get lost and no one but yourself will be to blame.

Do a brainstorming session with your class on the subject, "What Is Success?"

Use flash cards on which you have written a variety of Bible names: Saul, Moses, Paul, Jacob, Ruth, Joseph, Peter, Judas, Esther, John, Job, etc. As you show each name ask your students, "Was this person a success in God's eyes? The world's eyes?"

Answers for ANSWER

Sweet Success

To Christians, success comes when they trust God and do what is right in His sight. Without looking up the key verse, see if you can complete the verse at the bottom of the page, using the words from the list. Then write them in the correct places in the crossword.

For WHAT is a MAN PROFITED, if he SHALL gain the WHOLE WORLD, and LOSE his OWN SOUL?