
MONDAY MANNA
AUG 7, 2023**THE SNARES OF SUCCESS****By Rick Boxx**

Recently, I interviewed Anne Beiler, founder of Auntie Anne's Pretzels, about the snares of success. She was an 8th-grade educated, stay-at-home, Amish mom when she determined to help support her family by starting a pretzel business. From the humble beginnings of one farmer's market store, Anne grew the business to more than 900 stores around the world prior to selling the business.

That kind of success, while very enviable, can bring many temptations and snares along the way. We need to take steps to guard against them. As Proverbs 22:5 teaches, "Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; One who guards himself will be far from them."

It is important to be aware of what snares (or traps) might be ahead. The first snare that often comes is **praise**. When Beiler began building Auntie Anne Pretzels, people started praising her for her success. But she kept thinking, "I'm not brilliant, I'm an 8th-grade educated, Amish, stay-at-home mom."

But eventually, she admits, she started to believe the praise, deceiving herself that it was her brilliance, rather than God's grace. We find this warning in 1 Corinthians 3:18, "Take care that no one deceives himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise." If your successes bring praise, avoid deceiving yourself by remembering that your success only came from God's grace.

Another common snare is **power**. As business leaders grow in success, they also tend to grow in power, which can easily corrupt. Harvey Weinstein had the power to create or destroy actresses in the film industry. He abused his power to seduce many women in exchange for offering them stardom.

In Ecclesiastes 4:1 we read, "And behold, I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them; and power was on the side of their oppressors, but they had no one to comfort them." Power can be used generously to benefit others, or it can be abused. Find an accountability partner to help you guard against becoming intoxicated by power.

A third snare is **privacy**. Seeking privacy is important for times of reflection and rest, but some leaders who begin experiencing success take privacy to an extreme. Some go into isolation due to personal insecurities; others choose being alone due to growing arrogance that they are better than others.

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Isolation is one of our spiritual enemy's favorite tools. In 1 Peter 5:8 we are warned, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." When isolated, you can easily overlook or discount your own and your organization's shortcomings. Living in community with transparency is a better, safer strategy.

The final snare is **pride**. In the banking industry, I watched several companies begin to experience rapid success, drawing very favorable news coverage. The top executives' pride often led them to pursue more and more attention. When I saw multiple articles about a customer's company, I would visit the customers to make certain their business was not being neglected. The pursuit of prideful accolades, I discovered, often led to ignoring the day-to-day operations; this sometimes resulted in failure. Proverbs 16:8 cautions, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Most of us – if not all of us – place a high priority on achieving success. Do you agree that success brings with it dangers or "snares" that potentially could lead to failure? Why or why not?
2. Can you think of any examples of times when the snares of pride or power led individuals or businesses to failure? Can you think of reasons this might have happened?
3. In the 27th chapter of Proverbs we find two examples of the snare of praise. Proverbs 27:2 says, "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips." Then in Proverbs 27:21 it says, "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives." Do you see a difference between these two admonitions? If so, in what ways?
4. A final snare Mr. Boxx cites that can accompany success is that of "privacy" or isolation. Think of a scenario where this might develop. What safeguards could be put in place to prevent its occurrence and the consequences that could result?

NOTE:

*If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 11:14, 12:15, 13:13-14, 16:2, 17:3,10, 19:20, 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*

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