

## **TWO PERSPECTIVES ON SUCCESS**

**By Ken Korkow**

Do you desire to become a worldly success? There are a number of possible approaches to achieving this goal, but one of the most tried and true strategies is to focus on leadership. In other words, discover how to get other people to do what you want. They perform much of the work, while you receive much of the credit.

However, what if you choose instead to become a godly success? How do you accomplish that? Then you would want to focus on ‘followership’ – learning how to become a better servant. Instead of using people to achieve your goals and objectives, you strive to serve people, helping them to accomplish their own goals and objectives.

If you go into any bookstore or library, or search an online retail site, you can find countless books that offer differing views on leadership. The same applies to seminars, conferences, and retreats – we have a seemingly endless array of choices that offer many perspectives on what it takes to become an effective leader of people.

There is one book, however, that demonstrates and teaches the immediate and eternal value of being a follower-servant. It is called the Bible. In it we find many accounts of people who discovered that their greatest impact – what today we would refer to as “an influencer” – was by selflessly serving others.

We can find no better example than Jesus Christ, who declared, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). How did He do this? He performed miracles of physical healing, feeding multitudes, and even bringing people back to life on several occasions. His earthly life was exemplified by acts of giving, not receiving.

But Jesus’ greatest act of all was willingly going to the cross to die and pay the penalty for the sins of humankind. “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). From a human perspective, Jesus’ ‘ultimate sacrifice’ seemed like failure, but in terms of eternity it was the most successful moment of all time.

As business and professional people, most of us want to understand the formula for success. We think that if we can understand all the necessary inputs, then we can control the output. Sometimes this works, but often our success or failure is a result of factors operating outside of our control.

The problem is we are finite, limited by time and space; God is infinite and eternal. His ways and purposes are far beyond our own. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your

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ways My ways” (Isaiah 55:8). Because of this, placing our faith and trust in Him – our submission to His will and plans – are essential but mysterious elements we cannot calculate by any of our formulas.

What kind of success do you seek? What we really desire is evidenced by where we spend our time, what commands our focus. We must each decide. Today. And tomorrow. And the next day. Should we pursue worldly success? Jesus said, “For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world, and forfeit his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Once we decide, we must live with the eternal consequences. A mark of maturity is the willingness to defer immediate gratification for long-term gain.

*Ken Korkow lives in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A., where he serves as an area director for CBMC. This is adapted from his “Fax of Life” column.*

### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you define “success”?
2. Based on how you are living your life right now, how you are pursuing your work and career, what does that say about your perspective on success?
3. Do you think a person can actively pursue success based on the world’s definition and godly success at the same time? Why or why not?
4. When you think about God’s thoughts not being our thoughts, and our ways not being His ways, how does that make you feel? Is it encouraging or troubling for you? Are there ever any times when you would like God’s thoughts and ways to conform with your own? Explain your answer.

### Challenge for This Week

Over the coming week, think about what you have read and discussed in this Monday Manna. What kind of success are you pursuing – are you focusing on the right things? If you are a leader, are you leading people so they can help you accomplish your purposes, or are you seeking to serve them in achieving their goals and objectives? Find a trusted friend who can help you work through these important questions.

#### NOTE:

*For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages: Numbers 8:26; Psalm 33:11; Matthew 6:24,33-34, 16:25-27; Ephesians 5:15-16; Colossians 3:17,23-24*

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