

Success in Christian Leadership

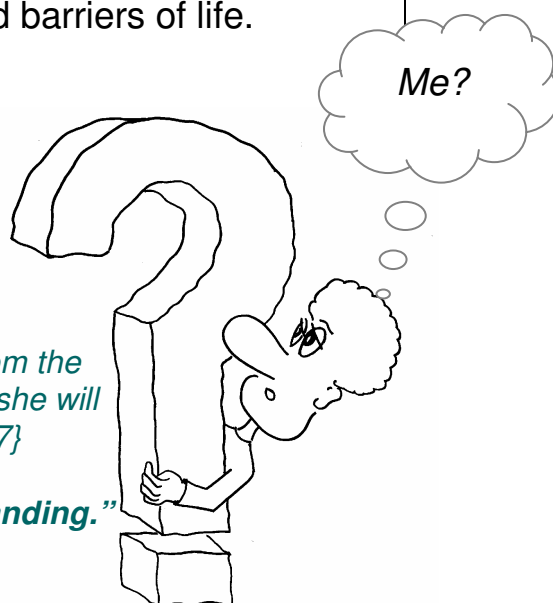
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You are beginning a Scriptural study in leadership success. Through my experiences of pastoring and mentoring, I have seen how and why God moves in the lives committed, dedicated people who aspire to become leaders. I have become convinced that His Word provides every key to success a Christian leader will need. I am also convinced these keys will open the doors necessary to Christian leadership success. In the process of time, the keys will not fail to better the lives of all who turn them.

We will explore four specific keys to success. These might be the keys to the doors you have been knocking on! No leader should be without them. Each key has inherent growth built into it. So there is no limit to the size of the opportunity – the size of the doors the keys open. Without these keys you will be locked into your limitations. Like any keys, they are only valuable if you take hold of them and apply them to the locks, strongholds, limitations and barriers of life.

Understanding how to turn each of these four leadership keys is the means to achieving all they unlock. God's heart's desire is that you learn about them, understand them, and seize every opportunity to apply them.

(Proverbs 4:5-7 NKJV) "Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. {6} Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. {7} Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding."



Four Keys to Christian Leadership Success

Key #1 Progressively Becoming more like Christ

Key #2 Progressively Fulfilling the Will of God for Your Life

Key #3 Progressively Becoming less and less like the World around you

Key #4 Finding your Purpose in life and Acting to Fulfill it

Key #1: Progressively Becoming More Like Christ

1.

*(Romans 12:1-2 NKJV) "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

While attending a conference in Australia in 1998 I heard John Maxwell, say, "Success is not a destination, not a certain place... it's a daily thing. **The secret of success is found in your daily agenda.**"

People generally accept that our daily agendas – our plans and expectations for the day, determine to a large part what we actually do during any given day. In other words... What we do daily determines our success or... our failure. This is certainly true. However...

Is there some **deeper truth** to success in Christian Leadership?



Are you content to live in the shallow part of the river – to be in ankle deep in the waters of expectation, content to trust success to your best efforts, lucky breaks, hard work or your own daily plans and agenda?

A Deeper Truth

What you do, as part of your daily agenda is certainly a factor in your success or failure, but it is not the deciding factor. There is a deeper truth...

Your success is determined by whether you become more like Christ – every day in every way... to look like, act like, talk like and walk like Jesus!

(Success in Christ is divinely designed to be progressive.)

The secret of success in leadership is not found in your daily agenda, but rather, in the foundation of your daily agenda. We have to go one step deeper - in Christ. The eternal fruitfulness of what you do is actually determined by how much you are like Christ.

Your character (or deficiency of character... that is, who you are) is the foundation of what you do. It will ultimately motivate and rule your actions and reactions.

(1 Corinthians 11:1 NKJV) "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

*(Again: Romans 12:2 NKJV) "but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

Opportunities to transform your thinking occur every hour of every day. Your surrender to these opportunities drives, controls and protects your life on your path to successful leadership.

(2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

In Christ, every day with Jesus is a new day. Progressively becoming more Christ-like or less Christ-like is a daily thing. The process is always in motion, even on a day when you have nothing to do. Some of those days are the best days to become just a little bit more like Jesus because you can spend just a little bit more time with Him!

A Prioritized and Disciplined Life

How we prioritize and discipline the practical stuff of our lives daily has a great deal to do with how successful we will be as leaders.



- Is being more Christ-like at the top of your daily schedule? If not, what is?
- It has often been said that the highest form of flattery is imitation. Do you love to flatter Jesus by imitating Him?
- Is the purpose behind your daily schedule to be who God has called you to be, so you can better do what He has called you to do - to shed light on a darkened world? If so, you will be a success in life.
- Do all of your dealings during all of the day bring glory to God because you know they imitate what He would do? What about most of them? Some of them? A few of them?
- Ask God for the increase -- to be more like Him.

*(Hebrews 6:11-12 NKJV) "And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, {12} **that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**"*

Procrastination

Procrastination or delay is a common cause of failure in the lives of good people. Our churches are full of pastors, elders and other leaders who are down and discouraged. They refuse to prioritize and discipline their lives. They refuse to act to imitate Christ. You cannot say, "Some day, or one of these days I will begin to prioritize and discipline myself for success."

"One of these days" normally means... "none of these days."

Success - Ultimately Measured In Things Eternal

Everyone needs to live life with eternal purpose - every day. Satisfaction with your actions is ultimately measured in things eternal. Every other measurement is hollow, misleading and will some day burn up or burn out. Only God's successes in you will burn on! So ... what should we prioritize our lives around daily? There is only one possible answer: Changing daily to be more like Him!



*(1 John 3:2 NKJV) "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is."*

Our Highest Goal, above all else

If the goal is to become more like Christ, then what about Christ should we become more like? Is it His wisdom? Is it His power? Is it His faithfulness? Yes, all these things. There is, however one of His attributes that must always take first place above all the others...

††† His Holiness †††

You are called to be more like Him in many ways, but the most important is to imitate His holiness (In fact, all other resemblance to Christ hinges on conforming to His holiness). Why should we have His holiness as our goal?

*(Hebrews 12:14 NKJV) "Pursue peace with all people, **and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.**"*

*(Ephesians 1:4 NKJV) "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,**"*

*(1 Peter 1:15-16 NKJV) "but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, {16} because it is written, "**Be holy, for I am holy.**"*

Being Holy... as God Is Holy, is a Reflection of Him

God's holiness is so high and wonderful it cannot be fully defined or contained by words, images or ideas. If holiness is an attribute belonging exclusively to God, the only way we can be holy is to reflect God in us. (It is Christ in us that people see.)

- We grow in Him as He grows within us.
- We glow for Him as His glory begins to shine from within us.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

The only way we can be holy is to reflect God in us.

Growing and Glowing – From Within Our Attitudes

Attitude: Reject any attraction to, or tolerance for the unholy.

- God does not wish to share His space in your heart with anything that offends Him.
- God knows that rejection of the unholy is a progressive thing within us. In His boundless grace, He gives imperfect people His perfect presence within. We become more in touch with Him and more like Him. The things that offend His holiness are driven out of our lives. This is the process of sanctification.

Attitude: Have a hunger, a fire to grow closer to Him, to stay closer to Him and to become more like Him. Remember, imitation is the greatest form of flattery. We must have an intimate loving relationship with Him.

††† Love never fails †††
(1Corinthians13:8)



What about your lifestyle could you reject to give Christ more room within you?



What could you embrace into your lifestyle to give Christ more room within you?

What Biblical subject could you study more intently that would give you more opportunity to change?

Attitude: Constantly seek to be in one place - where the Spirit of the Lord is. Be careful where you walk.

(Psalms 37:23 NKJV) "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way."

(Proverbs 4:11-12 NKJV) "I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. {12} When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, And when you run, you will not stumble."

Go from one place of His awesome presence to the next. When you meet the Lord along the way, He will cause you to change to be more like Him. If you fail to look for Him, fail to invite him to walk with you, fail to greet Him wherever you go, there will be no transformation, no freedom. Therefore, you need to step into those places you recognize as being occupied by the Holy Spirit. If you do not sense Him wherever you are walking, simply invite Him to come along. Then be sensitive to the signals He sends you.

- He may ask you to step away from the place you are in.
- He may ask you to step through the place you are in.
- He may ask you to stay awhile in the place you are in.

Growth and transformation always come from hearing His voice and responding in obedience.



What is your next step to becoming more like Christ?

If you have no answer - no plan, then you need to think carefully, pray diligently and seek counsel so you can move ahead into the path God has called you to.



Review

Christian Success -- Progressively Becoming More Like Christ

- ☑ A prioritized and disciplined life is essential.
- ☑ Success is ultimately measured in eternal things.
- ☑ Our highest goal is holiness. It takes discipline to get there.
- ☑ Our holiness is a reflection of His holiness.

The Process of Change - Your Image into His

“be transformed by the renewing of your mind ...”

(Again, Romans 12:2 NKJV)

To “renew” your mind means, “to change, to make like new.



What is in your mind that might need to change?

Answer: Two things: How you think and what you think about

This is done daily, hourly, even minute-by-minute. God wants you to change how you think, and who or what you allow to influence your thinking. Have you made a habit of including and relying upon the Spirit of God to bring Christ into your thought life... all of it? When your thinking agrees with His thinking... you are renewed into His image. You do this by learning what it means to be like Him, and then applying that understanding. The result: when people look at you, they see more of Him in you. Eventually, enough of you changes that Christ shines forth regularly from your life.



What stops your image from becoming like His image?

Answer: According to Romans 12:1 - Being conformed to this world. Another way to say the same thing is...

Taking on the attributes of unholiness and allowing them to shape who and what you are.

How can you prevent this? Answer:

Look to Jesus! Walk with Jesus! Think like Jesus! Act like He would! You will become a winner and a champion for Jesus!

Suggested study: Ephesians 4:20 - 5:14