

FINDING YOUR GOD INTENDED PURPOSE IN LIFE

“THE SECRET OF SUCCESS”

There are many secular, “How to be Successful” books that you can buy but the best “Success Book” you can get is the bible. In fact many of the principles written in the secular books were already written in the bible. The main difference is the secular books put self first whereas the bible puts God first.

The bible tells us how to have spiritual success and also how to have practical success in daily life. For example, it tells us how to have success in relationships, in business and in fact everything that we do. In this lecture I want to concentrate on principles of achieving spiritual goals and the human goals in every day life.

For example, the apostle Paul believed in setting goals. In the letter he wrote to the Philippians we read of the all consuming goal of his life after he became a Christian. It was to become like Christ. He wanted to fully identify with Christ in his sufferings, death and resurrection. He set a high goal as the major goal of his life to live the Christ-life in all his actions, even to attain the perfection of the resurrected Christ. Did he get there before he died ? we don't believe so, but he was still actively moving toward it.

Let me give a parable that will help us to understand the principle he worked by. Once there were two ants, one named Andy and the other Alex. They set a goal of climbing to the top of the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. It was going to take a long time for two little ants to do that but they set that as their major goal. They also set minor goals of climbing the mountain in stages. Each new stage or height they reached would be an accomplishment. They both set off and after much persistence and perseverance they reached the first stage. They were both on an emotional high, they had made it! “Wow!” exclaimed Andy, “We have done what no ant has done before us, let's stay here and enjoy the victory.” “No! No!” cried Alex. “We must go on, we must go higher.” “No I'm staying here, it's too much like hard work to go higher” said Andy. So Alex continued climbing and Andy stayed at the first stage.

Soon Andy was fast asleep and lost all desire to go any higher, while Alex kept on climbing and moving towards the goal of reaching the top. Time went by and Andy died there defeated in spirit at stage one. Alex reached stage two and three but he died before he reached stage four. He died victorious because he was still going forward' He made much progress because he set a higher goal. He would have made less progress if he had a lower goal. Andy settled for a lower goal and made little progress. Andy is like many of us as Christians. We set too lower a goal for our Christian lives.

Alex was like Paul, never reaching his main goal but ever moving toward it. Let's see how Paul expresses it. Philippians chapter 3 v 12. "Not that I have already obtained all this , or already have arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."

Paul hadn't arrived at his goal but he continued to press on toward it, he didn't give up, he wasn't satisfied with present accomplishments, he had a higher goal. He wanted to take hold of all that Christ had already given him. You could figuratively say that Christ had given him a mountain to climb that had unlimited possibilities and he wanted to go as far up it as he possibly could.

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

That's the secret of success, never to feel you have fully arrived, you may have reached minor goals and you can rejoice in that, but not for long, you have to go higher. "Forgetting what is behind," How important that is to forget the failures and successes of the past and keep going forward and up. Your past failures will make you feel unworthy and sap all your energy and strength, while your successes will make you proud and self satisfied so that you don't feel the need to go higher. They will be like being chained to heavy weights that are too heavy for you to make progress.

"I press on toward the goal" "To win the prize" What is the prize? I suggest the prize is not reaching the goal but getting as near to it as you possibly can in this life. In other words, the higher the goal the further we will go. Imagine you lived in bible times and you wanted to go somewhere riding on your donkey. But your donkey is stubborn and sluggish and won't move, so you tie a carrot to the end of a stick, sit on the donkey's back and hold the carrot out in front of him. Suddenly the donkey sets a goal to get that carrot and eat it and begins to move forward. He keeps going forward as long as you hold that carrot out in front of him. But if you start to feel sorry for him and give him the carrot to eat, he will stop, eat it and no longer go forward. He needs a fresh goal, another carrot.

We are all a bit like that donkey we need to set goals in our lives to get us going for God. The higher the goal the further we will go. We need to remind ourselves the further we go or the higher we go in this life the greater our reward in the next. In heaven our rewards will be greater if move toward higher goals in this life. Every Christian should realize together with Paul "God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus." Finally as Christians we don't set goals and move toward them in our own strength but together with the Lord in His strength.



SETTING A GOAL FOR A LAZY SLUGGISH DONKEY

**AS CHRISTIANS LET'S GET MOVING
BY SETTING SHORT TERM GOALS
AND A LONG TERM GOAL FOR GOD.**

FRANK HUTCHINSON