

Succeeding at What Doesn't Matter
Philippians 3:4-11

Would you consider yourself to be successful? How would you even measure that?

Success isn't **EVERYTHING** we think it is-It's so much **MORE!**

Philippians 3:4-11 — *4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

Do you get the sense just listening to this that Paul's understanding of success in life went through a radical transformation? Let's look at how that can happen in our lives as well.

1. Think **CLEARLY** about success in life Philippians 3:4-6

Here's how Paul used to define success...

Rituals: *Circumcised on the 8th day*
Nationalism: *Of the people of Israel*
Status: *Of the tribe of Benjamin*
Heritage: *Hebrew of Hebrews*
Achievements: *Pharisee*
Actions: *Persecutor of the church*
Adherence: *Blameless*

Think clearly about what success really is in your life, because success isn't everything we think it is—it's so much more. There is something worse than not succeeding. It's succeeding at what doesn't matter.

2. Define success in **CONNECTION** with Jesus Philippians 3:7-8

Acts 22:3-16 — **3** *“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. 6 “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ 8 And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ 11 And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. 12 “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. 14 And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’*

Everything he used to think was an asset on the ledger of his life, he realized was really a liability...worthless, offensive and dangerous.

Matthew 13:44-46 — **44** *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

Success is defined by Jesus as knowing Jesus and when you really understand that, you’ll realize that that relationship is worth sacrificing everything you used to think was so important in your life.

3. Make living the life of Jesus our **GOAL** for success **Philippians 3:9-11**

Romans 3:23-24 — **23** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

Galatians 2:20 — **20** *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Philippians 3:11 — *11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

Living the life of Jesus now, experiencing what real success is in this life is going to move us to love our community like never before, because that's exactly how Jesus loves us!

Next Sunday, we're going to challenge you to make this series real. And we're going to provide you with the resources to do just that. We'll have an envelope for you next week, one per family, with instructions on what we're calling Valentine Serve. And during that next week (Feb. 9-16), we're going to love our community like never before. And when you do, we want you to share that with us.

Let's talk about succeeding at what doesn't matter...

1. When Paul evaluated his life prior to his Damascus Road experience, what kinds of things did he point to that he believed made him successful in life (v.4-6)?
2. What kinds of things do people point to today as signs of success in life?
3. How is knowing Jesus like finding a treasure in a field and then going and selling everything you have to purchase that field?
4. Why is thinking incorrectly about success not just worthless, but dangerous?
5. Why do you think it's so easy to believe that there's something we can do in life that will have an impact on our standing with God (v.9)?
6. What do you think it means to become "like him in his death" (v.10)?
7. What kinds of changes would need to take place in our lives if we really made living the life of Jesus our goal when it comes to being successful?