



WHAT IS TRUE SUCCESS?



WHAT IS TRUE SUCCESS?

WHAT could be worse than failure? False success. After all, when you fail at some endeavor, you can take steps to correct the situation. At the very least, you can learn from the experience and resolve to do better next time.

False success is different. Under its influence you can think you are winning when in fact you are losing. By the time you see the need to change, it may be too late.

Consider an example. Jesus Christ once asked: “What good will it do a man if he gains the whole world but loses his life?” (Matthew 16:26) That thought could well apply to those who devote themselves to the pursuit of money and all it can buy—the epitome of false success. “Thinking only in terms of the next major promotion, making more money or acquiring more stuff, fails to feed the soul,” writes career counselor Tom Denham. “Simply measuring success in monetary terms is shallow and will leave you empty in the long-term.”

Evidently, many people today would agree. In one survey conducted in the United States, “having a lot of money” came in 20th in a list of 22 “contributors to having a successful life.” Closer to the top were such things as good health, good relationships, and a job that you love.

Clearly, many people can distinguish between false success and true success—at least when they are asked. It is more challenging, however, to make decisions that reflect the proper view of success.

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HOW DO *YOU* MEASURE SUCCESS?

To test yourself, think about the following hypothetical scenarios.

Who would you say is truly successful?



☐ ALEX

Alex owns a business. He is honest, hardworking, and courteous. Alex's business has flourished, and as a result, he and his family live comfortably.



☐ CAL

Cal owns a similar business, and he makes far more money than Alex. In an effort to beat the competition, though, Cal has become a workaholic and has numerous illnesses.



☐ JANET

Janet is a middle-school student who studies diligently and loves to learn. As a result, she gets good grades.



☐ ELLEN

Ellen gets even better grades than Janet and is an honor-roll student—but she cheats on tests and has little real interest in her education.

If you said that **Cal** and **Ellen**—or **all four** individuals—were successful, you might be measuring success by results only, regardless of the means by which those results were achieved.

On the other hand, if you chose only **Alex** and **Janet**, you probably measure success by a person's character traits and work ethic. It makes sense to do so. Consider the following examples.

- Which is better for Janet's *long-term* welfare—that she get the highest grades or that she nurture a love of learning?
- Which is better for Alex's children—that they have everything money can buy or that they have a father who shows that he values spending time with them?

The bottom line: False success is based on image; true success is based on proper values.

HOW TO ACHIEVE TRUE SUCCESS

The Bible encourages a proper view of success. It does *not* teach that success is attainable only by a fortunate few. On the other hand, it does not endorse the storybook fantasy that if you simply ‘follow your dreams’ all your wishes will come true. That notion—which is all too often spoon-fed to children from an early age—will likely lead to disappointment.

The fact is, real success is within the grasp of anyone—but it requires effort. Consider the following principles.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:

“A lover of silver will never be satisfied with silver, nor a lover of wealth with income.”—Ecclesiastes 5:10.

WHAT IT MEANS. A materialistic lifestyle does not guarantee satisfaction. In fact, it tends to do the opposite. “People whose primary motivations are financial are much more likely to be anxious and depressed than people who value strong relationships with others,” writes Dr. Jean M. Twenge in her book *Generation Me*. She adds: “Research consistently finds that money cannot buy happiness—after you reach a subsistence level, income is not significantly related to life satisfaction.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Set as a goal something more rewarding than wealth and possessions. “Guard against every sort of greed,” Jesus said, “because even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses.” —Luke 12:15.



“My Former Success Was Superficial”

Timothy and Charlotte lived in a large home with many rooms. They had a number of luxury cars and took several expensive vacations each year. Yet, at the height of their material success, they gave it up. *Awake!* asked Timothy what changed their thinking.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:

**“Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.”
—Proverbs 16:18.**

WHAT IT MEANS. Ambition and conceit will not help you find true success. In fact, the book *Good to Great* notes that company leaders who have achieved long-term success “display a compelling modesty, are self-effacing and understated. In contrast, two thirds of the comparison companies had leaders with gargantuan personal egos that contributed to the demise or continued mediocrity of the company.” The lesson? Thinking too much of yourself is more likely to lead to failure than success.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Instead of seeking prestige, cultivate modesty. The Bible says: “If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself”—hardly an indicator of success!—Galatians 6:3.

What kind of work were you doing?

I worked in the music industry and in accounting. Charlotte was a chiropractic assistant, and she also worked in banking. Later, we opened four barber shops. I was considered successful in all these endeavors. In fact, I hardly had to work because I had others working for me. Eventually, though, Charlotte and I decided to scale back. We sold much of what we owned.

Why did you “scale back”?

We could sense that we were not truly successful. The excitement that accompanied each purchase would

quickly pass, leaving us feeling empty, unsatisfied, and unfulfilled.

How did you find true success?

As one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I had always been active in the Christian ministry. Although for a time Charlotte and I were spending 70 hours each month teaching the Bible to others, the ministry was not actually the focus of our lives. So we sold our businesses and made ourselves available to serve wherever there was a need for more Bible teachers. Today we are serving at the United States branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Since this is part

of our ministry, I receive no pay and no special recognition. We have what we need materially. But that is not the focus of our life.

Do you feel more successful than before?

Absolutely. My former success was superficial. What I have now is bringing me *lasting* satisfaction because I know that the work I am doing is helping to take the Bible’s message to people worldwide and is improving their lives.*

* Jehovah’s Witnesses do not receive a salary for carrying out their Bible education work.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:

“There is nothing better for a man than to . . . find enjoyment in his *hard work*.”
—Ecclesiastes 2:24.

WHAT IT MEANS. If you develop a strong work ethic, you will likely enjoy your work more. In her book *Teach Your Children Well*, Dr. Madeline Levine writes: “Part of feeling successful at something is being good at it and most of being good at something has to do with effort and persistence.” That includes having the resilience to deal with occasional setbacks.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Work hard to become proficient, and do not give up when faced with obstacles. If you have children, give them (according to their age and ability) the opportunity to work through their problems. Do not be hasty to rush in and fix all their problems for them. Young people find genuine satisfaction—and acquire good training for adulthood—when they develop resilience.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:

“A live dog is better off than a dead lion.”—Ecclesiastes 9:4.

WHAT IT MEANS. If you work secularly, your job should be part of your life—but not your *whole* life. Really, how successful will you feel if you are at the top of your profession but lose your health or the respect of your family? People who are truly successful endeavor to keep their work, health, and family life in proper balance.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Take care of yourself. Get proper rest. There is little benefit in becoming a workaholic who sacrifices everything—health, family, and friendships—for false success.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:

“Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.”—Matthew 5:3.

WHAT IT MEANS. Study of the Bible and application of its principles are essential ingredients in true success. In fact, millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses have found that putting spiritual matters first in their individual lives has *reduced* their anxieties over material interests.—Matthew 6:31-33.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Learn how the Bible can help you to find true success. For more information, contact Jehovah’s Witnesses locally or visit our Web site, www.jw.org. ■



SWITZERLAND

Tiny sensors attached to three **alpine swifts** at their breeding site have shown that the birds flew nonstop for more than 200 days while migrating to Africa. Previously, such sustained activity in motion had been reported only in marine animals.



INDIA

It is estimated that every hour, a woman is killed because of a dispute over **dowries**. Though the custom of giving and receiving such payments is officially prohibited, in 2012 more than 8,200 women were murdered because a groom or his family believed his bride's dowry to be insufficient.

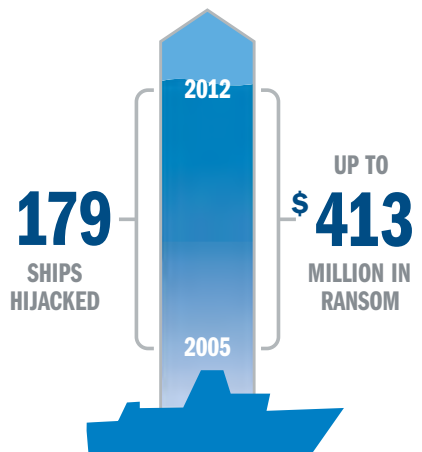
UNITED STATES

Some police are using technology to make car chases less dangerous. One approach being tried involves compressed-air launchers fitted into the grills of patrol cars. These fire **GPS-trackable devices** that stick to vehicles being pursued. Suspects can then be tailed at a safe speed.



HORN OF AFRICA

Pirates hijacked 179 ships off the coast of the Horn of Africa between April 2005 and December 2012. Those criminal acts yielded up to \$413 million (U.S.) in ransom money for the pirates, estimates a World Bank study.





How to Resist Temptation

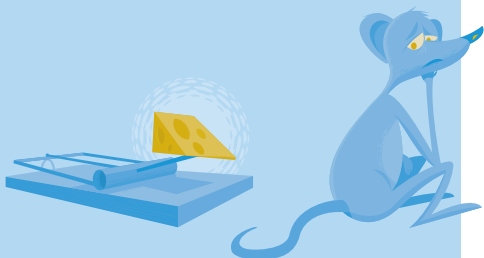


THE CHALLENGE

“Sometimes girls ask me for my phone number and offer to ‘hook up’ with me. I refuse and walk away. But in the back of my mind, there’s a lingering thought, ‘*What if I had given her my number?*’ Honestly, some of those girls are very attractive. It’s easy to think, ‘Why not?’”—Carlos,* 16.

Do you, like Carlos, struggle with temptation? If so, you *can* win the battle.

* Name has been changed.



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Everyone is vulnerable to temptation—even adults.

After all, temptation can take many forms. The apostle Paul was not young when he wrote: “I really delight in the law of God . . . , but I see in my body another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin’s law.” (Romans 7:22, 23) Despite the pressure, Paul resisted the urge to give in—and so can you! Really, why be a slave to your desires? (1 Corinthians 9:27) Learning to resist temptation while you are young will set you free from much anxiety now and will also prove to be a vital skill that you will need in adulthood.

The media fuels temptation. The Bible speaks of “youthful desires,” which are strong enough as it is. (2 Timothy 2:22) But movies, TV, music, and books marketed to young people often intensify those desires by conveying the impression that surrendering to temptation is acceptable. For example, if two characters in a movie are ‘in love,’ it is all but certain that they will have sex with each other at some point in the story. However, the Bible says that real men and women have the power to “keep abstaining from fleshly desires.” (1 Peter 2:11) That means you *can* choose to resist temptation. But how?

**If you give in to temptation,
you will only get hurt**



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Know your weaknesses. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Likewise, your resolve to do what is right is most likely to break in the areas in which you are most vulnerable. Which areas do *you* need to guard against? —*Bible principle: James 1:14.*

Anticipate temptation. Think of situations where you are likely to face temptation. Mentally rehearse how you will resist if such temptation occurs.—*Bible principle: Proverbs 22:3.*

Strengthen your convictions. The Bible says that when tempted to engage in sexual immorality, Joseph said: “How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9) The phrase “*how could I*” shows that Joseph had strong convictions about what was right and wrong. Do you?

Find supportive friends. You can remove much temptation in your life by choosing as associates those who share your moral convictions. The Bible says: “The one walking with the wise will become wise.”—Proverbs 13:20.

Avoid circumstances that will make temptation harder to resist. For example:

- Do not allow yourself to be alone with a member of the opposite sex.
- Avoid using the Internet at a time or a place that might make it tempting for you to view pornography.
- Stay away from people whose speech and conduct make wrongdoing look attractive.

Which guidelines could you set for yourself to help you avoid being brought into temptation?—*Bible principle: 2 Timothy 2:22.*

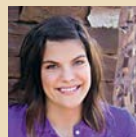
Pray for help. Jesus told his disciples: “Pray continually, so that you may not enter into temptation.” (Matthew 26:41) The fact is, Jehovah God *wants* you to resist temptation, and he can help you to do so. The Bible says: “He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”—1 Corinthians 10:13. ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire.”—James 1:14.

“The shrewd one sees the danger and conceals himself.”—Proverbs 22:3.

“Flee from youthful desires.”—2 Timothy 2:22.



AMANDA

“When I face temptation, I reject it immediately. I find it best not to dwell on the what-ifs or the idea that maybe it wouldn’t be so wrong. Letting the mind dwell on the possibilities is what gets you into trouble in the first place.”



EMILY

“Remove yourself from situations where you’re more likely to face temptation. Surround yourself with friends who encourage you to do what is right. Resisting temptation trains you to deal with tougher situations that you might face in the future.”



A Visit to **Belize**



BELIZE packs variety into a small space—from tropical forests to turquoise waters surrounding a multitude of islands along its coast. But diverse geography is only the beginning of the wonders of Belize.

Hundreds of bird and animal species can be found in this country. Among its wildlife are the brightly colored keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) and the Baird's tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*)—a rubbery-nosed relative of the rhino that can move quickly on land and under water! There is also the solitary jaguar (*Panthera onca*). In fact, Belize boasts the world's first jaguar preserve.

Belize was once part of the Maya civilization. Spanish conquistadores arrived in the 16th century but did not fully defeat the Maya. Later, the British wrested control of the area and in 1862 officially declared it to be the colony of British Honduras. In 1981, Belize gained independence.



Marketplace in Belize City

Belize boasts the world's first jaguar preserve

Belize's coral reef is part of the second largest barrier reef in the world



San Pedro

Belizeans are as colorful as their surroundings. Some of the primary ethnic groups are Creole, East Indian, Garifuna, Maya, and Mestizo. The people are friendly and courteous. When children speak to adults, they often use the terms “Miss” or “Mister” and answer by saying, “Yes, ma’am” or “No, sir.”

In Belize, there are congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses in American Sign Language, Belize Kriol, English, Low German, Mandarin Chinese, Maya (Mopán), and Spanish. In 2013, about 1 in every 40 people in Belize joined the Witnesses in attending the Memorial of Christ’s death. ■

DID YOU KNOW? Belize’s coral reef is over 180 miles (290 km) long. It is part of the second largest barrier reef in the world after Australia’s Great Barrier Reef.

FAST FACTS

Population: 333,000

Capital: Belmopan

Government: Parliamentary democracy

Languages: Belize Kriol, English, Spanish

Climate: Subtropical

Land: The mainland is made up of mountains, tropical forests, and swamps. Hundreds of islands and islets with mangrove trees can be seen in the shallow coastal waters



Airborne Gardeners

of the Tropical Rain Forest

AS ANY gardener knows, successful cultivation depends on sowing seeds in the right place at the right time. Strange as it may seem, however, some of the most effective sowing in the rain forest is done at night—and from the air. The airborne gardeners doing the sowing are Old World fruit bats—some of which are known as flying foxes.*

Spreading the Seed

Most fruit bats fly around at night, scouring the forest for trees that offer

them tasty fruit or flowers rich in nectar. As they go about their aerial foraging, the bats digest fruit and expel undigested pulp and seeds. To complete their gardening work, they also pollinate flowers while sipping the nectar they enjoy so much.

Since fruit bats may cover long distances during the night, they can disperse seeds over a wide area. And because the bats pass some seeds through their digestive tract, they also provide “fertilizer” that encourages seed growth. Not surprisingly, a variety of plants in the rain forest depend on bats to pollinate their flowers or disperse their seeds.

* Old World fruit bats are found in Africa, Asia, Australia, and some of the Pacific Islands.



Baobab tree blossoms have at most a 24-hour life span. But that is enough time for fruit bats to locate the large blooms full of nectar and transfer the pollen to other baobab trees

SAVING THE FOREST

When an area of tropical forest is cleared, bats play a key role in helping trees reestablish themselves in the cleared area. Their ‘gardening work’ can sow seeds that eventually become new trees. “The quality of life for humans is directly related to a healthy global environment, and keeping that environment healthy requires bats,” says the book *Bats of the World*, by Gary L. Graham.



DID YOU KNOW? Unlike many other bats, fruit bats locate their food, not by echolocation, but by sight and smell. Their large eyes are well-suited to their nocturnal activity

Since they range far and wide, fruit bats have to have navigational skills and exceptional eyesight. In poor light, they can see better than humans. They can even distinguish some colors. And they are not at all averse to flying by day as well as by night.

Family Life

The Samoan flying fox (*Pteropus samoensis*) species mates for life. As observed in some species, the female bat cares well for her offspring, carrying it with her for a few weeks and suckling it almost to adulthood. In the case of two

species of fruit bat, the female may even get the services of a “midwife” to assist her during birth.

Sadly, many fruit bats are threatened with extinction, partly because of the destruction of their habitat. In the islands of the South Pacific, the disappearance of fruit bats would be catastrophic because some plant species of these islands seemingly cannot be pollinated without bats. Clearly, the work of these airborne gardeners should never be taken for granted. ■



IMAGES

Millions of sincere people venerate images as part of their worship. But is the practice endorsed in the Bible? Does it please God?

Did faithful Jews of Bible times venerate images?

“You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be enticed to serve them.”
—Exodus 20:4, 5.

The veneration of images is consistently condemned in the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly known as the Old Testament

A COMMON CLAIM According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, the Jews had an abundance of images associated with their worship “and these representations were honored, revered, and venerated.”* As examples, that encyclopedia cites the numerous engravings of fruits, flowers, and animals that adorned the temple in Jerusalem.—1 Kings 6:18; 7:36.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW Contrary to what the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* asserts, faithful Jews did not venerate any of the engravings or figures associated with the temple. In fact, nowhere in the Bible do we read of a faithful Israelite using an image for worship.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS “I give my glory to no one else,” God said through the prophet Isaiah, “nor my praise to graven images.” —Isaiah 42:8.

* The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* defines veneration as “a religious act, an act of worship.”



Did the early Christians use images in their worship?

A COMMON CLAIM “The use of images in early Christian worship cannot now be reasonably questioned,” says the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. “The Christian catacombs are veritable galleries of early Christian art. . . . Even mythological figures adorn the holy chambers of sacred worship and burial.”*

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW The oldest images found in these catacombs—underground passages used as burial places—date back only to the third century. That was some 200 years *after* Jesus died. Therefore, what the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* calls “early Christian worship” is not the *earliest* Christian worship—that which was practiced by *first-century* disciples and described in the Christian Greek Scriptures, commonly known as the New Testament. The fact that such images were in the catacombs merely shows that by the third century, nominal Christians had adopted the pagan custom of using images, likely to attract converts.†

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS “Flee from idolatry.”—1 Corinthians 10:14.

* In this context, images include pictures, icons, statues, symbols, and anything else that is venerated.

† The use of images was common in many ancient cultures, including those of Egypt, Greece, and India.

“What agreement does God’s temple have with idols? . . . Quit touching the unclean thing.”

—2 Corinthians 6:16, 17.

“The early Christians would have looked with horror at the bare suggestion of placing images in the churches, and would have considered bowing down or praying before them as nothing less than idolatry.”—*History of the Christian Church*

Should images be used simply as an *aid* to worship?

A COMMON CLAIM “Since the worship given to an image reaches and terminates in the person represented,” says the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, “the same type of worship due the person can be rendered to the image as representing the person.”

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW When Jesus taught his followers how to pray, he did *not* tell them to use images. The very idea of using an image to worship the true God cannot be found in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS “It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.”—Matthew 4:10.

“Guard yourselves from idols.”—1 John 5:21.

Veneration of images is a religious practice that has no support in the Bible. For that reason, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not venerate images, nor do they have religious images in their homes or in their places of worship



The Horse's Leg



© Lisa Dearing/Alamy

A HORSE (*Equus caballus*) can gallop at a speed of up to 30 miles per hour (50 km/h). Although this involves considerable mechanical work, relatively little energy is spent. How is this possible? The secret is in the horse's legs.

Consider what occurs when a horse gallops. Elastic muscle-tendon units absorb energy when the leg steps onto the ground, and much like a spring, they return it, propelling the horse forward.

Furthermore, at a gallop the horse's legs vibrate at high frequencies that could injure its tendons. However, the muscles in the legs act as dampers. Researchers

call this structure a “highly specialized muscle-tendon design” that provides both agility and strength.

Engineers are trying to imitate the design of the horse's legs for use in four-legged robots. However, according to the Biomimetic Robotics Laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the complexity of this design cannot be easily duplicated with current materials and engineering knowledge.

What do you think? Did the structure of the horse's legs come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

