

TALKING POINTS

JOY - SUCCESS

LEARNING IN

There's always been an implied relationship between success and joy. In the world, there's a never-ending number of books written about success and how to achieve it. The idea is – if you become successful, you will have joy. Time has proven again and again It's simply not the case. Many people have achieved material success and yet had no joy to go along with it.

The true relationship between joy and success is talked about in the book of Philippians, and it begins with the true definition of Success – success (and true joy) is finding what God wants us to do and then doing it.

The most important lessons in our life are learned far better from a model than a manual. It's better to have someone show us how to live our lives than to simply tell us how. We have the ultimate model in Jesus, but we also have a good model in Paul the apostle.

Paul was completely “sold out” – completely committed to doing what God wanted him to do. Because he “walked the walk”, Paul's words to us have a deep meaning and validity. Paul didn't brag, he just told it like it was because he had *lived it out*.

Read Philippians 3:17, 4:9

Why doesn't the pursuit of worldly success bring joy in the end?

LIVING IT OUT

From the model of Paul's life, we can draw out three principles of success – and by extension, these same three principles will bring true joy:

Truthful Evaluation - if we're going to be truly successful in life and gain the joy of the Lord, we have to be *honest about where we really are* in our walk with God. Often our sinful condition in life doesn't reflect our redeemed position before God. We have to be committed to *grow*.

Read Philippians 3:13-14

Why do you think we're inclined to deceive ourselves regarding where we are at spiritually?

Proper Perspective - if we're ever going to be truly successful by finding the joy of the Lord in our lives, we have to put the past behind us. We can't let ourselves be manipulated by the memories of shame and failure in our lives. Learn from the past *without dwelling on the past*. Take our past (whether success or failure) to the cross and *leave it there*.

Read Philippians 3:13, 1 Corinthians 9:24

How do we lay our past at the foot of the cross *and not take it back*?

Determination - to be successful and have joy, we have to be committed to fighting to the finish, to finish well. In the Christian life, gaining ground is always a conquest in an ongoing battle. We have to remember this and press on.

Read Philippians 3:14, Acts 20:24

Why is it when things go well for us, we forget we're in an ongoing spiritual battle?