

The Joy of Successful Christian Living

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Philippians 3:12-14

12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Study after study has revealed that the vast majority of people come to the end of their lives with deep regrets.

- They regret things they failed to say or do for others.
- They regret that they didn't do more things that live on after them.
- They regret that they didn't spend more time with family.

In Philippians chapter three Paul gives us a model for successful living.

3:17 Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

In today's text – Paul explains four keys to successful living.

Secret #1: Face your SHORT-COMINGS

No-one here is perfect. No-one has it all together, including me! It is important to remember this – you and I still have a long way to go. Therefore It is important to inventory your life on a regular basis.

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; Philippians 3:12a

Successful Christians Never Stop Growing. Successful Christians are always developing, growing, expanding, and learning.

“He who keeps his sins secret will not do well; but one who is open about them, and gives them up, will get mercy.” Proverbs 28:13 (BBE) Biblical success begins with being honest with yourself – face your shortcoming and realize you are a work in progress.

Secret #2: Let go of your PAST

Many of us dwell on the past – and not only that – we replay the bad stuff over and over and over again. In verse thirteen it says: *“But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,” Philippians 3:13*

Success involves learning to biblically forget. A passage from Isaiah in the Message Bible says:

"Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands.” Isaiah 43:18-19 (MSG)

How do I live beyond the “stuff” that has happened?

Don't let the past control you anymore. Don't let it have power over you or manipulate you.

How? Change your self-talk:

People who dwell on the past do two really foolish things:

They live with the delusion that they can change their past by dwelling on it.

They believe they need to punish themselves with negative talk: “You dummy, You fool, You were stupid.”

Successful people learn from the past without dwelling in the past. They change their language to: “I did make a mistake but I have learned and will do it differently in the future.” “Jesus has cleansed me of my sin. I am a new person in him.”

Successful people learn from the past and once they learn the lessons they need – they let go and move on.

REMEMBER WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT YOU IN HIS WORD: *For I know the plans I have for you,* declares the LORD, *plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11*

Secret #3: Focus on the FUTURE

“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14

Paul was goal orientated – he had a single priority! He is looking “onward – to Jesus.”

Paul says that the successful Christian life is goal orientated and single focused. Our goal should be to please Jesus. The Bible says: ***“Don't you realize that everyone who runs in a race runs to win, but only one runner gets the prize? Run like them, so that you can win.” 1 Corinthians 9:24 (GW)***

“Whether we live in the body or move out of it, our goal is to be pleasing to him (Jesus).” 2 Corinthians 5:9 (GW) There is no more rewarding goal in life – than to please the Lord.

Secret #4: Fight to WIN

It is not enough just to have a goal in mind – you must also have the determination to reach that goal. Absolutely nothing worthwhile in life happens without effort.

Paul said: ***“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus..” Philippians 3:14***

Paul is writing in Second Timothy when he says: ***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” 2 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)***

In fact Paul wrote in the book of Philippians: ***“I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6 (HCSB)***

Conclusion:

This week I will make a list of my shortcomings and turn them over to Jesus in prayer seeking that he will change my shortcomings into positive characteristics.

I will let go of my past mistakes, hurts or sorrows by putting them in the hands of Jesus and refusing to ever attempt to take them back.

I will focus on the Lord Jesus' future and seek to follow him regardless of the cost, effort or time it demands.