

Another Side of Success

By Allan L. Nemer

The topic of success is common in business circles. Myriads of books and seminars exist for the sole purpose of helping you, your business or organization succeed. I think there are as many definitions of success as there is sand on the beach. Without a starting point, it is difficult for most people to know where to start. To those who know the L-rd and His word, the initial steps are easily found.

A Place to Begin

G-d's word clearly states that the fear of L-rd is the **beginning** of wisdom and knowledge. I believe the meaning of those scriptures is that the fear of G-d includes reading His word, spending time in prayer to get to know Him and please Him. That is the basic and probably only biblical definition of success. Seeking the L-rd is not a formula for fame, fortune, wealth and happiness. In many parts of the world, seeking the L-rd means a death sentence. Seeking His face is its own reward. Yeshua stated:

"But seek first the kingdom of G-d and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you". (NKJV Matt 6:33)

As we follow the L-rds examples, we are able to deal with the successes and **failures** of life. Seeking the L-rd is a day-by-day experience. It is a practice that never ends and we should never want it to end. Daily, by His grace and with his help, we should be checking our hearts before Him. Otherwise, we will find ourselves in a slow but sure slide towards a hardened heart that is unresponsive to the L-rd and to His correction and discipline.

An Example from Scripture

Let us go to scripture to see an example of someone that at first sought the L-rd and achieved great success. However, as time went on he changed and grew far away from the L-rd

In the book of 2 Chronicles, chapter 14 we find Asa becoming king of Judah after the death of his father Abijah. As fathers go, Asa had a good example of godly leadership. Abijah only reigned in Judah for three years yet those years were filled with a war with Israel. Abijah did what was good in the eyes of the L-rd. In Abijah's case, the result of having a good heart was success in the battlefield. His godly life was not ignored, because when his son Asa became king in his place, he followed his father's example.

Asa reigned in Judah for 41 years. Scripture records that Asa did what was good and right in G-d's eyes. He was committed to the L-rd and spiritually cleaned up the country. He went far beyond many other kings of Judah and tried to thoroughly cleanse the land of everything that was ungodly. He removed the foreign idols and high places, broke the sacred pillars and wooden images. He commanded Judah to seek the L-rd and obey His commandments. He even removed his mother as queen mother because she built an image of a foreign god. Paragraph after paragraph talks about all of King Asa's accomplishments and under his godly leadership Judah prospered and became powerful.

When Ethiopia went to war against Judah, Asa didn't trust in his strength but sought the L-rd for help and guidance. The L-rd responded to the king's faith by destroying the enemies' army. The result of that victory spurred Asa to greater accomplishments. For 35 years, Asa was experiencing prosperity and success.

What changed?

However, along the way, something happened to Asa. The scriptures do not say what happened. There is no written record that King Asa's heart had changed or of sin in his life. Yet, it is obvious through his actions that his heart had grown cold towards the L-rd. He seemed to take things for granted. I can only speculate that King Asa's heart grew proud of "his" accomplishments. Perhaps he assumed the L-rd would automatically endorse his every move. Maybe he was caught up in the "doing" of

Sometimes
success is a
greater test
than failure or
persecution.

activities. Sometimes after a long string of victories and successes, we end up presupposing that everything we do is from the L-rd. It is easy to become presumptuous and think that the L-rd will bless it simply because “we” are doing it.

In the 36th year of his reign, Baasha, king of Israel came against Judah. King Asa took all the gold and silver from his palace and the temple of L-rd, gave it to the king of Syria, and asked for his help. Asa, with the help of Syria won the battle, but did he really win the war? No longer do we see prayers to the L-rd asking for His help. No entreaties are recorded, nor do we read about any fasting. No longer do we see dependence upon G-d. No longer do we see a realization that everything comes from the L-rd

After the war was over, the L-rd disciplined Asa, through a prophet, for not trusting in G-d for deliverance. Instead of realizing the error of his ways and humbling himself, as his ancestor King David did, King Asa became furious, put the prophet in jail, and started to brutally oppress his people. The Hebrew word for “oppress” means “to crack in pieces” (literally or figuratively). The king had changed so much over the years that he became unwilling and unable to hear correction. Punishment and possible torture was awaiting anyone who criticized him as king. His unwillingness to receive correction spilled over to other people, causing them pain and suffering.

What does this have to do with me?

In our personal lives, in business or in ministry we can lose our way. King Asa is an example to all of us. After 3 decades of good leadership, he seemed to have taken some things too much for granted. He lost his humility before G-d. It is easy to get overly involved in activities and lose track of the ONE who is the author of these activities. We need to maintain a **daily** walk with the L-rd or risk becoming cold hearted.

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the L-RD require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your G-d.” (Micah 6:8 NKJV)

A daily prayer:

Thank you L-rd for everything you have done in my life. You loved me so much that You died upon the tree (cross) so that I might have eternal life and eternal fellowship with You. Encourage and empower me every moment to seek first You and Your kingdom. Show me if there is any sin in my life. If there is, I acknowledge it now and thank you for the power of your blood that washes me clean. I come before You now to give me my daily bread. Show me today’s task that I will do in Your name and with Your power. Since everything comes from You, I give You all the praise and glory. In Y’shua’s name, AMEN.

Lesson’s to be learned

- If you haven’t accepted Y’shua (Jesus) into your life and accepted his atonement for your sins then **now** is the time to do so. Because of what He did at Calvary, we can have eternal life and eternal fellowship with Him.
- By scriptural definition (from G-ds point of view), success is defined as not only knowing the L-rd but also seeking the L-rd and His kingdom first and pleasing Him first. Don’t fall into the trap of using the world’s standards of success.
- Seeking the L-rd is its own reward.
- Stay accountable to those people in your life whom you trust and know will speak honestly to you.
- Stay humble and give the L-rd all the credit.
- While a failure can hurt, success can just as easily wreck our life. Sometimes success is a greater test than failure or persecution.