

I was a lousy speller when I was a kid. So I tried everything I could think of to learn how to spell. My teachers told my parents not to spell words for me and make me look them up in the dictionary. One of the words that I learned how to spell in a rather unique way was the word success. I would hear the cheerleaders at games yell, “S U C C E S S, that’s the way we spell success.” I figured if they could spell it that way at a game, they must be right. That cheer still pops into my head every time I try to spell the word success.

Even though we can know how to spell the word, we may not know what success is. People define success in many different ways. For some success is money, for others it is climbing to the top. There is a magazine called SUCCESS and conferences on How to Succeed in just about any area of business or life. One thing is certain, the more you try to succeed, the more likely you are to run into someone who wants to block your success. Ask anyone who has taken part in this year’s presidential race.

People may not want us to succeed, but God does. Jesus’ words recorded in Matthew 19:26 say, **“With God all things are possible.”** But his idea of success may not be the same as the people of the world. So how do we succeed? What are the keys to success? Let me suggest five ideas drawn from God’s Word as the Keys to Success.

The first key is to Dream Big. Don’t be afraid to dream God’s sized dreams. Since all things are possible with God, we can dream big for the Lord because we know that the Lord can do great things in and through us. God doesn’t want us to fail. He doesn’t give us something to do and then set us up for failure. In Philippians 1:6 we are given this great promise, **“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”** If you think you can’t do something, you probably will never even try. But if you think you can do something that honors God and with His help, the go for it. God wants you to succeed in a life of service, a life of faithfulness, a life of compassion. The Tyler Steffey Field, a field of dreams, is coming closer and closer to a reality every day. Why? Because this field will help us serve the youth and their families in our community. It will help us reach out to them and introduce them to Jesus.

Key #2 is Stay Focused on Christ. Don’t get distracted by all the others things going on around you. Stay focused on God’s plan for your life. Hebrews 12 tells us, **“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”** Remember that your goal is to serve and glorify the Lord. Remember that when you fail to live up to God’s standards, that He still loves you and is ready to forgive you and restore you. If you want to succeed, let Christ show you the way. Walk with Him

in humble faith. Everything that glitters isn't gold. Just because people call something a success, doesn't mean that it is. Follow Christ on the road to success.

Key #3 is Be Part of the Team. You can't succeed by yourself. We need help to succeed. In faith and life that help comes from God. Jesus said that He would always be with us. He promised to give us the Holy Spirit as our Counselor and Guide. So success begins by being connected to God. But success also comes when we work together in the name of the Lord. There are few things more disheartening than to see a group of Christians fighting among themselves. Why does that happen? Do people forget that we are one in the Lord? We are partners in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul offered this prayer for the Christians in Philippi (Philippians 1:5-6), **"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel."** Churches, Bible study groups, even Christian families succeed when they are all on the same team, partners in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The fourth key is to Lean on Jesus. In 1 Peter 5:7 we are told, **"Cast all your anxiety on him (Jesus) because he cares for you."** Jesus wants to help us through life. He wants to be there when the times are tough, when we are not sure what to or don't know which way to turn. Worrying won't do us any good. But putting our trust in Jesus. He is always with us. There is nothing that life can throw at us that we can't face as long as the Lord is with us. He may not take the bad things in life away, but He will help lift the load and give us the strength that we need to get through it. Believe that God cares for you because He does. Trust in God's love, after all Jesus died to pay for your sins. His love lasts forever.

The final key to success is to Stick with Jesus. It is too soon to quit. Too many people set out on the journey of faith and then give up. Today six of our young people will confirm their faith during the 11:00 Service. This is an important step in their journey of faith as they make their public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Young people do this in Christian Churches all across our nation. Some of them will keep their promises, but other will call confirmation graduation and walk away. They can't and won't succeed. Jesus said, **"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."** (John 15:7) That is a wonderful promise of success. God can and will do great things in our lives if we stick with Him.

It is really simple if we have the right definition of success. If our goal is to know and trust the Lord, grow in the Lord and serve the Lord and the people around us, then we can be successful. But if our goal is reaching the top or getting as much money as possible, success may slip through our hands. Remember to dream big in the Lord, stay focused on Christ, be part of God's team, lean on Jesus for help, stick with Jesus and you can be a success. Amen.