



Places In The Father's Heart

That reach out and touch, to bring times of refreshing...

Success ~ Ours or His

By Gerri Taylor

It is important to realize that God does not count success as we count success. In our culture today, we are bombarded by things that the world calls success. We often term success by an individual's wealth, by the kind of vehicle they drive, by the neighborhood they live in, by the labels of the clothes they wear, by the country club they belong to, by the company they work for, or by the number of friends they have. We must remember that success is not measured by what we have; it is measured by who we are.

God never looks on the outside to determine our success, He looks on the heart. When the Lord spoke to Samuel regarding Saul and His rejection of him He said, "Samuel, look not on his appearance or at the height of his stature, for I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." I Sam. 16:7.

Often a church's success will be based on their size, or the number of baptisms they have had over a certain period, or how many they have had in Sunday school in a particular week. Other ministries successes will be based on their size and how many people they have had attend an event, or how many international countries they have visited. That is the way man looks at success. If God does not base success on outward appearances, we wonder what He uses as a basis for church or ministry success. We believe once again that a church or ministry's success is based on who they are and what comprises their character and integrity. Those two qualities cannot be bought or sold. They are earned; and they are earned in the school of the Holy Spirit. They are never earned in the glory they are learned in the gutter of hard knocks and tough times. They are learned when times are lean; so lean that one would scream 'failure' if they looked at the books! It is when all fails, when nothing seems to work, when God calls you to do something very specific and it seems to utterly fail. That is when character and integrity are learned and earned!

We have been busy over the past several months writing our first book. In pulling together the history of our time in ministry, we have recalled many interesting stories when we have sought the Lord diligently, heard His voice clearly, and obeyed only to find ourselves standing seemingly alone and wondering how in the wide world we could have missed Him so far! We knew we'd heard Him and we had obeyed the best way we could, yet the outcome was far less than we or others had expected. Lord, we'd say, we know You said You'd bless us. Where is the blessing?

It was during these times when we had to look beyond what we could see with our natural eyes. We had to look for the bigger picture in what God was doing. We had to go after the mystery to find the real blessing. It was because we did not count success as He counts success. Generally we were looking for the blessing in some kind of tangible way; mainly money! But God was looking on our hearts. He was after the character and integrity that would be produced through our obedience even if we could not see it at the time.

Of great importance in finding success is the fact that we must never violate our relationship with God at the expense of doing the wrong thing. God speaks to all of us differently. He seldom asks



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the same thing of everyone. Remember in the New Testament He authorized that meat could be eaten when it was blessed. To one man he gave the privilege of eating meat, yet to another He spoke to him to avoid meat and eat only vegetables. Neither man was wrong so long as he obeyed what God had spoken to his heart. To some He will ask a certain thing based solely upon His command; to another He may allow that person freedom to do precisely what He's asked another not to do. We must learn to respect each other and extend freedom for each other to walk out what we believe we have heard in our hearts as God's command. If we don't do that, we will judge and criticize our brother unjustly.

True success is based on who we are on the inside and how we walk out our Christian life. May character and integrity be worked in our lives so that when difficult decisions are placed before us we will never compromise our relationship with God. May we stand firmly on what He has spoken to our hearts to do and let Him be the judge of the heart of every man.