
Papa Hawk Perspectives Thoughts on Success

Everything we need to know about happiness and success is contained within the binding of one book – the Word of God.

Since I retired at the end of 2020, I have had the time to reflect a lot on my life up to this point. I have known all along life's journey that I have been surrounded by God's favor – regardless of the temporal circumstances that I may have been experiencing at the time. I have been so blessed by God in every area of my life.

When I was younger, "success" was a significant area of interest. I was very motivated to meet the needs of my young family. And I was so intrigued by what was it that separated those that were able to succeed and meet their goals from those that always seemed to struggle to achieve? Why did some people have the "golden touch" while others never seemed to be able to get over the top? Why did some people seem to be blessed in everything they put their hands to while life seemed to be a constant struggle for others?

I was determined to unearth the "secret" of success. There had to be something that the high achievers knew that we didn't learn growing up or weren't taught by our college professors. To this end, I listened to endless recordings (on cassette tape back in the day lol) and have read literally hundreds of books on success, self-image, goal setting, people skills, financial success, etc. These books, both Christian and secular, were valuable to me in my personal growth and the results that I was able to achieve professionally, financially and in all areas of life.

Keep God First In All Things

In a nutshell, the Papa Hawk philosophy of success includes the foundational principle of "Keep God First In All Things," with the individual pillars being the importance of renewing our minds, seedtime and harvest, prayer, believer's authority/spiritual warfare, and financial stewardship.

The two principles I have really been led to focus on, and I know have made a huge impact in our lives, is the importance of consistently renewing our minds in God's Word and God's laws of finance and stewardship.

Does God Want His Kids to be Successful?

I know that it can be a controversial topic within the church as to whether God desires for his kids to be "successful?" And does God desire for His kids to be blessed financially? I believe the answers to these questions is a resounding "yes!" I don't believe God has called us to be insecure, insignificant, destitute, or living an unfulfilled life. There is plenty of scripture to establish that He desires for us to have life more abundantly, for our needs to be met and to have all sufficiency in all things for every good work. Scripture also establishes that God has a unique plan for each of our lives and He desires for us to be fulfilled and happy, i.e. to be blessed.

Unfortunately, religion is one of the strongest weapons the kingdom of darkness has to discourage people from believing for something more. It can be disheartening when so many churches/denominations believe that God doesn't perform miracles today or, worse, that God is the one who wills for our lives to be a mess in order to break us down and teach us a lesson.

Basing our faith on our own personal experiences, on what our five physical senses can perceive vs. what God tells us in His Word, is a strategy of the enemy designed to discourage us. As Pastor John says, disappointment is the

mother of really bad theology because what many believers do when they're disappointed is to lower their theology to match the disappointment rather than lift the disappointment to the truth of God's word.

The enemy loves it when we doubt. He loves it when we settle. He loves it when we don't believe God's Word – "well that blessing happened for them but that doesn't seem to be the plan for me." So, you resign yourself to your reality that this is the way it's going to be. It seems to be your truth even though it doesn't line up with what the Word says. Here's the bottom line –

We should not allow fear or doubt to compromise our thinking and belief in God's Word based on what others may or may not be experiencing in their walk of faith

Moreover, some in the body of Christ believe that God sovereignly controls everything including every immoral and despicable act of evil. I believe the Word establishes beyond any doubt that this is not true, that God is not the author of sin or evil. John 10:10 is one of many verses to address this – "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." 1 John 3:8 states, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."

Don't misunderstand me - there is no doubt that God did not put us in this world to be "successful." We will never hear the Father utter the words, "well done my good and successful servant." He put us in this world to be faithful disciples and to have relationship with Him. And He has given us plenty of instruction in His word that he desires for us to be happy and successful as long as we are living our lives abiding in Him and seeking Him above all other things.

Victory for the believer comes in knowing and choosing God's truth

With that said, there are so many Christians, in my opinion, that are being deceived and living defeated lives, believing that this is God's will for their lives. This is unfortunate as I believe our heavenly Father desires for each of his kids to live a free and productive life in Christ. 3 John 2 says that above all things He wishes that we prosper and be in health, even as our soul prospers. And Psalm 35:27 says that God takes pleasure in the prosperity of his servants. Just like earthly fathers loving their kids and desiring that they live happy and productive lives, God wants the same and more for each of his children.

Well Done My Good and Faithful Servant

Every Christian longs to hear those words from Jesus' lips someday in heaven. No one will ever hear the Lord say, "Well done my good and successful servant." Living a life in relationship with the Lord, seeking Him first and abiding in Him in our daily walk, regardless of the circumstances and what may or may not be happening in our life at any point in time, is what the Word instructs.

Any goals that we achieve or success that we attain should be a byproduct of a love relationship with God. As Pastor John teaches, "we are not living for God's love, approval and blessing, we are living from His love, approval and blessing!"

Note that it's a relationship with God our Father - not a formula. The Holy Spirit is a "He" to whom we relate as our divine guide, not an "it" that can be boxed and quantified. We are talking about walking with God, which is a Father-son relationship.

A Right Relationship With Money

The Word says that “the love of money is the root of all evil.” In other words, if we are out of balance and seeking money ahead of our relationship with the Lord, that is clearly unacceptable to God. Our relationship with the Lord must be our number one priority. Money is just a tool, it is an inanimate object, it is neither good nor bad. Having an abundance of money or a lack of money does not equate to holiness. It’s what we do with the money that God entrusts us with that matters. Money is essential to fund churches and missions to spread the gospel to the ends of the world. When we understand that God owns everything and we are called to be stewards of what He blesses us with, we will have a right relationship with money.

As Our Soul Prospers

3 John 2 says, “Above all things, I wish that you prosper and be in health” – but the last four words are the key – **“even as your soul prospers.”** In other words, growing in our knowledge of the Word and how to live our lives in accordance with the instructions He has given us. It means walking by faith and trusting in Him, regardless of what may or may not be going on in our lives. It means being motivated to serve God and make a difference by being a blessing to Him and others, as well as helping to fulfill the Great Commission. We are to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, His way of doing and being right above all else, then everything that we need will be added to us. The question is whether we are living our lives abiding in Him and acknowledging Him in all our ways vs. living carnal lives in submission to our flesh and the world?

Always Keep God First

In reflecting back on my professional life and time in the corporate world, when I was in the trenches and in the midst of the “battle” while developing my book of business at IMA, I was very intentional about certain principles that I believe undoubtedly made a difference in what I was able to achieve.

As I mentioned before, if I had to boil everything that I have learned down to just four words, this four-word prescription for happiness and success would be, “always keep God first.” Seeking the Lord and having a personal/daily relationship with Him is the foundation on which we lived every aspect of our life. As Pastor John has said, “keeping the main thing the main thing” is of paramount importance. I was convinced early on that I did not want to live life on my own power and my own intellect. Truth be told, I lacked the confidence to do anything relying solely on my own talents and abilities.

Do the best you can and God will make up the difference!

Here is an awesome truth to understand - the Holy Spirit is the world's best salesman, the world's best mechanic, the world's best factory worker, the world's best engineer, the world's best nurse, the world's best doctor, the world's best dentist, etc. etc. There is no limit to what He can do through us in any occupation. Our job is to seek first His Kingdom, be in relationship with Him and then just do the very best we can with the human abilities that He has given us and trust in Him for the rest.

So, it just made sense to me to tap into the creator of this entire universe, who also created me and loves me and has a great plan for my life. It just made sense to prioritize my relationship with the Lord, to walk by faith, to trust in Him and abide in Him. So, part of my daily prayer was that of surrender - I did not want to live any aspect of my life on my own power or my own might. I certainly did not want to rely on my own intellect. I prayed for wisdom and guidance in every word, every thought and every action. I prayed that I could be a vessel that the Lord could work through so I could be a blessing and make a difference in the lives of others.

Then Just Do The Simple Things:

Pray and surrender daily – give thanks in all things

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Seek His wisdom and guidance in all things
Trust in the Lord and His great and precious promises
Stand on the Word of God, believe the Word of God and make the Word of God the final authority in your life
Do the best you can with the talents and abilities that God has blessed you with
Be intentional in constantly renewing your mind in God's Word to achieve transformation
Strive to be a blessing in every word, thought and action
To be a vessel that the Lord can work through to help fulfil the Great Commission
Be intentional in giving your time and resources knowing that you can't outgive God
He will bless and multiply the seed you have sown and give back to you a good measure, pressed down and shaken together
Don't get hung up on the tough times and adversity
Don't grow weary in doing good - don't be anxious about anything
Cast all your cares on the Lord, continue to walk by faith
Persevere with the Lord's help and strength, not on your own power and might
Keep your eyes on God, not on your problems
Understand your authority over all the power of the enemy
Don't be moved by the world or your flesh, your circumstances or your feelings
Keep everything in perspective – whatever it is that is bothering you today, ask yourself – will it really matter in a year, or 5 years, or 10 years from now or in eternity.... how this circumstance turns out?

- 99% of the time the answer is a big NOPE

And always remember the end of the good book says that we win! 😊

It all gets back to “keep the main thing the main thing” and to “keep God first in all things” which says it all.

As Jesus commanded, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Mathew 22:37-38

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