



Sermon-Based Small Group Leader Notes

For the week of October 30, 2011 (week 7 of 10)

Introduction

Topic: The Idol of Success

Sermon Title: "Make It All About Success"

Sermon Series: *How to Wreck Your Life* (week 3 of 5)

Scripture: Mark 8:34-36

Sermon by: Pastor Harrington

Goals for This Gathering

- To discuss the homework
- To pray together
- To look at how we view success in our lives and discuss ways to prevent allowing success to become an idol
- Discuss any changes in day or time that might need to be made with the holidays coming up

Prayer

- Take prayer requests and praises
- Pray for all Small Groups meeting at Northwest and in homes
- Pray for the spiritual growth of your group

Getting Started

The questions in this section allow for both fun (q.1) and serious (q.2) answers. Have some answers ready for **questions 1 & 2** to help encourage others to answer. For **question 3**, consider the statements by Chris Evert and Madonna on their success struggles.

Chris Evert was one of the top tennis players on the women's tour back in the 1970's and 1980's. In fact, her overall win-loss record was the best of any singles player in history. But when she contemplated retirement, she was petrified. Here's how she put it:

I had no idea who I was, or what I could be away from tennis. I was depressed and afraid because so much of my life had been defined by my being a tennis champion. I was completely lost. Winning made me feel like I was somebody. It made me feel pretty. It was like being hooked on a drug. I needed the wins, the applause, in order to have an identity. [*Good Housekeeping*, October 1990, pp. 87-88]

Here's a similar sentiment from pop legend Madonna:

I have an iron will, and all of my will has always been to conquer some horrible feeling of inadequacy.... My drive in life is from this horrible fear of being mediocre. And that's always pushing me, pushing me. Because even though I've become Somebody, I still have to prove that

I'm *Somebody*. My struggle has never ended and it probably never will. ["The Misfit," *Vanity Fair*, April 1991, pp. 160-169, 196-202]

Into the Bible

In this section, participants have the opportunity to look at two other verses from the Bible that give us a sense of how success should be viewed in our lives.

- Mark 8:34-36: Jesus warns of the addiction to achieve.
- 2 Kings 5:1-16: Naaman teaches there can be only one God!

Question 8 is very open to discussion. After being healed, Naaman tried to give a gift to Elisha. But Elisha would have nothing to do with it. Elisha wanted Naaman to know that his healing came neither as the result of anything he had done nor had his healing resulted from Naaman's actions, but the miraculous healing came only by the grace of God. How do you approach God?

Digging Deeper

- The questions in this section look at our individual situations and may invite some to share very personal stories.
- Allow your group to answer these more personal questions as they feel comfortable, perhaps even sharing an example of your own.
- Before praying, allow your group members to think about **question 9** and the thoughts above it. Take a couple of minutes to consider what role success has played in each of our lives. There is nothing wrong with wanting to do well at whatever it is God has called you to do. But if you have been measuring your worth based on your salary or your career or your trophy spouse or the GPA of your children, then beware.
- Close with prayer, praying for each other and for God's wisdom about success in our lives.

Prayer Requests and Closing Prayer