

## Attitudinal Requirements for Spiritual Success

### Introduction:

1. Paul J. Meyer founded Success Motivational Institute (SMI) in 1960 and dedicated it to “motivating people to their full potential. His flagship company has grown into an international group of companies marketing his materials in more than 60 companies and in 23 languages.”
2. The international growth of his company and his ideas reflect the fact that millions of people the world over desire and even dream of success in the material world. Sadly, however, many who dream of success become dismal failures!
3. However, success in the material world pales into insignificance when compared to success in the spiritual realm. Note Matt. 6:19-21; Matt. 16:26.
4. True spiritual success is reflected in such scriptures as: Rev. 2:10; Rev. 14:13; 2 Timothy 4:6-8.
5. I verily believe that every person who is genuinely converted, as he (or she) begins his (or her) life as a Christian, has a deep longing for heaven, and really wants to hear the Lord say: “*well done...*,” Matt. 25:21,23.
6. However, the sobering fact remains that the pages of history record the examples of countless souls who started well, but never realized their goals:
  - a. Demas, Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10.
  - b. Judas, Matt. 10:1-4; Matt. 27:3-5.
  - c. The Israelites, I Cor. 10:1-5.
  - d. Some of the Galatians, Gal. 1:6-7; 5:7.
  - e. Some of the Hebrew saints, Heb. 5:12-14.
7. True success does not come accidentally; It takes proper **action**. But underlying and behind all correct action is the proper **attitude**. Lesson Title: Attitudinal Requirements for Spiritual Success.

### Discussion:

#### I. Definitions:

##### A. Attitude:

1. “A way of thinking, acting, or feeling; manner, or behavior of a person toward a situation or cause.”
  - a. Our mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated, or allowed to run wild.
2. From a biblical perspective, how we think is most important (Prov. 4:23; 23:7; Phil. 4:8).
  - a. We are not the victims of circumstances nearly so much as we are victims of the wrong thought processes. Circumstances reveal character; they do not produce success.
  - b. Lou Holtz: “your talents determine what you can do. Your attitude determines how well you do it.”

##### B. Spiritual:

1. An adjective. “Of or having something to do with the spirit or soul.”
2. Having been created in the image of God, Gen. 1:27, we are spirit beings, Heb. 12:9.

##### C. Success:

1. “A favorable result; wished for ending; good fortune...”
2. Pau Meyer: “The progressive realization of a predetermined worthwhile goal.”
3. Success is a Bible word, Josh. 1:8.

#### II. Observations:

##### A. In the Physical Realm.

1. Success is not the result of one’s birth or family circumstances. One may be “born rich,” but he is not born successful

##### B. In the Spiritual Realm.

1. Success is not the result of being born to good parents, and being brought up in a good environment.
  - a. To be sure, this is a great help toward a person succeeding in life, Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6; Psa. 127:4.
  - b. But countless people, at birth, were blessed with “good Christian parents,” who took their work seriously, but who succumbed to the temptations of Satan and fell away, never to return to the Lord, I Peter 5:8,9. Others, born to immoral parents, have become faithful, fruitful Christians.
2. Three things, Attitude, Character, and Success go hand in hand.

#### III. Approaches one could appropriately take in Developing this lesson.

##### A. From the standpoint of the Beatitudes, Matt. 5:3-12.

1. Poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger and thirst, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers. The importance of these character qualities cannot be over emphasized.

##### B. From the Standpoint of the Fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22-23.

1. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. The importance of these qualities cannot be over emphasized.

- C. From the Standpoint of the “Christian Graces,” 2 Peter 1:5-7.
1. Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, goodness, brotherly kindness, charity (or love). The importance of these qualities cannot be over emphasized.

#### IV. The Approach we are Taking – look at People in the Bible Who were Spiritually Successful, and observe the Predominant Attitudes and Characteristics about Them.

##### A. Old Testament Characters.

1. Abraham – Faith.
  - a. Born in Mesopotamia, Acts 7:2, to idolatrous parents, Josh. 24:2.
  - b. Unique in that he “uttered no prophecy, wrote no book, sang no song, gave no laws; he was a rough, venerable, Bedouin-like sheep master.” We know little about him prior to age 75.
  - c. God called him, “*My friend*,” Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7; Jas. 2:23.
  - d. He was certainly not perfect, Gen. 12:13; 20:2.
  - e. Yet he was a man of great faith! Gen. 12:2; Heb. 11:8,10; Gen. 15:5-6; Rom. 4:20-21; Heb. 11:17-19; Genesis 22:2-3.
  - f. We need Abraham’s brand of faith! If God “said it,” we had better “believe it.”
2. Joseph – Purity.
  - a. Son of Jacob, great grandson of Abraham. He went “from pit to palace, from rags to riches.” He endured all the vicissitudes of life, but he kept his record clean. He did not allow slavery to embitter him, nor was he spoiled by success.
  - b. But surely one of his greatest virtues was that of moral purity! Gen. 39:7-13.
  - c. We need that kind of purity! I Tim. 5:22; 2 Cor. 7:1.
3. Moses.
  - a. Youngest child of Amram and Jochebed, Ex. 2:10-21, who became a great Hebrew leader, writer of the Pentateuch, a historian, statesman, and patriot.
  - b. Lived for 120 years (first 40 years, from birth until flight into Midian), (second 40 years from flight into Midian to the Exodus), (third 40 years from the Exodus to his own exodus).
  - c. “As Pharaoh’s son he learned to be a somebody; in desert places he learned to be a nobody. As leader of God’s host he learned that God is everything, the only person in the Bible to have God as his undertaker!” Deut. 34:6. In more ways than one there were similarities between Moses and Christ, but greatest being that he was a lawgiver, Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22; James 4:12.
  - d. But Moses was known for his meekness, Num. 12:3.  
(1) He surely had that God-tamed spirit (which is what meekness is).

##### B. New Testament Characters.

1. Paul – Zeal!
  - a. The great apostle to the Gentiles, wrote 13 N.T. epistles, a Pharisee, a freeborn citizen of Rome, a tent maker by trade, educated at the feet of Gamaliel, a persecutor of Christians.
  - b. But once converted, he had one “magnificent obsession” – to conquer the Roman Empire for Christ.
  - c. His was a life of Zeal!  
(1) Run out of Antioch, he went to Iconium (Acts 14:1). Stoned at Lystra, he went to Derbe, back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, Acts 13:19-22. Beaten and imprisoned at Philipp, he went to Thessalonica, Acts 16:40-17:3. It seems that everywhere he went he got into trouble, but the only thing that could still his tongue was to have his head cut off.
  - d. We need to have that kind of zeal! Titus 2:14.
2. The Eunuch – Eagerness to learn the will of God!
  - a. He had a good job, Acts 8:27; was devoted to God, Acts 8:27, eager to learn (and obey) and obey the will of God, Acts 8:30-31,36.
3. Peter – forgiveness.
  - a. Brother of Andrew, son of Jona, fisherman of Bethsaida, became the Lord’s friend, disciple, and apostle. Was naturally impulsive, a natural leader, apostle to the Jews.
  - b. But another word describes Peter – forgiveness.  
(1) He craved the Lord’s forgiveness (Matt. 26:75); he was concerned about forgiving others (Matt. 18:21-22); he practiced forgiveness; he was not one to hold a grudge (Gal. 2:11,13; 2 Pet. 3:15).

#### Conclusion:

1. All of us should long for spiritual success. It begins with the proper attitude.
2. One can never be successful as a Christian unless he first becomes a Christian!

--Bobby Witherington, Sept. 11, 2016

