



# WINNING DOES NOT EQUAL SUCCESS

## ABSTRACT

*it was in time for me to watch one of my favorite events that I have watched for the past 56 years. This is the NCAA ...*

April 12, 2026

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## Scripture of the Day

1 John 5:1 – 5

*5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. <sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup>For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup>For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

## Introduction

*Welcome to a church in the World where we strive to share what God says and means from His Word with anyone who is willing to listen. Coach disciples on how to walk that out, knowing there will be pain and suffering, but also experiencing the supernatural joy of the Lord both now and forevermore.*

You may notice that our tagline is a little different than previously. While in Senegal and Liberia I did a sermon going through our tagline and I changed it a little bit based on the sermon. I will be giving that sermon for everyone in the coming weeks. I would like to thank everyone in Senegal and Liberia who made our stays there such a blessing. We cannot thank you enough.

When I returned about a week ago it was in time for me to watch one of my favorite events that I have watched for the past 56 years. This is the NCAA basketball championship here in the United States. We are the best college teams compete against each other in basketball to see who is the best. And one of the teams I have rooted for since I was in high school was in the championship game. However there was a struggle in me on my return.

The Lord has been communicating to me and making me really think about, what is winning to him. Not for me but for him. And is winning, and how the world looks at winning, is that truly success?

## Body

In the United States, there is a saying, “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.”

So you see that throughout culture. I do not know if that exists in other countries. However I expect it does because we see that around the world. That athletes, politicians, people in the workplace do everything in their power to succeed. And we see over and over again in culture that to win is to succeed. And you do whatever you can to win. If that means using people for your benefit or cutting corners on products or services so you remain legal but it is not the best, you can make more money. Or politicians who lie and then deny that they lied, so that they can

still win an election. We see that everywhere and many, many people celebrate it. That is what everyone else does, so you have to do it too or you will not get ahead.

However, is that what God has called His disciples to do?

So let's dive into Scripture to see what God says about Success for His disciples in three general areas:

1. Athletics (Entertainment)
2. Politics
3. Business / Work

## Athletics / Entertainment

### 1 Corinthians 9:24 – 25

*<sup>24</sup>Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup>Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

### Hebrews 12:1 – 2

*<sup>12</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Sports culture worships winning, celebrates trash talk, rewards intimidation, and makes heroes out of those who dominate. The called disciple competes **fully** but refuses to make winning their identity or treat opponents as enemies to be destroyed.

## Politics

### Proverbs 31:8-9

*"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."*

### Isaiah 10:1-2

*"Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights."*

### Proverbs 29:2

*"When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan." —*

### Ephesians 4:29 – 32

*<sup>29</sup>Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits*

*the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Politics rewards tribalism, spin, and the accumulation of power. The called disciple must be willing to lose an election rather than compromise their integrity — and must hold their political identity far more loosely than their identity in Christ.

## Business / Work

### Proverbs 11:1

*"The LORD detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him."*

### 1 Timothy 6:17-18

*"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth... Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."*

### Proverbs 3:9 – 10

*<sup>9</sup>Honor the Lord with your wealth  
and with the firstfruits of all your produce;  
<sup>10</sup>then your barns will be filled with plenty,  
and your vats will be bursting with wine.*

### Colossians 3:23 – 24

*<sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, <sup>24</sup>knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ*

The market rewards ruthlessness, cost-cutting at the expense of people, and deception that's "just business." The called disciple must resist this current — and it will cost them sometimes. That cost is part of discipleship.

## Take Aways

Lifting people materially, professionally, or socially without pointing them to Jesus is ultimately an act of incompleteness — and at its worst, a kind of cruelty dressed as kindness.

If a businessperson creates great jobs, a politician pursues great justice, and an athlete inspires millions — but none of them point people to Christ — they have given people **good things while withholding the only necessary thing.**

### **Matthew 16:26**

*"What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" —*

## **Point People to Jesus**

Every interaction, every platform, every relationship is ultimately an opportunity for the greatest act of love — **introducing someone to the King.**

### **Acts 4:12**

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."*

### **Romans 10:14**

*"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"*

### **John 14:6**

*"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*