

# SERMON NOTES - Comparative Success

## 1. Recap of previous ideas

1. God does want us to succeed (see verses below)
  2. Success in His eyes is more than worldly ideas of success  
The **Worldly** idea of success is:
    - Achievement
    - Accumulation
    - **Competition / Comparison**
    - Recognition
    - SensationHis "**Good Success**" includes this PLUS
    - It's for Him and others - not ourselves
    - It's with eternity in mind - not primarily the here and now
    - Salvation and being right with Him is more important than earthly health and wealth**Luke 16:11** - "10 "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"
  3. We get to know Him through His word
  4. When we get our priorities correct His blessing flows: "seek 1st His kingdom" *Mat 6:33*
  5. It's "upside down" and surprising to us because it's different to what we're used to
- 

## 2. Comparisons

**2 Corinthians 10:12-18** - "12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not **wise**. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us--a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment. 17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD." 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends."

**Jeremiah 9:23-24** — Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

---

## 3. Your own Race

**Hebrews 12:1-2** - "1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ...

**Psalms 139:13-17** - You are fearfully and wonderfully made and unique.

**Ephesians 2:10** (NKJV) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**1 Corinthians 4:3-4** NKJV - "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord."

**1 Corinthians 15:9-10** (NKJV) 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am

what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

---

## 4. The Prodigal Sons

Luke 15:11-32

Luke 15:31 NKJV - ""And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.'"

---

## 5. Your Talents

Matthew 25:14-30 - "14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 "And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 "His lord said to him, '**Well done, good and faithful servant**; you were **faithful** over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 22 "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 "His lord said to him, '**Well done, good and faithful servant**; you have been **faithful** over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

---

## 6. Practical Conclusions

**Know** your gifts.

**Use** your gifts for Him.

**Honour others**

**Be secure in who you are.**

**Don't compare** yourself to others either in Pride OR Inferiority

**Success** is His "well done, good and faithful servant". Use faithfulness as a measure rather than results or comparison.

# Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

**1** - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

**2** - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

**3** - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?  
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do **PRACTICALLY** in response to this teaching?

**4** - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

**The blessing** and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.

71 Bible verses about God's desire for His people's success and prosperity:

1. Genesis 1:28 - "28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.""
2. Genesis 12:2 - "2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing."
3. Genesis 13:2 - "2 Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold."
4. Genesis 24:1 - "1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things."
5. Genesis 24:35 - "35 "The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys."
6. Genesis 26:12-14 - "12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. 13 The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; 14 for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him."
7. Genesis 39:2-5, 23 - "2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. 5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field." "23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper."
8. Leviticus 26:3-5 - "3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, 4 then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely."
9. Deuteronomy 2:7 - "7 "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing." ""
10. Deuteronomy 8:17-18 - "17 "then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' 18 "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."
11. Deuteronomy 11:11-15 - "11 "but the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, 12 "a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year. 13 'And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 'then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may

- gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. 15 'And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.'
12. Deuteronomy 28:1-14 - "1 "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. 2 "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: 3 "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. 4 "Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. 5 "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 6 "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 7 "The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. 8 "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. 9 "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. 10 "Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. 11 "And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. 12 "The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13 "And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. 14 "So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them."
  13. Deuteronomy 30:15-16 - "15 "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 "in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess."
  14. Deuteronomy 30:19-20 - "19 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 "that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.'"
  15. Joshua 1:7-8 - "7 "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."
  16. 1 Kings 2:3 - "3 "And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is

- written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn;"
17. 1 Chronicles 22:13 - "13 "Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed."
  18. 1 Chronicles 29:12 - "12 Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all."
  19. 2 Chronicles 20:20 - "20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.""
  20. 2 Chronicles 26:5 - "5 He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper."
  21. 2 Chronicles 31:21 - "21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered."
  22. 1 Samuel 2:7-8 - "7 The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. 8 He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the beggar from the ash heap, To set them among princes And make them inherit the throne of glory. "For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, And He has set the world upon them."
  23. Psalm 1:1-3 - "1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."
  24. Psalm 23:1 - "1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."
  25. Psalm 34:10 - "10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing."
  26. Psalm 35:27 - "27 Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, "Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.""
  27. Psalm 37:4-5 - "4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass."
  28. Psalm 37:22 - "22 For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth, But those cursed by Him shall be cut off."
  29. Psalm 37:25-26 - "25 I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread. 26 He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed."
  30. Psalm 68:19 - "19 Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah"
  31. Psalm 84:11-12 - "11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. 12 O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!"

32. Psalm 107:38 - "38 He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly; And He does not let their cattle decrease."
33. Psalm 112:1, 3 - "1 Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who delights greatly in His commandments. ... 3 Wealth and riches will be in his house, And his righteousness endures forever."
34. Psalm 113:7-8 - "7 He raises the poor out of the dust, And lifts the needy out of the ash heap, 8 That He may seat him with princes--With the princes of His people."
35. Psalm 118:25 - "25 Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity."
36. Psalm 122:6-7 - "6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. 7 Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces.""
37. Psalm 132:12-18 - "12 If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I shall teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore." 13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: 14 "This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. 15 I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy. 17 There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed. 18 His enemies I will clothe with shame, But upon Himself His crown shall flourish.""
38. Psalm 145:14-19 - "14 The LORD upholds all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down. 15 The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season. 16 You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing. 17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works. 18 The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them."
39. Proverbs 3:1-10 - "1 My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; 2 For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, 4 And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. 9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine."
40. Proverbs 3:13-18 - "13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; 14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. 16 Length of days is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her."
41. Proverbs 8:17-21 - "17 I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me. 18 Riches and honor are with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. 20 I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, 21 That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasuries."

42. Proverbs 10:2-6 - "2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, But righteousness delivers from death. 3 The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish, But He casts away the desire of the wicked. 4 He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame. 6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked."
43. Proverbs 10:22 - "22 The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it."
44. Proverbs 11:24-25 - "24 There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty. 25 The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself."
45. Proverbs 15:6 - "6 In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, But in the revenue of the wicked is trouble."
46. Proverbs 16:3 - "3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established."
47. Proverbs 28:25, 27 - "25 He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered. ... 27 He who gives to the poor will not lack, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses."
48. Isaiah 1:19 - "19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;"
49. Jeremiah 17:7-8 - "7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. 8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit."
50. Jeremiah 29:11 - "11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."
51. Malachi 3:10 - "10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it."
52. Matthew 6:25, 33 - "25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ... 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
53. Matthew 7:11 - "11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"
54. Luke 6:38 - "38 "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.""
55. Romans 4:13 - "13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."
56. Romans 8:28 - "28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."
57. Romans 8:32 - "32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"



58. Romans 12:2 - "2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
59. 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 - "21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come--all are yours. 23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."
60. 2 Corinthians 4:15 - "15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God."
61. 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 - "6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." 10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God."
62. Galatians 3:13-14 - "13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."
63. Ephesians 1:3 - "3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,"
64. Philippians 4:13 - "13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
65. Philippians 4:19 - "19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
66. Hebrews 11:6 - "6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."
67. James 1:13, 17 - "13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ... 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."
68. 1 Peter 5:7 - "7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."
69. 1 Peter 5:10 - "10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you."
70. 3 John 1:2 - "2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."
71. Revelation 21:7 - "7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."