

Putting the most into life... (K. Barker)

1. Hebrews 11 is God's Hall of Fame, a list of the names and accomplishments of outstanding men of faith. What can we learn from them? Let's focus on Moses to learn some principles that may guide us to successful living. Study Heb 11:24-25. How did Moses succeed?

First, Moses made the **right choice**. Moses' decision is recorded in Heb 11:24-25. The test that Moses faced was essentially the familiar one of fame and fortune. He had grown up surrounded by the pomp and splendor of ancient Egypt. And thanks to modern historical research and scientific archeology, we now know a great deal about Egypt's past glory and grandeur. No doubt Moses had received a good education in the court of Pharaoh. Acts 7:22 informs us that he was educated in all the science and learning of the Egyptians. Yet he repudiated it. Apparently Moses realized that for him to enjoy court life, fabulous wealth, and the passing pleasures of sin would be wrong, particularly in view of his people's distress. Thus, he made his decision to share their lot. He chose the way of faith - and hardship - instead of the way of flesh - and pleasure.

Under similar circumstances, what choice would you have made? Choices face each of us daily. For example, there are no hard and fast rules regulating many areas of your private Christian conduct. Instead, the responsibility is placed upon you to employ good judgment, biblical wisdom, and spiritual discernment in making decisions that honor Christ and that are in accordance with the principles of God's Word. Furthermore, if you are a young person, some of life's most determining choices are still before you - the choice of what school you will attend, the choice of an occupation or vocation, the choice of a life partner. Will you reach decisions on these important issues according to your personal desires and ambitions, or will you prayerfully seek **God's will** - to be directed by Him?

2. What does Heb 11:26 tell us about a principle of success?

Second, Moses had a sense of **right values**. In fact, perhaps he made the right choice **because** he had a sense of right values. The author of Hebrews tells us in Heb 11:26 that Moses "considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,.." Several things are set in **contrast** here. In verse 25, "ill-treatment" is contrasted with "pleasures of sin" and in verse 26, "reproach" is contrasted with "treasures of Egypt." Which would you value more highly?

How is **your** sense of values? Let us apply this principle to a few specific areas. Do we value **time** correctly? Ephesians 5:16 declares that we should be "making the most of our opportunities, because these are evil days." How prone we are to procrastinate, when in reality the roads of tomorrow often lead to the land of never!

The principle can also be applied to the devotional life. To take an example, how much time will you spend today reading the newspaper, a magazine, or other items of interest? Will you spend at least **some time** in prayer and in careful reading of God's Word? If one finds time for education, recreation, travel, or simply conversing with others, but no time for a personal, independent study of the Bible, then he has a distorted sense of values.

The New Testament teaches that when a person is born again, his whole world-view or outlook on life should be transformed! Then he will value the things of God more than the things of the world. Is this true of you - and me? Do we value the things of God correctly? If so, old-fashioned or not, it entails a biblical separation from worldliness. 1 John 2:15 issues this command: "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The reverse is likewise true: if anyone loves the Father, love for the world is not in him. This is what Thomas Chalmers called "The **Expulsive** Power of a **New** Affection." But what is worldliness? Does it consist merely of overt acts of sin? Someone has well defined worldliness as "living for things, not for God; living for self, not for others; living for time, not for eternity."

What takes precedence in your life? Is Christ preeminent? Your answers reflect your sense of values.

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3. Examine Heb 11:26-27. What principle of success do you note here?

Third, Moses had the right vision before him. "...; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen." Two things are said here to comprise the vision that Moses had before him. First, apparently he looked toward a day of evaluation when he would stand before the Lord and be rewarded for faithful service. In addition, he kept his spiritual eyes of faith on God. A similar vision should likewise motivate us to seek to know, choose, and do God's Will. We are instructed to live and serve in the light of the judgment seat of Christ, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Cor 5:10)." We should also keep our eyes of faith focused on Christ, as we are enjoined to do in Hebrews 12:1-2: "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Note that Jesus Himself had a vision before Him: He endured the cross in view of the joy that was set before Him.

4. What last principle for success do you see in Heb 11:28?

Fourth and finally, Moses made the **right sacrifice**. By faith, Moses instituted the Passover, which was to become a memorial or reminder of the day when God miraculously delivered the Israelites from death and slavery in Egypt. Those who killed a lamb and applied its blood on their doorposts were spared from death.

The New Testament mentions at least **four sacrifices** that every Christian can make. The first three are contained in Heb 13:15-16, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." The three sacrifices named are: 1) **thanksgiving and praise** (this is our worship), 2) **good works** (our service), and 3) **benevolences** (the giving of our substance).

Perhaps the most far-reaching, consequential, and **inclusive** sacrifice of all is found in Rom 12:1, and this is the fourth sacrifice, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." You can present to Christ the **living sacrifice** of your body, which includes everything - your entire life and all that you are and have.

Consider the searching question asked in this poem, and see if your response would be the same as that of the writer:

"And shall I use these ransomed powers of mine
For things that only minister to me?
Lord, take my tongue, my hands, my heart, my all,
And let me live, and love, and give for Thee."

This is how to succeed as God views success - how to put the most into life and also how to get the most out of life.

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