

LINGERING ON THE ETERNAL CHANGES OUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

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Success is a value statement. Often it can even be a factor we consider when we evaluate the humans around us. It reminds me of the [Max Lucado](#) book; You are Special. It's about a bunch of little wooden people called Wemmicks, making judgement calls on all the other Wemmicks around them by delivering stars (you're awesome!) or dots (you are not awesome!).

Measuring success is super fun when you are doing things super right. I mean, you nail the math test, score a promotion, get 500 likes on your Facebook announcement, turn a couple heads in your put together self, you leave the pediatric dental office NOT having lost a year off your life, maybe you totally nail the scallops you made for dinner (yeah, no big deal), your house looks effortlessly magnifique, or your kids are all super well behaved and predicted to become rocket scientists... or something categorically brilliant. It's pretty easy to feel happy isn't it? #blessed!!!

"But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him." — Jeremiah 17:7

When diligent efforts towards a goal are successful, it's not usually a bad thing. **We**

are wired for purpose and passion — the problem is when we authorize *temporary successes to define our happiness and security*. It's a problem when we let them define us. Because they are just not very dependable, and they don't have the informed authority on our hearts.

When we consider the eternal in our work, our incentives change. It's more than just being right, more than personal ambition or respect; we are given every reason to offer our best, our diligence, our grit and grind when we produce... while being simultaneously shrewd and not being *defined* by the outcome. If our value and our identity has already been clarified, work is merely an act of love for our Lord, glorifying Him by working as though we are working unto Him. If God alone has the informed authority to define us, even our work cannot determine our value, or lead the charge on our happiness.

My 6 year old recently burst into tears over an incorrect math problem (holy perfectionist); and I looked at him in love (and slight confusion, because what in the world...) and explained to him that diligence is more important than perfection. That diligence and perseverance will *lead* to mastery of a subject. Diligence means pushing through even when we get it wrong. And it's more applaudable than lazy success. **Virtue is valuable.**

Wealth and health and happiness does not always equal favor. If wealth and health and happiness in this world keep me from storing up eternal treasures, we might as well perceive them as a cursed distraction from the stuff that actually matters. But before you start thinking God isn't for prosperity, let's clarify... Jeremiah 29:11 states that he *plans* prosperity and hope for us. PLANS it. **We're wise to examine what is eternal success and what is merely temporary success.**

"Anyone who swims so completely in a sea of material surplus as to be unaware of the virtues of the simple life is flirting with great moral risk." — Ben Sasse, The Vanishing American Adult.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal..." — Matthew

6:19-20

When we linger on the eternal, not only do our things cease to offer such authority to garner applause, but what we accumulate and accomplish also ceases to be the final voices on our success. Things do not last. They have no voice. They are like the dust of the earth and will blow away like chaff. Our world looks at things that God does not, and I can humbly say this, because our family lives in the top 1% of the world. Our home is not fancy, but it offers more luxury than most people born will EVER experience. This will not matter, it will not boost my "success-o-meter" before the Lord when he examines my life.

This summer when I lost my Mamaw and sat in her funeral I started thinking a lot about how an eternal gaze impacts our hope and our rest. So that's where I'm going next.