SUCCESS

Albert Einstein's rise to fame, like Abraham Lincoln's and many others', testifies to the fact that it's hard to predict success. Beginning in 1873 thirteen attempts had been made to cross the Atlantic in a hot air balloon, all ending in failure.

It wasn't 'til August 1978 that it was accomplished successfully, in a six-day crossing, in a craft named *Double Eagle II*.

Asked why it took so many tries to pull it off, Maxie Anderson, a member of that victorious crew, said, "Success in any venture is just the intelligent application of failure." (*National Geographic*, Dec. 1978, pp. 858-882)

Tonight's question is a three-parter:

• How do you define success?

• What do you regard as your biggest success, and why?

• What's been your biggest failure, and why?

(DISCUSSION)

Currently at our Nordy's Lunches we're looking into Paul's Letter to the Romans. Paul knew great success. His letter to the Philippian believers in ancient Greece contains his impressive bio. (Philippians 3:1-21)

In A.D. 64, about three years before being beheaded by the crazed Nero, Paul passes on to his understudy Timothy what he's learned about leadership, about what to believe, and about how to live it. (Let's read I Timothy 6:3-12.)

"If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, o man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses." (I Timothy 6:3-12, NIV)

"… I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:11b-13, NIV)

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2, NIV)

"Calling the crowd to join His disciples, (Jesus) said, 'Anyone who intends to come with Me has to let Me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me, and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, My way, to saving yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?" (Mark 8:34-37, *The Message*)

I Timothy 6:6 is the key to spiritual growth and personal fulfillment.

Philippians 4:11b is an important secret Paul had *learned*. It was not the natural human perspective on life. It has nothing to do with fatalism or apathy. He'd come to realize that everything belongs to God, and that what we have is a gift from Him. And that it's exactly what He wants us to have at that moment. Paul had discovered that we're to be thankful for everything, to use it wisely, to not covet what others have, and above all to trust in God to meet all of our needs. That's true contentment. True success in life.

The difference between a desire and a goal:

Desire: It would be nice to have it fulfilled, but it requires help; you can't attain it by yourself.

Goal: You can achieve it by yourself, with no one's aid.

Example:

Desire: To have a fantastic relationship with your son.

Goal: To spend quality time with him on a regular basis.

We cannot force our desires on others. We can/should hold ourselves accountable to reach our goals.

Bottom line: Is it a desire or is it a goal?

His Deal

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