

THE LINK BETWEEN PEACE AND TRUE SUCCESS

By Jim Langley

The late John Wooden became a man whose name was synonymous with success. With 10 national collegiate men's basketball championships during his career, it is easy to see why his "Pyramid of Success" served as a foundational teaching tool not only in sports, but also in business.

If we look at the tenets that make up Wooden's model for success, we can see each of the building blocks working to complement each other in team building. One of my favorite books was written by coach Wooden with Jay Carty, *Coach Wooden One-on-One*. Over the years, for me it became more than a devotional resource. It also became a wonderful reflection of a man I never met, yet I came to know him very well through his conversations with co-author Jay Carty.

Success is an elusive topic; what it really represents means something different to each of us. Here is a brief look at success through Wooden's eyes:

He stated, "Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming." Interestingly, his quote makes no mention of winning, gaining wealth or fame, attaining honors, or finishing with more wins than losses. He also places no time constraints on achieving success. This is because Coach Wooden considered success to be a lifelong process.

In the Bible we find a similar perspective on success. Israel's King David was not perfect, but it says he was a man after God's own heart. At the end of his reign, David instructed Solomon, who would be succeeding him and building the temple for God. In 1 Chronicles 22:13, David told his son, "*Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the Lord gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.*"

Peace has nothing to do with wealth, status or anything tangible. It is that intangible assurance that allows us to know we are pleasing to our God and that He will one day tell us. "Welcome home, My good and faithful servant!" Here are a few things the Bible tells us about peace:

Peace is unwavering. External circumstances cannot disrupt the inner peace we can enjoy when we place our faith and confidence in God. "*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you*" (Isaiah 26:3).

Peace is a product of prayer. Why do we not experience peace in our lives? Maybe it is because we do not ask God for it. "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Peace is promised. Cultivating a relationship with Jesus in both our personal and professional life offers peace the world around us knows nothing about. "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid*" (John 14:27).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What would be your own definition of success? Does it involve beating the competition, advancing up the ranks professionally, or making more money? Explain your answer.
2. In his quote, Coach John Wooden spoke of success in terms of peace of mind and being satisfied with having done your best. What is your reaction to that point of view?
3. What have success – and peace – to do with a relationship with God? Do you agree with this conclusion? Why or why not?
4. Have you experienced peace through a relationship with God, specifically through Jesus Christ, one that endures despite the challenges and problems of every day? If so, explain what that is like for you.

NOTE: If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following passages:

Genesis 39:23; 1 Samuel 18:14; 1 Chronicles 22:11-13; Ecclesiastes 10:10; Joshua 1:6-9