

SUCCESS

This week my daughter Xana addressed a youth group and made the comparison between how God views success and how the world system views success. This got me thinking... “How does God measure success?” My simple definition of success involves three things, “Doing **what** God wants you to do; **how** He wants you to do it; **when** He wants you to do it.” However, there is much more to “how God measures success.” One answer can be found in the life of Elijah. We discover God’s measure of success through Elijah’s personal failure, and how God uses that for His own glory.

Elijah had a big showdown with 950 prophets of Baal; where he demonstrated the power of God. He challenged them with these words: “*If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow Him*” (1 Kings 18:21). Winner takes all! Elijah gave them every advantage by letting them go first. He even soaked his bull and the firewood with water, making it seem impossible to win the contest. But when he asked God, God sent fire to consume Elijah’s sacrifice and everything else next to the altar. That night not only did Elijah claim his victory and success, but he also brought many believers to the Lord.

However, right after this event (1 Kings 19:9-21), rather than Elijah doing his victory dance, we see him fleeing the scene from the wicked Queen Jezebel. He has just slaughtered 950 of her best prophets, and now she wanted his head to avenge for their deaths. You’d think that a person who was as devoted to God as Elijah would never have deserted the Lord, but in fact he did. He ran like a wanted criminal and tried everything to evade being captured. Just like a defeated soldier, Elijah was ready to raise a white flag and surrender. He said, “*I have had enough, Lord, take my life*” (1 Kings 19:4). Do you see any similarities between Elijah and us?

Note, God disciplined Elijah with this simple question, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” The Lord had given Elijah a mission, and was expecting him to complete his assigned task. But Elijah hid in the cave waiting for God’s sympathy because he thought he had failed the mission. He had forgotten that God was still in control. Let this not only be Elijah’s lesson, but ours too. God doesn’t want to see us discouraged! And success doesn’t come from our own abilities, but from above. Here is another lesson we can learn from Elijah. Elijah looked for signs by which the world measures success such as power, glory and fame to judge his own success. When they did not manifest, he felt God had deserted him. So God shows Elijah that it is not all about power or prestige. It’s the gentle whisper (the still small voice) of the Lord that can establish the victory.

Therefore, I encourage you to stand firm in your faith despite personal failures. Don’t dwell on all the frustration and heartaches. God shall keep to His promise! The promise that you will experience His “measure of success” in spite of your personal failings. When Elijah was about to quit, God didn’t let it happen. And He’s not going to let it happen to you!