



December 28, 2008 – Will Mackey

## How to Get the Most Out of the New Year! (Understanding How God Views Success)

Our world is far from perfect. The truth is life is tough much of the time. Given this, how are we supposed to succeed, get ahead, or be fulfilled?

1. True success in life is not determined by the way we look but by the character God builds in our hearts.

*But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (I Samuel 16:7)*

God's opportunities for success begin with issues of the heart...of God's character produced in our hearts.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

### The person of character:

- does what is right even when no one is looking.
- tells the truth at all times.
- focuses on responsibility instead of rights.
- makes sure private life matches public life.
- makes sure actions match words.
- treats everyone with the same courtesy and respect regardless of their stature in society.

2. True success in life is not determined by what we accumulate for ourselves but by what we invest in the lives of others.

*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. (Luke 12:15)*

*In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)*

*...Freely you have received, freely give. (Matthew 10:8)*

### Things, other than money, Christians can give away:

- Kindness
- A listening ear
- Patience
- Encouragement
- "Good" gossip
- A helping hand
- Time

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:37-40)*