

Success = Shalom & Shalom = Success

I said to a friend recently, “Well, I achieved my goal for the year. I listened to all my Christmas music.” This was no small accomplishment; I have a lot of music. I listened to vinyl records at my desk, cassettes on my cassette player while walking and exercising and CDs in my car. During December my wife and I got laughing about how each year in our 42 Christmases we end up arguing about what to give people. So, I achieved my goal, but I was not in complete peace in December; so, was I a success? It depends on your definition of success.

I have 2 magazine articles on the topic of success. One is *The 5 Ds of Success*; by William F. Kendy the other is *The 7 Cs of Success* by Tom Morris. Both articles are correct in what they are saying. I will refer to these later. I first want to use the Hebrew word and greeting, “Shalom” as a definition of success. I will define the word “shalom” and then see how to get there. I use King James because it is not under copyright. Anytime I use Bible verses look them up and read them in context.

Shalom defined

The King James Version of the Bible translates “shalom” using: peace, well, peaceably, welfare, salute(with another word), prosperity, safe, health, peaceable, and 15 other ways. Strong’s Concordance uses these words: completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safety, prosperity, health, quiet, tranquility, contentment, and friendship. If we are successful in all these areas I believe we could call our self, a success. God says what to do to be successful.

How to achieve success

Joshua 1:7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Joshua has a big task ahead of him. First, he has to take Moses’ place. This is like when someone takes over from a popular and successful football coach. He is judged by the standard the other coach set. Second, at the same time he must conquer and displace numerous nations. God tells Joshua to: observe the law or do what God says to do, don’t let it depart from your mouth or speak the word or say what God says, and meditate on God’s word.

Hundreds of books have been written about **Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.**

Jesus also says:

Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Tying these verses together we see: What is on the inside of us will come out in words. We meditate (mutter, utter, speak) on the Word and get it deep down inside us. Then we will say what God says and we shall have what we say. Early in my adult life I reasoned that the more of God's word I got inside me the better my life would be.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Here we see again meditate on God's word and whatever you do will prosper.

Ending this section, here is enough to make us successful. I, at age 65, know it is easier said than done and we have a lot to do working all this out; but the time to start is now. **Exodus 8:9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?**

10 And he said, Tomorrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. Pharaoh wanted to spend one more night with the frogs. The sooner we start the better it is.

Below I will go into some words and verses we can use to fine tune our meditation.

To talk about success we can discuss spirit, soul and body. We all need our faith developed in every area of our lives. We are a spirit, we have a soul (mind, intellect, emotions) and we live in a body.

Faith defined: **Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Spirit

When we repent, are baptized, and accepting of Jesus' lordship, our spirit is reborned: we are in the Kingdom of God. Our spirit is who we are, not our conduct. Our goal is to have our spirit in control, not our soul or our flesh.

Ways to build up our spirit:

Daily Bible reading and studying – If we want to hear God speak all we have to do is read the Bible.

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit – The Holy Spirit is inside a person who is born again, and being baptized in the Holy Spirit is a full release of the power of the Holy Spirit. The Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican churches, and I think the Lutherans have a second experience called “being filled with the Spirit” or Confirmation. The Charismatic and Pentecostal churches also believe in a another work after salvation.

Acts 1:4-8

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

They were not to leave Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They were going to receive power (The word “power” is the Greek word from which we get “dynamo” and “dynamite”.) It then says they will be witnesses; it does not say, “Go witness.” When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we cannot help but tell people about Jesus.

Soul

The battleground is our mind, intellect, and emotions. Our words (as discussed above) are the result of what we put into our spirit and soul. It is not a sin to watch a Road Runner cartoon, but when pressed, we want the word of God to come out of us not “beep, beep”.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Ephesians 6

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Please note verse 17. It says the helmet of salvation. Sometimes we don't feel as holy as we should and it seems God is off doing something else. We don't feel connected to God. Here is where we need a renewed mind. Our intellect and memory can take over and we can think back to when we were connected and the things God has done for us.

Psalm 103

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

I didn't know where to stop copying this Psalm because it is all so good. The writer is telling his soul to "Bless the Lord" and "remember". The praise comes from their mind.

Body

Our body can be trained. We all know athletes do this all the time. We can train our soul and body to react to the different stimuli that we run into each day. Our goal is to be in control of our body so we can react the way God wants us to when confronted with sin.

The Five Ds of Success

I read an article by a selling consultant in *Selling Power* magazine by the name of William F. Kendy. I would like to expand on his ideas using Biblical principles.

Success is not a god and never is it to be an end in itself. It is only a means to be an effective Christian.

Selling Power Magazine Article

The Five D's of Success

Decision. You must make a conscious decision to take charge of your own life and future, if you want to grow. Change is difficult and not without risks. However, change is inevitable and, most of the time, represents progress. It's said that people do something new and different only when

the pain of doing nothing is greater than the pain of making a change. What's the alternative? Five years from now, you'll still be in the same place - just five years older.

2 Timothy 2:20-22

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

In the first two chapters of 2 Timothy Jesus tells us what to purge. It is up to us if we want to be used of God or not. We can be a mud pot or a gold pot.

Desire. All successful salespeople have a burning desire to achieve their goals. How badly do you want to reach yours? Develop a passion for what you do and what it means to your future. Keep a mental picture of what your success means to you, both personally and professionally.

2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

We keep love and Heaven as our goal. It is not just us trying to get to heaven but us trying to get as many people as possible to go with us.

Philippians 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I am righteous because God made me righteous. Now I use my right-standing with God to help and intercede for people who do not have that right-standing. This is a high calling.

Acts 1: 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Please note that Jesus did not say then go witness but he said you will be witnesses. When we are full of the Holy Spirit we will be witnesses; what is inside will come out. What we are to do is keep our prayer level and our Word level up; that is our work and how we build up desire in our lives. God will put the "want to" in us.

Discipline. You get out of something only what you put into it. Develop your personal plan and work it. Do what you have to do - day by day, week by week and month by month - to reach your objectives.

Proverbs 6:6. Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

6:7. Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

6:8. Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Working hard is a wise thing to do.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

This is what every employer is looking for, someone who will do what it takes to help the company. This verse says that if you see something that needs to be done, do it with all your might.

Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Self-discipline is a fruit of being filled with the Holy Spirit. We can work with God to fulfill what He wants for us and what He wants for us is always in our best interest.

Determination. No pain, no gain. Most people fail because they're not willing to pay the price to get where they want to be. Remember, if you do what you fear, you won't fear what you do. Selling is a tough business with a high level of rejection. Have a strong resolve and don't give up.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

We should follow the word "fear" through the Bible; fear is not a good thing.

Matthew 13:44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

In Daniel Chapters 10, 11, 12 we see Daniel going on a fast for three weeks. This is what some people call a Daniel Fast. **Daniel 10:3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.**

Daniel was determined to hear for God. God laid out the end times for him. We see that demons were preventing the angel from getting to Daniel for 3 weeks.

Do it now. Don't wait until tomorrow or next week to start. Simply making the decision and then starting on a new path instills confidence.

Exodus 8

3 And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs:

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.

9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?

10 And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God.

Instead of saying, "Now, get these frogs out of my bed." He said "Tomorrow". He wanted to spend one more night with frogs in his bed. If we have a lifestyle we want to change, we should do it now.

Copied from his website

True Success

A New Philosophy of Excellence

Tom Morris

I've recently received a number of phone calls and emails from people who have seen one of my videos or heard one of my audio tapes and requested a short statement of my 7 Cs of Success to be posted here on the website. I'm happy to oblige!

From Plato and Aristotle to the present day, the wisest people who have ever thought about success and excellence have left us bits and pieces of powerful advice for attaining true success in our lives. I have put them all together as a framework of seven universal conditions which I call "**The 7 Cs of Success.**" For the most satisfying and sustainable form of success in our lives, we need:

- (1) A clear CONCEPTION of what we want, a vivid vision, a goal clearly imagined.*
- (2) A strong CONFIDENCE that we can attain that goal.*
- (3) (3) A focused CONCENTRATION on what it takes to reach the goal.*
- (4) (4) A stubborn CONSISTENCY in pursuing our vision.*
- (5) (5) An emotional COMMITMENT to the importance of what we're doing.*
- (6) (6) A good CHARACTER to guide us and keep us on a proper course.*
- (7) (7) A CAPACITY TO ENJOY the process along the way.*

These seven conditions provide the most universal framework for making things happen in a positive way, for putting our talents to work in the world, and for creating a better future for others as well as ourselves. They give us the most general strategic principles for success. But to result in the most rewarding, satisfying, and sustainable forms of success, they need to be applied in combination with what I call The 4 Foundations of Sustainable Excellence:

- (1) Truth
- (2) Beauty
- (3) Goodness
- (4) Unity

These are the four foundations of great and lasting relationships. Together with the 7 Cs, they provide us with the most comprehensive universal framework for lasting success in all that we do.

For more on the 7 Cs, see my book True Success. Buy it from Amazon.com

More on the 4 Foundations can be found in If Aristotle Ran General Motors. Buy it from Amazon.com

Both books are available through bookstores nationwide.

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The Morris Institute is based on the philosophical work of Tom Morris

and the Morris Institute Fellows, as they bring wisdom to life for people throughout the world.

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I would like to commit on and add scripture references to what Tom Morris wrote. First I would like to say that God created man, after man fell God then begin putting his word into the Earth so that we could navigate through life. God gave us His word as a handbook to life; life works better if we follow the instructions.

(1) A clear CONCEPTION of what we want, a vivid vision, a goal clearly imagined.

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

A church or a person should know where they are going. Where there is no revelation, goal, or no redemptive revelation of God, people just kind of wander around, everyone doing their own thing. Perish means to lose restraints or ignore or neglect. We and God decide where we want to go, and then God orders our steps. He corrects us and gets us back on track when we stray or miss a turn. If we don't know where we are going, how do we know when we get there?

(2) A strong CONFIDENCE that we can attain that goal.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Psalms 112:7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

Many books have been written about God's love for us and developing our faith. The key element is God's word. We read, study and speak God's word.

Psalms 27: 1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

All over the Bible we can see that God is our confidence. Our confidence is in Him.

(3) A focused CONCENTRATION on what it takes to reach the goal.

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Yesterday was yesterday. We should concentrate on what we need to do today. Remember, I am writing this for me, too.

Psalm 42:1-2 As the hart pants *and* longs for the water brooks, so I pant *and* long for You, O God. My inner self thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? AMP

A company sells a kit that helps a person stay focused. It simply says to write down 3 things you want to accomplish that day using your goals in life. Set up a list daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. A person may feel called to teach a Bible study. A daily goal might be to meditate on a certain passage of scripture for an hour and also pray for an hour. A person does these things first when not doing the other things required to live (job, relationship, etc.). So, instead of watching TV that person focuses on what will help meet their goals. A weekly goal might be to read a book that helps in becoming a teacher. A monthly goal might be to make sure they are attending everything at church that helps meet the goal. Then the yearly could be study Greek. Every goal is focused on the main goal of becoming a teacher. The kit says write everything down and refer to it every day.

A way to build your faith in what I am writing is to delete my words and just read and reread the Bible verses listed. There are other things on my website like giving that you can do like this. Read it once with my commentary then just read the verses over and over until faith comes alive.

I read somewhere that if you spend 10 minutes a day reading in your occupation in 10 years you will be an expert in that area. This is what I have done; I read, listen to tapes and Christian radio, and pray. This allows me solve or understand anything that comes up in my life.

Please note that I don't do anywhere near what I should be doing. I watch way too much TV. That is why even knowing the Bible does not always help; it's doing what the Bible says that is the big help. In writing this I am going to stay more focused in what I do. See, faith has come alive in me already.

(4) A stubborn CONSISTENCY in pursuing our vision.

Ephesians 6: 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Let's look at this again. I was just going to use the word "stand" but the whole thing is helpful to consistency.

Let's go verse by verse:

10 – We are commanded to rely on God's strength and power. We don't do things relying on our own power. We do not rely on our intelligence or education, our money or our ability to make money or any other thing apart from God. God will definitely use these things but we do not rely on them.

11 – If we have on God's armor Satan won't know whether it is God or me. We need the armor to protect us from Satan's cunning arts, deceit, craft, or trickery.

12 – Our enemy is demonic forces, not men. Our enemies are the demons behind the men coming against us.

13 – We stand against evil.

14 – Truth is central and we must see things the way God sees them. Have you ever noticed how in movies that show people in armor, that the armor also presents a toned body and does not look like the person wearing the armor. Our right-standing before God through Jesus must always be central to our lives – never forgotten.

15 – I am told that the Roman warrior's shoes have a cleat that keeps them from being moved. Our peace is to be shared with the world.

16 – Our faith is our resolute conviction of our right-standing before God and that he is our daddy, not just some spirit that lives a long way away. This shield will stop any demonic attack. Remember Jesus used "It is written....He used the Scripture to defeat Satan; Satan cannot stand before God's word. We will quench all, not some, of the devil's attacks.

17 – We must renew our minds with God's word. Sometimes it is hard to hear from God. When this happens, we rely on our mind to remember that we are God's child. We have an offensive weapon and that is God's word. "Word of God" refers to the spoken word; God's word to me. This is not just the written word but it is when the written word becomes alive or when God tells us to do something. The Greek word is "rhama"; the Greek word "logos" means the written word.

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

Our goal is to give God's word to others all the time, whether we feel like or not.

(5) An emotional COMMITMENT to the importance of what we're doing.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Everything we do should ultimately lead to peace and to helping build up others.

Psalm 57:7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

Psalm 108:1 O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

(6) A good CHARACTER to guide us and keep us on a proper course.

Most people have figured out that we should always be of good character. Our command from Jesus is to love.

1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails....

Jesus gave us one main rule and that is to love. I always like to ask the question, "What in it for us." If you would like to see what happens if we walk in love read Deuteronomy 28:1-14; it will make you want to walk in love.

(7) A CAPACITY TO ENJOY the process along the way.

You can kick me in the shin and steal my happiness, but you can't steal my joy. I am happy I get to watch the Big 12 Baseball tournament on TV but I am not happy it is not in high definition. We can try but our happiness cannot always be controlled by us; but we can control our joy.

Here are some random verses that will be helpful to us as we study and meditate on success.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

I would like to focus in on the word "temperance". It means self-control (the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, esp. his sensual appetites).

As we are filled with the Holy Spirit these things manifest in our lives. Being filled with the Holy Spirit gives us power. We can then use this power to grow in the fruits. This is not a one-time deal; but we must continually be filled with the Spirit. The best way to do this is praying in tongues. The reading of the Bible and sitting under anointed teaching is how we build faith. Music helps us to hear the Word. Prayer and praying in the Spirit is how we build power.

James 5:16 Amplified Bible (AMP) Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

Unforgiveness will stop faith and power. Mark 11 gives us the account of the fig tree.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

And from the Lord's Prayer we are asking God to forgive us as we forgive others.

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Operating in love with forgiving everyone who offends us in any way is a sure way of always being successful in everything we do. (I'm not dumb; I know it is easier said than done.)

Psalms 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

When we come to the realization that God has set up laws to make our lives better, we learn to love it when God shows us something we are doing wrong. We don't just have peace but "great" peace.

James 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

In verse 26 the word "religious" means to tremble, fearful or worshipping. The word "religion" is external ceremonies. Vain means devoid of force, truth, success, result, useless and of no purpose. If we do not control our tongue or speech our ceremonies, even if they seem religious, are useless and of no purpose and we become self-deceived. Ouch, that hurts.

In 27 we see the pure outward expression of our relationship with God is:

To visit (to look at or after, inspect, examine with the eyes, to look in order to help or benefit, care for, provide for, look about for) the fatherless and widows in their pressure, oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress or trouble. To keep himself/herself spotless, irreproachable, unsullied and free from censure or vice, this is more than just not killing someone. This is a lifestyle.

If our goal is to obey rules then we are not operating in God's love. There is nothing more enjoyable than living in the love of our God. God's word leads to fun and enjoyment; rules and regulations sap our joy.

We can judge ourselves by looking at how we spend our time and how much of our money are we giving away. On my walk this morning I listened to some secular music that I enjoy. I enjoyed listening but it did not do me or more importantly you any good. Last night I watched some comedy TV and baseball; this was after going to a Bible study at church. Again baseball is fun but doesn't help anyone. I did read the Bible as I was going to sleep, so that's OK. But a lot

of times I read secular books. So it appears that the things of God are a close second to my own will and enjoyment.

You may ask, "Don't you feel guilty?" The answer is, "No" because my faith is built up in the mercy of God. I suggest you read, on my website (hgspublishing.com), the introduction to *Proverbs, What's In It for Us*. It deals with the mercy of God

Conclusion - We want to be successful so that we can help others.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.