

*Counterfeit Gods—Defeating the Idols that Battle for Our Hearts*  
**“The god of Success”**

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Ephesians 2:8-10

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- A. How many of you played the grade school game called “\_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_?”
- B. The god of success plays on the most basic problem of humanity - \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. There is nothing wrong with setting \_\_\_\_\_ and working \_\_\_\_\_ to reach them.
- D. The god of success promises purpose, fulfillment, and satisfaction, but delivers \_\_\_\_\_ and endless striving for \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. “\_\_\_\_\_ is alcohol of our time...an \_\_\_\_\_ addict is no different from any other kind of addict.” (Mary Bell, counselor)
- F. More than any other idols, personal success leads to a sense that we ourselves are \_\_\_\_\_, and that our security and \_\_\_\_\_ rest in our own performance.
- G. In Luke 18, Jesus encounters a person described as a \_\_\_\_\_, young \_\_\_\_\_.
- H. The god of success suggests that we can \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves instead of depending on \_\_\_\_\_ to do it for us.
- I. Jesus gave the rich, young ruler the chance to become a \_\_\_\_\_, young \_\_\_\_\_.
- J. \_\_\_\_\_ was one of the most successful and powerful men in the world in his time.
- K. \_\_\_\_\_ had to learn that God is a God of \_\_\_\_\_, and the salvation that comes from God cannot be earned, but only \_\_\_\_\_.
- L. The idol of success cannot just be expelled, it must be replaced and the only thing of value and meaning to replace it with is the Lord \_\_\_\_\_.
- M. Questions for introspection:
  - 1. How do you \_\_\_\_\_ success?
  - 2. What \_\_\_\_\_ your desire for success?
  - 3. How often do you find yourself \_\_\_\_\_ successful people?
  - 4. Will you embrace the mindset that being successful is hearing Jesus say: “Well \_\_\_\_\_, good and faithful \_\_\_\_\_.”

The god of success whispered to us, “Don’t you want to be king of the hill?” “Which hill?” we asked. “Any of them. All of them.” He smiled.

And we pursued a life of climbing, always climbing. Up hills. Up corporate ladders. Up lists. Up food chains. Up social registers. This god never had to make his case for what he was offering.

But along the way, climbing, working, earning, and achieving became ends in themselves. It was no longer about what we could do, but about whom we could out-do. If we were honest we would have to say that it wasn’t for the Lord or even for others that we worked but for ourselves.

And we had several unhappy surprises. One was that we hurt people as we climbed over them or elbowed them down the hill. Another was that we were always weary from the effort. Not to mention always wary of challengers to the throne. And the greatest surprise was that the top of the hill wasn’t nearly as great as we thought it would be. The top of the hill ended up being a pretty lonely and disappointing place. We wondered if maybe we had the wrong hill.

And then we discovered one last hill. But this hill already had a King, along with three crosses standing on it. And he extends us a simple invitation: “Come and follow.” And as we follow him he turns success on its head. The first will be last and the last will be first.

The greatest among you will be the servant of all. Consider others better than yourself. To find your life you must lose it. And so now, we still care about success, but we define it very differently. He has become our purpose. We live for serving him, for knowing him, for pleasing him. That’s how we define success. (Kyle Idleman, “Jesus My Purpose.”)

Answer Key: A. king, hill. B. pride. C. goals, hard. D. emptiness, self-worth. E. achievement, achievement. F. god, value. G. rich, ruler. H. save, Jesus. I. poor, servant. J. Naaman. K. Naaman, grace, received. L. Jesus. M.1. define. M.2. drives. M.3. envying. M.4. done, servant.