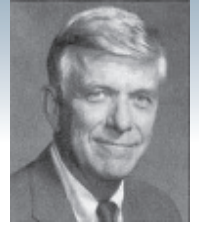


GOD'S VIEW OF SUCCESS AND CONTENTMENT

Session 1 - Key Words



Mr. Gayle Jackson

- One of the great struggles today is that we hold reason preeminent to revelation. Reason is not greater than revelation.
- Most of us receive our Scriptural study like a buffet line, picking a little here and a little there. The Scriptures are not to be studied that way. Scripture is to be studied in content, in context, in continuous thinking. Put the pieces together in to a continuum.
- How does the paradigm of Purpose, Vision, Conviction and Motivation fit together? God has a strategy that is made up of what our purpose is, what our values and convictions are, and our motivation.
- Purpose is knowing what you want your life to add up to and why. Purpose is from God and is non-changeable.
- Vision is seeing your purpose played out.
- The constraints of not missing the target are your convictions and values.
- Motivation is by the eternal hope of God.
- Vision is a Scriptural concept, but it is not a Scriptural word. Likewise, the words conviction and purpose are not found in the Scriptures, but the concept are.
- Vision is seeing your purpose played out. Vision is a process of walking with God to come to your vision – it is not an “out of the blue” experience.
- If you want a vision for your company, you must have a vision for your life in serving God.
- Purpose to Individual to Family to Job to Vision
- Vision and purpose are usually found right where you are (not in a distant land).
- The Vision is a continuing formulation of how God is going to use you.
- Purpose never changes, vision does change. Purpose always precedes vision.
- Start with the Scriptures, understand your purpose then move toward vision.
- You must first understand your own individual purpose, then you can understand your family purpose, then you can find your corporate purpose. Once you understand your corporate purpose you can have a vision for how God will use you in that company to serve people.
- **CONVICTIONS** and **VALUES** are always related to your interaction with people. **PURPOSE** is always defined by how you relate to people. Thus, VISION is always defined by how you relate to people.
- Most everyone has a worldly **MOTIVATION** with a Scriptural purpose, and, that **will NOT work**.
- There are a lot of things that will take your vision away from you and you will find yourself moving away from the things God has for you to work with.
- The problem is based on how we approach understanding the revelation of God in your life.
- We see our vision being played out with a world definition.



- We think in words, we remember in pictures.
We think in words, we are emotionally moved by pictures.
We think in words, pictures will de-synthesize us and corrupt our thinking.
Words are the tools of good thinking.
Words are key to us.
- We are uniquely motivated by these words -
Success – what is success? Determines **Vision**
Significance – how do I determine significance?
Honor - how do I gain honor?
Career – what is my career?
- With worldly definitions we think... *If God is God, how is He going to make me ...* (insert your definition of success)
E.g., Definition of worldly success might be honor always comes from financial success.
We gain significance from perceived success.
BOTTOM LINE: How I compare to you.
- Career planning teaches us that anything is achievable as long as we plan it. This teaches us to compartmentalize our lives. Thus we put the issue of work and business into a compartment because the Scriptures are not relevant inside the concept of success.
- **PROBLEM:** Our definition of **SUCCESS** is not God's definition of success.
He who gets to define the words, wins the argument.
He who gets to define the words, defines reality.
He who gets to define the words, ultimately owns your soul.
- Take your definitions very carefully. Hold the world's definitions to suspect. Be suspicious if it looks intuitively right, look at the Scriptures to see if it lines up.



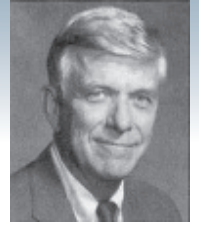
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Mr. Jackson says that the purpose of your life is God-prescribed and is non-changeable. Do you agree with his statement? Why or why not?
2. Are you able to adequately describe God's purpose for your life so that you can define how your vision causes it to "play out"? Discuss this with the group.
3. Mr. Jackson says, "If you want a vision for your company, you must have a vision for your life in serving God." Have you found that to be true? Discuss this with the group.
4. What is your definition of success – personally and corporately? Does your day-to-day life (your actions) prove this to be true?
5. How does your definition of success compare with God's definition? Do you know what God's definition of success for your life is? If not, how can you find out?



GOD'S VIEW OF SUCCESS AND CONTENTMENT

Session 2 - Definitions - The World's or God's?



Mr. Gayle Jackson

- How you define words is important.
- We blend the world's definitions into God's definitions so we end up being double-minded, unstable in all our ways.
- We find that we cannot differentiate the Christian community from a pagan one.
- Revelation is always preeminent to reason. Always hold your reasoning in suspect.
- Wrong definitions take us to wrong places.
- Hezekiah mixed his definition of success with the reality of God.
- When people want to see evidence of God moving in our lives, what do we show them?
- It starts with a foundational misunderstanding of what success is.
- Is the drive for success, significance and honor legitimate? **YES** God gave us that drive.
- The issue is: Who gets to define the standards of success, significance and honor?
- What is the world's standard/definition of success?
- Success by the world's standards are measured by power, influence and money.
- Success is not how high the stack is but how much higher it is than your stack.
- The product of embracing the world's standards of success:
 1. To be successful you will always need to manipulate people.
 2. Significance is a matter of other's perception, not a matter of reality.
 3. Success is always a function of comparison and competition and is founded in discontent.
 4. You will ultimately become a servant to the system. He who defines reality owns your soul.
 5. You become incorrectly motivated.

Isaiah 39



Jeremiah 9:23-24
John 12:24-26

- What are God's standards of success? Jesus said, "Follow me."
- It is legitimate to vie for success and significance and honor. God says, "Just do it on my standards."
- Want success? Give yourself to a relationship with God.

HOW? 1. Come to grips with God through the reality of the death and shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, and His resurrection.
2. John 14:21 Pursue a life of obedience to God and He will make Himself known to you.

- Do you want **Success?** Know God. **Significance?** Humble yourself and depend upon God. **Honor?** Obey God.
- God desires us to be significant but He gets to define significance.
- Success by God's definition will always have:

1. A focus on people
2. Self denial
3. Servanthood attitude
4. Contentment
5. Motivated by the things of God



- To have a career plan is acceptable, but don't underestimate God's sovereignty in your life.
- God is more interested in the process of your life than your achievements and your product.
- We can have vision and a successful business but always remember that they are out of the providence of God, and not because of your genius.

SUCCESS SIGNIFICANCE HONOR CAREER

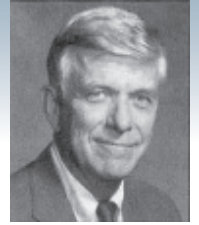
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Mr. Jackson says that when we try to blend the world's definitions with God's definitions we become "double-minded, unstable in all our ways." What does that mean to you? Do you agree with his assessment?
2. When asked to provide "evidence" of God's activity in your life, what do you say? If you respond with something that a non-believer can understand and agree with (a worldly definition), what does that say about your Christianity? If you respond with something that only a believer could understand (God's definition), what response might you expect to get from a non-believer? Discuss this with the group.
3. What do you think Mr. Jackson meant when he said that "comparison and competition is always founded in discontent"? Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. On what basis might God say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant."?



GOD'S VIEW OF SUCCESS AND CONTENTMENT

Session 3 - The Foundation of Motivation



Mr. Gayle Jackson

- Theological improvement Vs. Becoming more loving
 1. Without a pursuit of understanding God's Word to obedience, we will never grow to the capacity that we can love the way God would have us love. 2 Peter 1:5-11
 2. We live in a generation where obedience is played down because we are too afraid it is legalistic.
- It is imperative that we seek God. [Hebrews 11:6] We seek God through the application of the Word of God in our everyday life. [John 14:21]
- **CHALLENGE** Within the context of who you are, within your temperament, skill-base, and giftedness, take obedience to the Scriptures and become people of the Word.
- The Scripture says that we are improperly motivated because we do not have *the foundation* to become properly motivated.
- Is your prayer life heavily skewed toward the success of the business?
- How committed to me is the "source" of the content of my life?

The "source" could be:

 - God
 - IBM (Gayle's "source")
 - Your company
 - The government
- How much confidence do I have in my "source"?
- How confident are you of God? Could it be the same God that your business declined with as when it increased? How committed to me is God?
- If the organization (source) doesn't work out (meet our needs) we just change organizations.
- Only two choices for the source of the content of your life: 1. The World - including myself 2. God
Attempting to "take" a little from each of these is called double-mindedness, entanglement, destruction for the Christian
- Salvation is a process, a transition from dependence on the world and ourselves over to dependence on God.
- If you choose to depend on the world (including yourself) as your source: The only way you can evaluate the "content of my life" is by comparison. You will always compare to determine the value of your content.
- God clearly instructs us not to compare. Comparison is the foundation of discontent. Discontent is anti-Scriptural.
- We teach our children to compare and thus double-mindedness.
- Comparison always manifests itself in discontent, and discontent always manifests itself in coveting. Coveting is insidious. Coveting is often the "unconfessed sin." Why? Paul says that he didn't know he was doing until it was defined for him. Coveting is always listed with the biggest sins such as fornication, adultery, etc.
- Coveting always leads to competing. Could you run a business and not be competitive?

LOVE WILL COME



And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.
Luke 2:52

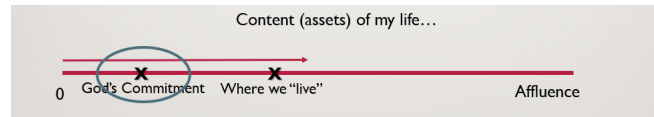
GROWTH OF MAN

- Physical
- Mental
- Spiritual
- Social

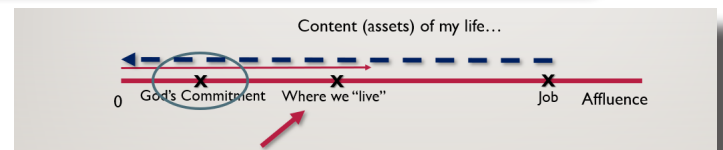


- The word "compete" is not found in the Scriptures, the Scriptures are "silent" on the word. Silence does not mean affirmation.

- Look carefully at “Why do I compete? What is the product of why I am competing?”
- Building team-ship, calling to a greater state of excellence is more productive for a business than a contest.
- I perceive that if I compete and win, I will be complete. In reality, the race never ends.
- If we pursue the content, comparison, covet and compete paradigm, we will never be on the **foundation** to be motivated the way God wants us to be motivated.
- What is God’s strategy? The strategy of contentment.
- Contentment means **IT IS ENOUGH**. It is a **growing** acceptance of where I am and who I am, so that I may be **motivated** by something other than my **circumstance**.
- What is NOT contentment? Complacency is not contentment. Passivity is not contentment.
- What has God committed to you?
 - Food
 - Clothing
 - Enough for any good work



- Bottom line in the Job story - God says, “I’m God and you are not.”
- Job’s problem was he let his provision become his expectation.
- Circumstances are always handled by God.
- Circumstances do not define Who God is, they let you define who you are before God.
- What is God truly committed to? Is He committed to the success of your business?



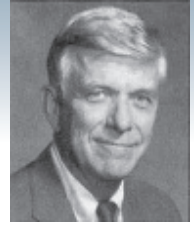
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We know we are told to “seek God” – but what does that mean? Mr. Jackson states that is done through obedience to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and that God promises to manifest Himself to us as we do so. What are your thoughts on this?
2. Have you before considered a relationship between competition and covetousness? Review the progression provided by Mr. Jackson and discuss how this might manifest itself in your life and in your business.
3. Mr. Jackson brings up a controversial and often misunderstood subject of the minimum commitment for provision God has made to His people in the Word. What is your understanding of this commitment? What verses support or deny it? How has it played out in your life? Does the commitment extend to your business?



GOD'S VIEW OF SUCCESS AND CONTENTMENT

Session 4 - Learning to be Content

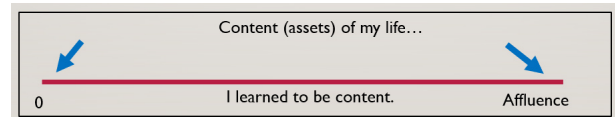


Mr. Gayle Jackson

- Contentment with God is irrespective of your circumstantial condition.

¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:11-13

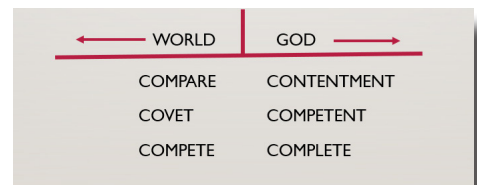
- No matter where God put me, I learned to be content.
- The Apostle Paul decided that the only commitment God had made to him was the development of his character.
- The two commitments God has made to us are:
 1. God is in control - He is sovereign.
 2. God has my best interest at heart.



- Circumstances do not tell us who God is – God defines the circumstances of our lives.
- Through circumstances we learn about ourselves and the reality of the love of God.
- These foundational truths bring contentment, calm and peace. Because of this you can be motivated in the things that count.
- God's strategy of contentment is to build a foundation so that you can be motivated by the things of God. If you are not content, you can never be motivated by the things of God.

- If I am content, then I can become competent (sufficient).
Sufficiency is competency in the things of God, which leads to completeness.

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7



- Scriptural definition of anxious: A need that distracts.
Don't be distracted away from God because of your needs.
- Contentment is a determined attitude, it is not a revelation. It is within you and guided by the Holy Spirit. It is irrespective of visual evidence. It is not emotion, action or public opinion.
- Contentment requires accountability.
- Don't let your provision and your momentary successes determine your expectation of God.
- We must know God's way to understand His provision and how He's going to give us significance.
- In John 14:8 Jesus says, "I am enough." The pursuit of spiritual issues is the great call to sufficiency.
- Come to grips with the fact that you are not in control, God is. Enjoy and accept from God your economic success, but don't take your contribution terribly seriously.



- You reap what you sow. Learn to invest your life and not spend it. Invest it wisely in the things of God.

- If you want to embrace this, remember these things:
 1. You don't work to earn a living.
 2. How hard you work does not have a direct cause and effect on how much money you make.

Ultimately, God is in control.

- Don't ever forget God's SOVEREIGNTY.
- Don't ever forget God's PROVISION.
- Don't ever forget the cornerstone truth that 1) God is in control and 2) He has your best interest at heart.

THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU HAS NOT ABANDONED YOU.

- It is how you live through the trial that God has put you in that encourages God.
 - How am I motivated?
 - Am I content with the way God is dealing with my life?
 - Can I deal with God being in control?
 - Do I believe He has my best interest at heart?
- Until you arrive at this position, you can never be motivated by the things of God.

Romans 5:3-5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This series ends with 4 questions. Discuss these with your group:

- How am I motivated (what motivates me to go to work each day)?
- Am I content with the way God is dealing with my life (my present circumstances)?
- Can I deal with God being in (complete) control (of my life and business)?
- Do I believe He has my best interest at heart (no matter what circumstances He puts me in)?

What evidence can you provide for your answers?



GOD'S VIEW OF SUCCESS AND CONTENTMENT

APPLICATION & COMMITMENT

James 1:22-25 NIV *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does."*

John 15:5 NIV *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*

Don't try to do this alone ...

Prayerfully consider what was taught in this series how you could best be used for God's purposes as you apply what you have learned. Select one change in your behavior as a result of your prayer time.

Date Series Began: _____

Date Series Ended: _____

Participant's Name: _____

A Biblical truth (principle) I learned from the lessons was: _____

I intend to apply this truth (principle): _____

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will begin applying this truth immediately. I ask and expect my group to hold me accountable for this and to check with me periodically to determine if I am doing so. Please ask me: _____

Signature

Date

