



**MISTAKES**  
**OF**  
**“SUCCESSFUL”**  
**MEN**

We have put “successful” in quotation marks, because these men were successful, but only from the world’s viewpoint.

Webster defines success as:

Outcome or result; a degree or measure of succeeding; a favorable termination of a venture; the attainment of wealth, favor, or eminence.

God’s definition and man’s definition are two different thoughts.

# Solomon

He was a powerful king to which other nations were content to pay annual tribute to.

He was very wealthy and the wisest man to live here on earth, with the exception of Jesus.

His fame preceded him.

In the eyes of the world, Solomon was very successful.

What was his mistake?

## I Kings 11:1-4

But king Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites----

From the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods. Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

# Samson

In Judges chapters 13-16, we read of the story of Samson.

He was a war hero.

He was a strong man physically, but he was a weakling in in the field of love and courtship.

His down fall came as the result of loving and trusting the wrong woman.

Both Solomon and Samson trusted the wrong people.

Whether we are talking about in marriage or just friends, we cannot allow others to lead us away from God.

I Corinthians 15:33

Do not be deceived; Bad company corrupts good morals.

We need to put our faith and trust in God and Christ and let no one come between us and Them.

## The Rich Young Man

Matthew 19: 16-22

Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that may have eternal life?”

So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

But Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me.”

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

The world was probably very proud of this young man.

He was young, rich, and religious.

His big blunder was that he loved material things  
(wealth) more than he loved the Lord.

I Timothy 6:9-10

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation  
and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts  
which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil,  
for which some have strayed from the faith in their  
greediness, and pierced themselves through with  
many sorrows.

Is there anything more important to you than the  
Lord?

## The Rich Farmer

Luke 12:16-21

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: The ground of certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, “What shall I do, since I have room to store my crops?” So he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store my crops and my goods. And will say to my soul, ‘Soul you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.’” But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

He was a successful farmer; he was thrifty; and he was visionary.

Surely, his community was proud of him.

But he was a fool.

Why?

His mistake was that he laid up treasure for himself and was not rich toward God.

## Matthew 6:19-21

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroys and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

## Matthew 16:26

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul.

## The Rich Man In The Story Of The Rich Man And Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.

No doubt he was the pride of his community and the envy of many.

He “was clothed in fine linen.”

He “feasted sumptuously every day.”

The poor man desired the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.

No doubt the rich man was a “big” success.

But success is shorted lived.

His mistake is that he missed heaven.

He neglected his soul’s salvation.

Hebrews 2:3

How shall we escape if neglect so great a salvation?

## Judas Iscariot

He had the honor of being selected as one of the twelve apostles.

He was the treasurer.

He was loved, admired and respected.

What blighted his success and killed his hopes?

Other than the fact that he was a thief, his greatest mistake was allowing Satan to enter into his heart,  
Luke 22:3.

Satan is too dangerous to entertain.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

Judas turned traitor for thirty pieces of silver.

He later went out and committed suicide.

All because he allowed Satan into his heart.

We should never give Satan the opportunity to enter  
into our hearts.

James 4:7-8

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will  
flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw  
near to you.

# Pontius Pilate

He was the Roman governor of Judea.

He had power and prestige.

According to the standard of the world he was a  
great success.

He blundered miserably.

His made the mistake of yielding to public favor  
against his convictions.

He knew this was a mistake.

Matthew 27:18

For he knew that they had handed Him over because  
of envy.

His wife warned him.

## Matthew 27:19

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.

But he gave into the crowd anyway.

## Matthew 27:22-24

Pilate said to them, “What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?” They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified.”

Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they cried out all the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified.”

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.”

And all the people said, “His blood be on us and our children.”

Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

This “successful” man went down in history as a moral coward.

Several year ago, a very important meeting was held in the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending this meeting were ten of the world's most successful financiers.

Within the next twenty-five years:

Two were convicted felons.

Two died in bankrupt.

Three committed suicide.

One went insane.

One died a fugitive from justice.

Success IS short lived.

At the beginning of the sermon I gave a definition of success. I like this one better:

He has achieved success who has:

Lived well...laughed often... and loved much.

Who has the respect of intelligent men, and the love of little children.

Who has accomplished his task.

Who has left the world better than he found it.

Whether by an improved poppy or a perfect poem, or  
a rescued soul.

One who has never lacked appreciation of the earth's  
beauty, or failed to express it.

Who has looked for the best in others.

Who has given the best he had.

Whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a  
benediction.

And used his life to prepare his soul for heaven.

## Ecclesiastes 12:13

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

Let no one till his death  
Be called unhappy. Measure not the work  
Until the day's out and the labor done;  
Then bring your gauges.

A photograph of a stone path leading through a garden with pink flowers. The path is made of large, light-colored stones and is surrounded by green grass and pink flowers. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, green font.

**Success is not in who you are, but  
in how you live.**

**The successful person is the one  
who has completely given their life  
over to Jesus.**

**Pilate asked the question: “What  
shall I do with Jesus?”**

**What will you do with Jesus?**

**More importantly, what will He do  
with you?**

Given by David Hamlin at the Hollister Missouri  
church of Christ on 12-03-06 pm.

[www.hollisterchurchofchrist.org](http://www.hollisterchurchofchrist.org)