

2: CLIMBING THE WRONG MOUNTAIN

By John
In Calling, Faith, Mindset

5 Min Read



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Mask of Success Series: When Winning Isn't Enough

OPENING THOUGHT

What if everything you're chasing—isn't what God is calling you to pursue? You worked for it. You sacrificed for it. The long nights, the early mornings, the missed dinners, and ignored whispers from God that something might be off—you ignored all of it to chase what you thought would finally make you feel significant. And now you're here. Only now, the view from the top doesn't match the promise. You hit the goal, crossed the line, and still feel empty.

I was a card-carrying member of the corporate rat race for longer than I wish to admit. A forty-hour work week was only known to HR. We typically worked on client issues an extra 5 to 10 hours each week. We didn't receive any monetary compensation; it was referred to

as a “professional donation.” Catchy huh? I eventually left the organization and started my consulting practice. More time with the family. Happier. Healthier. More where God wanted me to be.

You see, my wife and I had just considered homeschooling our three kids. By working from home, I was able to handle the Science and Math duties. Looking back, I can see it clearly—God had a plan all along.

Our culture idolizes outcomes and ignores alignment. It teaches us to work harder, reach farther, and run faster. Listening to God’s voice becomes an afterthought.

There’s nothing wrong with ambition or wanting to be good at what you do. But check your motive. Is pride the driving force behind your next promotion? Are you chasing recognition more than obedience?

The problem comes when you’re doing the right thing—but for the wrong reason.

Are you where God wants you to be? Sure, you’re making good progress climbing, but are you climbing the right mountain? Jesus doesn’t mince words:

SCRIPTURE

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

—Matthew 16:26 (ESV)

Jesus isn’t anti-success—He’s concerned for our souls. He’s not asking you to stop striving—but to check who you’re striving for?

Solomon had it all: wisdom, wealth, power. People hung on his every word. And in the end, he called it all “vanity of vanities.” (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

Why?

Because Solomon measured his success by the world’s standards—not by God’s.

APPLICATION

Success isn’t always a sign of obedience. You can be productive and completely out of alignment with God’s will. The world celebrates titles, promotions, and possessions. But Jesus asks, “What’s the cost?”

We’ve all ignored the warning signs at times—strained marriages, restless sleep, unshakable stress—because the goal seemed worth it. But what if the goal itself was wrong? What if chasing the next big thing is slowly pulling you out of your purpose?

It's time for a heart check.

Ask yourself: *"What have I been pursuing more than God? What am I afraid to let go of—even if He's not in it?"*

God wants your heart more than your hustle. And He's not impressed with outcomes that cost you intimacy with Him.

You don't need to throw away your career or stop dreaming. You just need to stop climbing ladders He never asked you to get on.

Let obedience—not outcome—define success.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE: WHICH SCOREBOARD ARE YOU USING?

Take 10 quiet, undistracted minutes today. Journal your way through these 3 questions: What have I pursued more than I've pursued God? Be honest—career? Image? Approval? Security? Write it down. What mountain am I climbing? Where are your best hours, deepest focus, and emotional energy going? What is it costing me—and is it worth it? Are your relationships suffering? Is your faith fading? Are you emotionally present at home? Close your time by praying: "God, show me where I've confused achievement with obedience. I want to climb with You, not just for me."

Then pray this:

"God, show me where I've confused achievement with obedience. I want to climb with You, not just for me."

FINAL THOUGHT

Climbing the wrong mountain isn't just about missing your purpose—it's about missing God along the way.

Don't measure your success by the car you drive, your house size, or your bank account. We're called to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind." (Matthew 22:37)

This week's step: Pick one pursuit that's been overshadowing your pursuit of God. Step back. Reevaluate. Release it if needed.

Ask the question most men never do:
"Is this climb worth my soul?"

You only get one life to climb the right mountain. Make sure it's one Jesus is climbing with you.

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