

God is our Success, but our labor is ours.

**Numbers 11:26-29** *“But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!”*

God had told Moses to “Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel” **Numbers 11:16** *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.”* These men were to be used in different capacities and it did not set well with some of them. Our success in the work of God is not ours, it is the Lord’s. People, even Christians love to brag, we brag on our children, our life achievement’s, how well we are doing, we are humanly proud of each other and our families. But in right thinking we have little to brag about because God is the giver of all success.

Now, before we get into this sermon, I want everyone to understand there is a difference between “success” and “appreciation”, One can have success and be appreciated, in fact God commanded our appreciation for those who labor in the Lord. God said of these servants, **1 Thessalonians 5:12 - 13** *“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; (13) And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”* And He said Elders or Pastors in, **1 Timothy 5:17 - 18** *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. (18) For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”* This is a commandment, and it is sinful if we fail to honor those laboring in the churches and for the churches. The word “honor” means - a value, that is, money paid, but is also means esteem (especially of the highest degree) – So it isn’t just talking about money but also appreciation, and the Lord said they are to be “counted worthy of double honour”. We must separate in our minds the difference between Peoples success and a person’s labor, they are not the same. God also said of giving His servants honor or double honor, *“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.”* Do not starve the honor or double honor they have earned. **It is a sin.**

Let’s look at what God says about our success.

A. Success is always God's crown, and never man crown.

1. God said in, **1 Corinthians 3:5-10** *“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”* We need to look at a few things here:
  - a. Paul said, “I have planted, Apollos watered;” this is the labor, this is the honor of these two men. The Lord said, “For we are labourers together with God” so God does not need us, but He uses us. Those that labor ought to be appreciated for their work with the Lord.
  - b. The Paul talks about the success, “God gave the increase” if God has given the increase, then man had nothing to accomplish here. Man did the labor he did the work of planting and watering, even though God gave the increase.
  - c. The God said, “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.” Not only from God, but also from other's Christians around them. We must always appreciate those who labor in the Lord, with the Lord, and for the Lord.
2. Let's look at John the Baptist.
  - a. Look **what God said** of John the Baptist, **Matthew 11:11** *“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”* – Not his success but God recognized his labor with appreciation. This is a high honor.
  - b. Now let's look at John's response to His work. **John 3:27** *“John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”* John credited God with everything, but God credited John with double honor for his labor.
3. Let's look at Paul.
  - a. We have already seen the scriptures in 1 Corinthians 3:5-10. Here also God recognized with honor Paul and Apollos labor, because God said through Paul, “I have planted, Apollos watered.” Paul went on to write, “For we are labourers together with God:”. So we need to understand that it is good to give God's servants credit due and appreciation and those that labor in truth double that appreciation and honor. It is God's command.

- b. Paul wrote these word's, **1 Corinthians 15:10** "*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*" - I am, and I have accomplished what God's grace has delivered through me. But "*I laboured more abundantly than they all*" Therefore, it is not unholy to credit the hard work of Paul. In fact, Paul is most favorably credited even in our day.
  - c. God gives us honor, **Matthew 25:21** "*His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*"
  - d. The Lord will also recognize us in judgment. **1 Corinthians 3:13 - 14** "*Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*" God will reward His servants, but we also have a responsibility as Christians and church to recognize their labor with honor or even double honor.
4. We need to understand, when Christ judges us, it will be on our labor of truth in God's word. Belief and fulfilment of His word. As believers and churches, we must fulfill all the commandments of the word and not pick and choose. Once God has taught us something then we are responsible and without excuse if we fail to fulfil God's word.