

God does not hold us responsible for the outcomes of faithful stewardship, but simply for faithfulness to the task. Faithfulness is our responsibility; the outcomes are in God's hands!

Remember -- in a fallen world inhabited by imperfect, sinful people there are no formulas which can guarantee perfect success (not even the suggestions I am making in this message!).

Someone may wonder, "Then why give suggestions for success, if it can't be guaranteed? In fact, why be faithful if the outcomes are not guaranteed?"

In response I would say that I believe these suggestions tend toward, contribute to, make it more likely that we will achieve success, even though they do not guarantee it. If God is pleased to crown our efforts with success in spite of our imperfect obedience and our inconstant faithfulness, then we can only praise Him for His grace!

Besides, isn't partial success better than failure? We know that lack of obedience and lack of faithfulness will almost certainly result in failure. So let us choose success, even though it be marred by our sin and imperfection!

My seventh (and final) suggestion is this:

7. If we wish to have success, we must strive for excellence in our work.

In Colossians 3:23 Paul says: "Whatever you do, do your work heartily [i.e., from the heart], as for the Lord rather than for men."

What is your work, your occupation?

Are you satisfied with the way you do it?

Many people might say yes to this question, because they make it a point to do as little as necessary; don't care whether their work is good or mediocre or poor; take as much time as they can get away with for coffee breaks, smoking breaks, rest room breaks, lunchtimes, and relief breaks;