

Recipe for Success

by Karen-Mae Trotman Mitchell

Text: “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings . . .” (Proverbs 22:29).

Theme: The Bible gives us the recipe for living successful lives for God.

Props: Apron, mixing bowl & spoon, and several “ingredients.” (Use colored sand for “pretend” cookies—available from a craft store—in small, transparent plastic containers, each one covered until needed. Or, if you are adventurous, you could mix the actual ingredients for cookies—flour, sugar, baking powder, etc. Add the ingredients to the mixing bowl as you talk about them.)
*Optional: Provide a store-bought cookie for each child, such as oatmeal-raisin. Promise to give these to the children's parents with napkins for them after church. Keep your promise!

How many of you have ever heard the word “success?” What do you think success means? Raise your hand if you would like to tell me.

Oh, those are all good ideas. Some people think success is having a lot of money, so they can buy lots of things. Some people think that it means having lots of friends. I think success is finding out what God wants you to do and being happy doing it. God wants us to live successful lives for Him. That is what we will talk about this morning.

How many of you like to help Mom or Dad in the kitchen? I like to cook and bake, and when my children were your age, I would get out a cookbook and they would make cookies with me. So today, I want to pretend that you are all my children and we are making cookies together. We are going to imagine that you can make “success” the way you make cookies. And we will see if we can find a recipe for our “success cookies” in the Bible.

In Matthew 6:33, the Bible tells us the first ingredient in success: “. . . seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (NKJV).

So let's put this first in our mixing bowl. Our first ingredient is *seek God first*. That's an important ingredient for our “success cookies.” (*Put in the first real or pretend ingredient.*)

Did you know that God has given each of us special gifts? Sometimes we call them talents. The Bible tells us that “each one has his own gift from God” (1 Cor. 7:7 NKJV). Each of us has special abilities, things that we can do well. Some of us sing; some of us draw; some of us can run fast; some of us read well; some of us are good at helping others. If we practice the things that we are good at, we become even better! This is called developing our talents. So the next thing we want to do in making our success cookies is *develop our talents*. 2 Tim. 1:6 tells us to “. . . stir up the gift of God which is in you . . .” (NKJV). So let's stir the talents into our cookies. (*Put in the next real or pretend ingredient.*)

The next step in our recipe for success is to *aim high*, to plan. Let's plan to do big things for God! God has promised that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:13, NKJV), and so can you! So let's

put high aims and goals in our success cookies. It's kind of like the baking powder that will make our cookies rise instead of being flat. (*Put in the next real or pretend ingredient.*)

We'll use one more ingredient today. Its *do your best*. Col. 3:23 (New Century Version) tells us, "In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were doing it for the Lord, not for people." God wants us to do our best. So let's mix that into our cookie dough. (*Put in the next real or pretend ingredient.*)

Wouldn't it be great if we could eat our cookies right away? But it takes time for them

to bake in the oven, doesn't it? Success also takes time. We must be patient. But we can be sure that God will bless our efforts when we are doing what He wants us to do. Let's remember one more Bible text. It's found in Proverbs 22:29: "Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men." When we live faithfully as Christians there will be wonderful opportunities that open for us to share our faith and tell others about our God.

Jesus is right there beside us to help us live successful lives for Him. "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

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