

Man: Lover, Leader, Provider

Joe McGee

Success is an often-used word in today's society—especially by men. Every man wants to be successful.

A successful man is someone who is happy with the direction his life is going. In his *public life*, he's fulfilled in his work, in his ability to provide income, and in how he is viewed by others. He has also developed his *personal life*, which includes the relationships with his immediate and extended family, his church family, and his friends. And finally, the most important area of a successful man's life is his *private life*—how he views himself on the inside. He realizes that he is valuable and responsible to God.

Successful men are those who have learned to develop and manage all three areas of life.

But what happens if we were not taught what true success is or how to achieve it? What if we left home without the skills to develop a career, to stay happily married, or to make responsible decisions? Are we left to struggle through life unfulfilled?

Not hardly!

Jesus said that His purpose for coming was to give us a rich and satisfying life (John 10:10). That rich and satisfying life begins when we accept Him as our personal Savior, but there is so much more to being “saved” than just assuring our place in Heaven. God saved each of us to fulfill a calling He had for us from the beginning of time (2 Timothy 1:9). Not only does He have a specific plan for each of us, but He will also help bring it to pass because, “He who calls us is faithful” (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24). What God requires of us is that we become a living sacrifice. We are not to copy the behavior of the world. Instead, we must allow Him to transform us through His Word by changing the way we think. Then we can know God's will for us, which is good, pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:1-2 NLT).

Years ago my wife, Denise, and I got into a heated argument after a long day at work. Pressure had been building up as our family had grown, and I was feeling overwhelmed. I felt the division of our duties was getting out of order. But rather than being a responsible husband and finding a solution to the increased demand on our resources, I made an unwise comment that perhaps Denise might do a better job at running our home.

I can still remember the look she gave me as she calmly said, “I want a job description from you.”

Part of what I did at the time was to write job descriptions for our company, so I said rather arrogantly, “That's just what I'll do!” I went to my room and opened my Bible to the passage in Proverbs 31 about the virtuous woman and thought to myself, “*I'll find enough scriptures to choke a horse and that will shut her up!*”

To make a long story short, three days later Denise asked me, “Do you have my job description done yet?”

“No, not yet.”

She said, “Can’t you find anything about a woman’s job description in the Bible?”

“I found some things.”

“Then what’s the problem?”

I said, “I keep running into mine! *My* job description has gotten so detailed, I’ll be spending the rest of my life letting God work on *me!*”

Then we both had a good laugh.

To boil it down, ***God has called all men to do three things: to love, to lead, and to provide.***

In Mark 12:30-31, we’re commanded to love God and to love our fellow man. In Ephesians 5, husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved us. He loved us when we weren’t loveable. There’s no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends (John 15:13). Real love is living your life for others. Real love is not cheap. If it’s not costing you something, it’s not love! “For God so loved the world that He gave....” Real love gives.

Someone once said that real men are like Jesus. They become responsible for things that are not their fault. It was not Jesus’ fault that Adam fell, but thank God He loved us enough to fix it.

The Bible gives us a clear picture of what love looks like in 1 Corinthians 13. Real love is patient and kind. It’s not jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. It doesn’t demand its own way. It’s not irritable, and it keeps no record of wrongs. It’s not happy about injustice, but it rejoices when truth wins out. It never gives up, never loses faith, but it’s always hopeful and endures every circumstance. The love of God was shed abroad in our hearts when we were saved (Romans 5:5). ***Successful men are lovers.***

Successful men are leaders. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, we read that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. The word “head” does not mean “boss” or “dictator.” It means “one who leads and provides resources.” Jesus said, “I only do what I see the Father do and say what I hear the Father say.” Jesus turns to man and says, “Without me you can do nothing, but with me all things are possible.” Man is to turn to his wife and say, “Here’s what I believe the Lord is saying we should do, and I’ll provide the resources to help us get it done.”

Our families are waiting to be told what they should do. They're waiting for the person with a purpose to step forward and lead. As men, do we love our families enough to stretch above and beyond and attempt something great? We know that we're children of God, because we're led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14). ***Successful men lead.***

Successful men provide. In 1 Timothy 5:8, we read that a man who doesn't provide for his family is worse than an infidel. It is our responsibility to find our gifts and callings and to increase our abilities to use those gifts through education and experience. We're not only supposed to provide for the needs and desires of our family, we're supposed to pay our tithes, to give to the poor and to every good work, and if Jesus carries, we're supposed to leave behind an inheritance for our children and grandchildren.

It is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past. Ecclesiastes 5:19-20 [Author's paraphrase from NLT]

Successful men—*real men*—are lovers, leaders, and providers. Thank God His Word shows us how to succeed in what we are called to do.

For God is working in us, giving us the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. Philippians 2:13 NLT