

19. THRIVE DON'T JUST SURVIVE



*Don't be afraid to give up what
is good for that which is great.*

#NCSAMENTALHEALTHDEVOTIONS

THRIVE DON'T JUST SURVIVE

1 Corinthians 10:20: "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye have fellowship with devils."

What does it mean to thrive? Does it mean to set a goal and to chase that goal, to achieve that goal no matter the cost? There are some people in life who reached their goals, they've made it, but they are still just surviving. They are not truly thriving. The reason for this is because they were chasing reckless extravagance and riches. They were seeking pleasure and momentary enjoyment, but gained no real fulfillment from that.

With COVID-19 making its appearance, for many life and work and progress have not stopped. The way we achieve these things may just have taken a bit of a turn. Many of us are now working from home and this is proving to be more difficult than imagined. You may even be working harder than before to achieve the goals and success you have set out for yourself. To make that deadline, to achieve that education, to do what needs to be done in order to be successful, you might need to put in more time.

Many might have asked how we stay on track with all these changes? How do we still reach our goals and be successful, despite the changes that have taken place? Traditional motivational talks will say in order for you to gain success, you'll have to want success as badly as you want to breathe. If you chase success as badly as you would chase breath, you will be successful. If you want to be successful, they say, you need to be willing to give up sleep, you need to be willing to skip some meals and miss out on social gatherings.

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At what cost does this success come? What do you have to sacrifice? What have you been sacrificing before COVID-19, or even now during COVID-19 in order to still maintain this goal, this success in life that you have set for yourself? Are you missing out on sleep? Are you skipping meals? Are you going hungry? Are you giving up personal time and family time in order to reach your goals and your success? What is the cost of your success? Will the cost of this success equal your investment? In other words, will the reward be as great as the sacrifice? Truth be told, earthly success does not pay. You give and you give with no guarantee of return.

There are massive **trade-offs** that people are making for success. There are three areas of our lives in which these trade-offs take place.

1. We trade off our **physical health** as well as our mental and emotional well-being in order to gain success. We do this until something breaks.
2. We trade off our **relationships**. We neglect them or we just do not continue cultivating them in order to gain success.
3. We trade off our own **authenticity**, our individuality and uniqueness or specific dreams in order to gain success, in order to reach our goal.

The problem with this is that you end up sacrificing things for something else which is not worth the return. Is your trade-off or this investment of physical health and losing out on relationships and your own authenticity, really worth the success? There is a saying by Albert Schweitzer: *'Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.'* Are you trading in your well-being and your true happiness in order to gain success?

**SUCCESS IS NOT THE KEY TO
HAPPINESS. HAPPINESS IS THE
KEY TO SUCCESS.**

If so, you are going to end up not being happy or being truly successful. Most people are unaware of these trade-offs they are making on a daily basis. Perhaps you are not aware of the trade-offs you are making currently during this lockdown. Time which you could be spending with your family. Time which you could be spending on your own personal health and well-being in rescheduling and reorganizing your way of life. The problem with this is when you do become aware of these trade-offs that are actually sacrificing your well-being, you do not know how to stop.

The trade-offs of health, relationships and identity are not worth it. The sacrifice is just too big and it might end up claiming your life. Earthly success does not pay. It does not give any guarantee of return. Heavenly success and heavenly treasure on the other hand, have a sure guarantee. The one is a **trade-off**, the other one is a **trade-up**.

The sacrifice God asks for, is a trade-up. Romans 12:1 tells us what type of sacrifice God asks for: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your **bodies a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service."* The sacrifice God is asking is not to kill yourself. God says, I want a living sacrifice. When you live , healthy and strong, in the best of conditions. God is saying, "I want you to be a **living sacrifice**. I want you to be perfect, without blemish, healthy and strong. Living a balanced life to be the best you can be in all aspects of life, not just your work and your vocation."

Malachi 1:8 says: *"If you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? If you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased?"*

**THE LIVING SACRIFICE GOD REQUIRES
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Why are we not looking at this biblical command in terms of saying, "Lord, you are asking us something completely different from the world"? The world is asking you to literally kill yourself in order to gain things which are temporal, things which are not really giving you the happiness and satisfaction. God, on the other hand, is saying: "I have a greater treasure for you." He is saying when you sacrifice, He doesn't want you to give up a balanced lifestyle; He doesn't want you to give up your health, your relationships. He wants you to be in a good condition when you make that living sacrifice.

By the time the world is through with us, we would have given up everything in pursuit of earthly gain. We want wealth, pleasure and fame. This is a trade-off and it leaves us lame and half-dead with nothing left to give to God. God's sacrifice is not a sacrifice at all. His trade-off doesn't come at the cost of our well-being. It is a trade-up. As a matter of fact, He desires us to achieve a better well-being in the process, to take care of ourselves, to be strong and perfect and balanced and healthy and without blemish.

Often we do know what is good for us. I think a lot of us have realised that we are making these trade-offs and we know what we need to do in order to gain that well being we need to have, but we don't do anything about it. Or we feel guilty when we do take time for those things that are important in life, for health, for personal well-being, for relationships.

You may be a doctor and you may be struggling with living healthfully because it is difficult to do this. You may be a pastor, but struggling to take time for personal spirituality. You may be an accountant who is constantly in debt.

**GOD DESIRES YOU TO ACHIEVE
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CARE OF YOURSELVES, TO BE
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HEALTHY- WITHOUT BLEMISH.**

Sometimes people need a big wake-up call in order to snap out of the routine, to get themselves to some sort of a behavioral change. Perhaps COVID-19 has been this wake-up call. Perhaps you haven't yet responded to it, but you are feeling that something needs to change. Some of us never really took care of our health. Now with this illness coming in, we've been forced to re-evaluate our well-being, to look at our immune systems, to ask whether we are strong enough to face this when we are exposed to it. Some people are now investing in immune boosters and lemon and ginger and taking care of their personal hygiene like they've never done before; they are eating and drinking more healthily; washing their hands and being more hygienic in general.

Jack was a workaholic father. By chasing success and being a workaholic, it was destroying his family relationships. It took his two year old son not recognising him one day when he came from a business trip for him to have that wake-up call and to start making those changes in order to live a healthy lifestyle and to have that well-being and that true success.

Are you trading-off or trading-up when you sacrifice? The world and Satan promise material success in exchange for a blood sacrifice, meaning that you may have to destroy yourself, your body, mind and soul, in order to have that progress, that success. God is not like that. He demands a living sacrifice, a sacrifice without blemish, one where you have a healthy well-being and where you look after yourself. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 God says: *"You are not your own, you are bought with a price. Now glorify God in your body."*

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God expects us to glorify Him with our bodies by living a well balanced lifestyle. Do you know what it means to take care of yourself? It is sad, but some may say that they do not know. Maybe you haven't taken care of yourself or maybe you are a lame sacrifice. If you are not sure how to take care of yourself you should perhaps start each day asking, "How am I going to take care of myself today?" Keep asking this question every day, every moment, until you start getting answers.

How do you take care of yourself? Some might go to the extreme when they consider this question. They might want to take extreme and immediate action. They might think it is necessary to do impulsive things like quitting their jobs because it is not good for them or to get a divorce. Stop! Nobody is saying that you need to quit your job. Just start with 15 minutes of exercise every day. Take an afternoon nap if you are feeling overworked. Learn to say no. Set new boundaries. Don't freak out and go to the other extreme. You need to achieve a balance by slowly making progress and changing the things you are doing which is not healthful to you.

Some of you are chasing that invisible dream and you struggle to let go of that invisible dream. Some may say it is not a trade-off, it is just delayed gratification. You are suffering now so that you can buy that house. Perhaps your reasoning is: "Yes, I may lose out on sleep and my health may suffer now, but I am doing it for that promotion; it is just until I have reached the goal; I will be miserable for now, but then I will be happy." There is a difference between delayed gratification and being miserable. Many are miserable and stressed out and physically ill because they are chasing some future happiness and success.

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When they reach their future happiness and success, they realise that they are not really happy because it was earthly success they were chasing.

You don't have to choose between the prize (success) and your well-being. You can have both. You need to learn to thrive and not just survive. Your well-being is uniquely yours and your life needs to be tailor-made in order to achieve this well-being. The problem often lies in the definition of success. Is there place in your definition of success for common humanity? In other words, the normal things of life you still need to do while chasing success, weather earthly or heavenly. What trade-offs are you making for success? Are you really okay with that?

Consider the following advice of Albert Einstein: *'Try not to become a man of success, rather become a man of value.'* I am not saying that you should start being lazy. You should not waste time either. You should set up goals and you should achieve them, but you should do this in a balanced way. You can't just be studying the whole day and work non-stop and have no time for family and no time for physical exercise or for rest or to reflect.

You may thrive by having money and position, but you are barely surviving in your health and in your relationships. You are barely keeping yourself from falling apart, emotionally and mentally. God would have you thrive mentally, socially, vocationally and in all aspects of life.

It is said that all progress takes place outside our comfort zone. This is true, but the discomfort we feel should not be at the sacrifice of our health and well-being. It can be at the sacrifice of our material wealth or our earthly pleasures.

**TRY NOT TO BECOME A MAN OF
SUCCESS, RATHER BECOME A MAN
OF VALUE. ALBERT EINSTEIN**

It can be at the sacrifice of success. Or should I say at failure. We all fail and we all make mistakes. The discomfort that we could be feeling is discomfort in saying, "I may have failed, but I am going to get up again. I am not going to stay down." Healthy discomfort is when we do not succeed but we keep getting up and we keep going.

Thomas Edison said: "I failed my way to success." Do you know that he conducted 1000 failed experiments and only at number 1001 he successfully created the light bulb. He pushed through the discomfort of apparent failure. We cannot stay in our comfort zones, but the comfort zones we should sacrifice are the said amusement and wealth, not our health and our well-being. Yes, there is a price to pay; a trade-off or a trade-up to be made to pay for our success here on earth and in heaven. The price we have to pay is earthly non-essentials.

'Don't be like most where every valuable attainment is neglected for fashionable display and superficial pleasure.' A man who finds true pearls in life, would give up everything for these pearls. It is like the story in the Bible of a man who one day found a treasure. He found a huge pearl in the field and then he hid the pearl. Later he sold everything he had to buy the land where he found the pearl.

When we find that true pearl in life, that heavenly prize, that relationship with God, will we not be willing to give up our earthly, temporal dreams for a heavenly one? To sacrifice those things will be a trade-up, not a trade-off.

For all his life, my dad badly wanted to be a farmer. He wanted a farm where he could build his own house and plant his own lands.

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But he gave up that dream to be a pastor. He has no house, no farm, no lands, no crops. He gave up his dream for a heavenly reward – to be with God and to do the things of God. Matthew 6:33 explains very clearly what is expected of us: *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

John D. Rockefeller once said that we must *‘not be afraid to give up the good for that which is greater.’* Earthly success doesn't pay. You give and you give without a guarantee of return. Heavenly success and treasure have an assured guarantee. The one is a trade-off the other one is a trade-up. Which one are you going to choose today?



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