



Can a Christian Thrive in a World that Rewards Evil?

Luke 6:45: (NASB) *The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.*



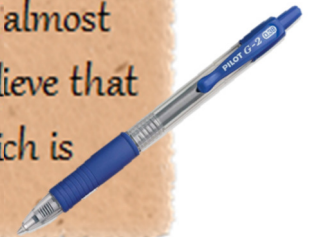
Oftentimes as we look around us we can really get discouraged, for we live in a world that embraces darkness and persecutes light. We are surrounded by political corruption, we are developed in a “me first” environment. We are shown that winning at all costs is acceptable. And instead of a “turn the other cheek” mentality, we are bombarded with a “smack him before he smacks you” approach. It is like living as a lamb among lions - and we all know how that works out. So, can we as Christians “thrive” in a world like this? Stay with us!

What is our context?

We recently received a letter from a young Christian man about 30 years old, living in a Middle Eastern country. He would like to remain anonymous, so we will call him “Timothy.”

Excerpts from Timothy’s letter:

I'm...a firm believer in good ethics. I don't like to lie or cheat, especially when it comes to my job. Alas, and forgive me for saying this, but almost 99% of my country's people strongly believe that you need to do so at work to survive, which is what almost everybody is doing.



We all want to win in life. We all want what we each perceive to be success. Let’s look at two diametrically opposed paths that both led to success...or did they?

Tour de France Victories 1 and 2, report on Lance Armstrong

- *It was hard to believe Lance Armstrong had been forced out of cycling for two years with cancer when he returned so mightily to the tour in 1999. That year he took...all three time trials to become, ten years after Greg LeMond, only the second American to win the Tour. The following year, the recipe for success was the same: He attacked on the hills and joined Marco Pantani out in front on his own. ...Armstrong sealed his second Tour victory.*

So, what is “winning” for a Christian? For the first hour of this program, we are going to focus on our own head and heart and notice certain principles to thrive in this evil world.



Mark 10:17-23: (NASB) ¹⁷As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ¹⁸And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments, Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother. ²⁰And he said to him, Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.


PRINCIPLE #1

Live in line with the laws of God

²¹Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. ²²But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. ²³And Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!

PRINCIPLE #2

Live in line with the spirit of selflessness, spurred on by the laws of God

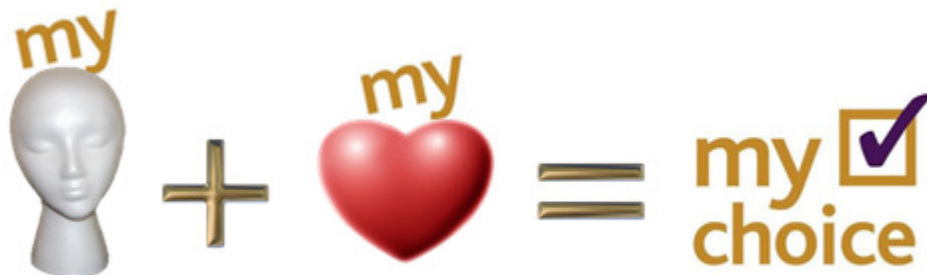
 **Success defined and Character/Reputation, John Wooden (former UCLA basketball coach), TedTalk**

- *Success according to John Wooden, speaking at 90 years old: Peace of mind is attained only through self-satisfaction and knowing you made the effort to do the best of which you're capable. I believe that's true. If you make the effort to do the best which you are capable; trying to improve the situation that exists for you, I think that's success and I don't think others can judge you.*
- *Your reputation is what you are perceived to be, and your character is what you really are. I think character is much more important than what you are perceived to be, and hope they would both be good, but they will not necessarily be the same.*

Personally defining success depends on what you are driven towards. True eternal success can only be achieved by driving towards those things of lasting value, significance and impact.

What is our standard? What if, by holding to it, you can't get ahead?

My country is now well-known for its lack of ethics and morality. You have to backstab to move ahead...



If you focus your head and then focus your heart, you can make a choice as to how you are going to deal with the things around you.

🔊) Tour de France Victories 3 and 4, report on Lance Armstrong

- *The following year, it was three times - not so much lucky, as heroic. Once again, Armstrong made his traditional breakaway on the climbs to take a mountain stage. With it, he took yellow and he held on until the line in Paris. In 2002, he became the unrivaled king of the Pyrenees with two successive victories on La Mongie and the Plateau de Beille. The icing on the cake that year was a victory in the Mâcon time trial the day before Paris - a four-stage victory to cap his fourth consecutive Tour triumph.*

Romans 12:14: (NASB) *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*

PRINCIPLE #3

Focus your energy on the spreading of goodness



 Teach by example - poetic verse, *John Wooden (former UCLA basketball coach), TedTalk*

- *A poetic verse Wooden came across in the 1930's: "No written word, no spoken plea, can teach our youth what they should be. Nor all the books on all the shelves, it's what the teachers are themselves." That made an impression on me in the 1930's and I tried to use that, more or less, in my teaching, whether it be in sports or whether it be in a classroom.*

Romans 12:15: (NASB) *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

PRINCIPLE #4 **Fear not entering into the lives of those around you**

We are to be sympathetic to those around us.

Romans 12:16: (NASB) *Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.*

PRINCIPLE #5 **Keep your head inside your head and keep your ego beneath it**

Don't put yourself in a compromising position, which can happen when our ego gets out of control.

 *Tour de France Victory 5, report on Lance Armstrong*

- *2003 was perhaps his toughest year, creating a most exciting race. First, there was Armstrong's swerve through a field to avoid the unfortunate Joseba Beloki. Then...the American's handlebars caught on a spectator's bag and he fell. But the king picked himself up, dusted himself down and launched a phenomenal attack of the last to take his fifth Tour and join (list of men) in the history books.*

Romans 12:17: (NASB) *Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.*



PRINCIPLE #6

**Evil dies on arrival
and righteousness
is always respected**

When evil comes into our lives, it should “die on arrival.” There should be nothing in us to nourish evil.

Romans 12:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸*If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.*

PRINCIPLE #7

**God's judgment in
God's time rights
all wrongs
...God's way**

Romans 12:20: (NASB) *But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.*



...*heap burning coals on his head* is actually a good thing! It is said that in biblical times, when one visited someone at night the host would give the guest embers to carry home so he could immediately stoke his own fire and warm his home. This was an expression of extending hospitality.

PRINCIPLE #8

**Mercy and kindness
have a home here,
regardless of who
is in need**



That is difficult because we may *want* our enemy to be cold!

Romans 12:21: (NASB) *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

PRINCIPLE #9

**Steel yourself towards
the defeat of evil
within your scope
with that which is right**

To sum up...

1 Peter 3:8-12: (NASB) ⁸*To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For, The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*

How do we stay focused on that which is most important and not lose hope?

Rick and Jonathan, your show is a constant inspiration, and I listen to the stuff I download as I walk. Alas, I'm in constant confusion. I listen to the show, and I get a push of hope, but hours later, I'm back to dark thinking. I think of revenge of those who refuse to pay for my services when they have millions and just didn't pay because they just could do so. I think of suicide because I don't feel like I fit among my friends who think I'm stupid for not sleeping with women who want to, or making a large margin of profit when I can.





Armstrong confesses to Oprah, *Wall Street Journal Live*

- *(Oprah) Yes or no: Did you ever take banned substances to enhance your cycling performance?*
- *(Lance) Yes.*
- *(Oprah) Yes or no: Was one of those banned substances EPO? (EPO, or erythropoietin, is a hormone naturally produced by human kidneys to stimulate red blood cell production, according to the World Anti-Doping Agency.)*
- *(Lance) Yes.*
- *(Oprah) Did you ever "blood dope" or use transfusions to enhance your cycling performance?*
- *(Lance) Yes.*
- *(Oprah) Did you ever use any other banned substances like testosterone, or cortisone or human growth hormone?*
- *(Lance) Yes.*
- *(Oprah) Yes or no: In all seven of your Tour de France victories, did you ever take banned substances or blood dope?*
- *(Lance) Yes.*

He cheated at all seven races! Eventually, whether in this age or the next, it will all come crumbling down.

We have to find a fruitful focus for our life:

Hebrews 12:1: (NASB) *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

The *great cloud of witnesses* refers to those who have gone before and are a blueprint of faith in action. These are partially listed in the prior chapter. See [Hebrews 11](#).

First rule, John Wooden (former UCLA basketball coach), TedTalk

- *I had three rules, pretty much, that I stuck with practically all the time. I learned these prior to making UCLA and I decided they were very important. One was: Never be late. Never be late. ...Players, if we were leaving for somewhere, they had to be neat and clean. And I had one of my greatest players that you probably heard of, Bill Walton. He came to catch the bus because we were leaving for somewhere to play, and he wasn't clean and neat so I would let him go - he couldn't get on the bus. He had to go home and get cleaned up to get to the airport. So I was a stickler for that. I believe in time, very important.*



What a contrast to Lance Armstrong! We should send the message to those around us of simplicity, honesty and integrity.

 I would never do that, Lance previously denying, *Wall Street Journal Live*

- *I came out of a life-threatening disease. I was almost on my deathbed. Do you think I'm gonna come back to a sport and say, "Okay, doctor. Give me everything you've got; I just want to go fast!" No way! I would never do that.*

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we should focus on Jesus as the end result:

Hebrews 12:2: (NASB) *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

 Second and third rules, *John Wooden (former UCLA basketball coach), TedTalk*

- *Second Rule: Not one word of profanity. One word of profanity and you were out of here for the day. If I see it in a game, you're gonna come out and sit on the bench. Third Rule: Never criticize a teammate. I didn't want that. That was my job. I'm paid to do it. ...Those are three things that I stuck with pretty closely all the time. Those actually came from my dad. That's what he tried to teach to me and my brothers at the time.*

He was building a structure on how to thrive in a bad world.

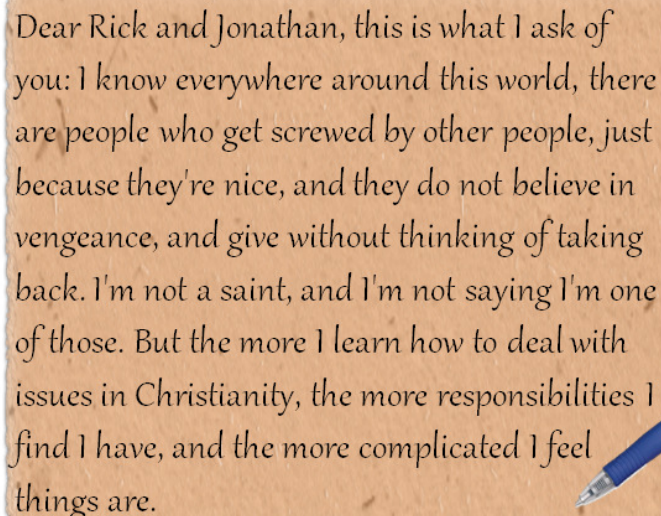
Fix the experience of Jesus in your mind:

Hebrews 12:3: (NASB) *For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Our friend Timothy is feeling overwhelmed by the lack of morality around him and he goes to dark thinking. This verse tells us to meditate on Jesus, because he experienced hostility like we never have. Jesus was able to overcome that hostility because he was focused on the will of God only.

Don't give up on well-doing! We have a lot of ammunition to use in battling against this dark world.

How do we encourage others to hold to a higher standard than is commonly acceptable?



Dear Rick and Jonathan, this is what I ask of you: I know everywhere around this world, there are people who get screwed by other people, just because they're nice, and they do not believe in vengeance, and give without thinking of taking back. I'm not a saint, and I'm not saying I'm one of those. But the more I learn how to deal with issues in Christianity, the more responsibilities I find I have, and the more complicated I feel things are.



This interview was given long before Armstrong finally admitted his guilt.

 **Avoiding detection, Tyler Hamilton (former Armstrong teammate)**

- *How did you all avoid detection?*
- *A lot of different ways. One way was the team doctors would tell you what and how much of a certain product you could take and how many days the testers could still detect it for, which I called in the book, the "glow time," how long you were glowing. So with each product, you had a different glow time depending on how much you took. You had very sophisticated teams with sophisticated doctors. If you followed their rules you would pass the controls. You know, I passed several hundred controls over my career.*

Remember the two times Jesus fed the multitudes? Did he survey the crowd and dismiss those not worthy to be fed by a miracle, or did he bless all who were in his life at that moment? **We, too, have daily opportunities to feed the multitudes around us as a witness to the love of God through Christ!**

Matthew 5:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Feed the crowd by truly rejoicing in ALL things...that's what Jesus did!



A caller suggested: Malachi 3:13: (NIV) *But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it. The wicked prosper right now. The Israelites complaining to God, what good is it to serve Him, when those around them were more prosperous. But eventually the godly will prosper. Galatians 6:7: Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

 **Love in the game, Tribute to Vince Lombardi, NFL Films**

- *Beneath his stormy surface flowed the warm tide of compassion and kindness.*
- *I know I'm an emotional man. In order for me, for example, to give everything of myself, to take the mental anguish that is all a part of this game, the emotionalism that is all part of this game, in order for me to do this for someone else, I think there has to be a certain amount of love for that other person. That love for each other, in other words, in the game of football.*

Vince Lombardi cared deeply about his players, and they performed for him. That is a great example of how to be an example to the world around you, including your enemies.

Matthew 5:13: (NASB) *You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

Feeding the crowd by maintaining your values can be the preserving element in the midst of sinful decay. So feed the crowd by being different...that's what Jesus did!



Matthew 5:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

Feed the crowd by allowing your light to shine freely. It is important that your light shine in a way that it would encourage and not blind; beckon and not frighten. That's what Jesus did! Even if they don't respond, people should see something different, something higher, in the way we live our lives.

1 Peter 2:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹²Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Feed the crowd by behaving in such a way that they see the unmistakable difference between you and the rest of the crowd...that's what Jesus did!

How do we fight the idea that "evil is normal and nice is stupid?"

...I find it all too hard to handle, and I could really use some help. I was the happiest person I knew when I was younger, and as soon I stepped into adulthood and it was time to face the world, I found myself getting depressed day in and day out. What I'm asking for, I guess, is for more inspiration. How should I think? I hate myself now because I look at people around me and all I could think of is how bad they treat me and others. I don't want that, but I really can't help it anymore. I am full of hatred, and I hate myself for it more. I don't want someone to lend me money to pay off my debts and then pay them back. I don't want to make a big deal out of this. I just want a show, if possible, where you guys could talk about how hard it is for a nice person to survive in a world where evil is normal and nice is stupid.






Evil is normal - it is after all, Satan's world. That being said, we arm ourselves against it.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5: (NASB) ³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

...taking every thought captive implies that there are some thoughts that do not want to be taken. Remember, my heart + my mind = my choice.

Why is evil "normal?" Because it has a powerful voice!

 **Press conference, Lance Armstrong explaining why he did not give an interview to a certain reporter (This is Lance Armstrong after he was accused but before he admitted wrongdoing.)**

- *I might just clear up one thing, the reason you didn't get it (the interview), Paul. When I decided to come back for what I think is a very noble reason, you said, "Folks, the cancer has been in remission for four years, but our cancer has now returned," meaning me (for the sport of cycling).*
- *I am here to fight this disease. I'm here so that I don't have to deal with it, you don't have to deal with it, none of us have to deal with it, my children don't have to deal with it, but yet you said that I am the cancer and the cancer is out of remission. So I think it goes without saying, no, we are not going to sit down and do an interview.*

The attitude here displayed reminds us of another self-righteous group:

Luke 18:9-14: (NASB) ⁹And he also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get. ¹³But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner! ¹⁴I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Bringing our self-contradiction to God in prayer helps us to be cleansed. We begin to cope with our sins in a spiritual manner, armed with humility.


 **Old Fashioned Virtues, Tribute to Vince Lombardi, NFL Films**

- *Lombardi believed in the old fashioned virtues, which were stamped all over his team: Hard work, second effort, loyalty and love. His genius was that he was able to inspire so many of his players to grasp these ideals. Lombardi's influence extended not only to his own team, but during his short career as a coach, many hundreds of thousands of other young athletes warmed their own competitive spirit by the bright fire of this man who stood for everything that was solid and successful in American sports.*

We are looking at the world of sports as a way to identify things, but these principles apply to every aspect of our general living. When we apply hard work, effort, loyalty and love, we have a much better chance of succeeding in a Christian way.



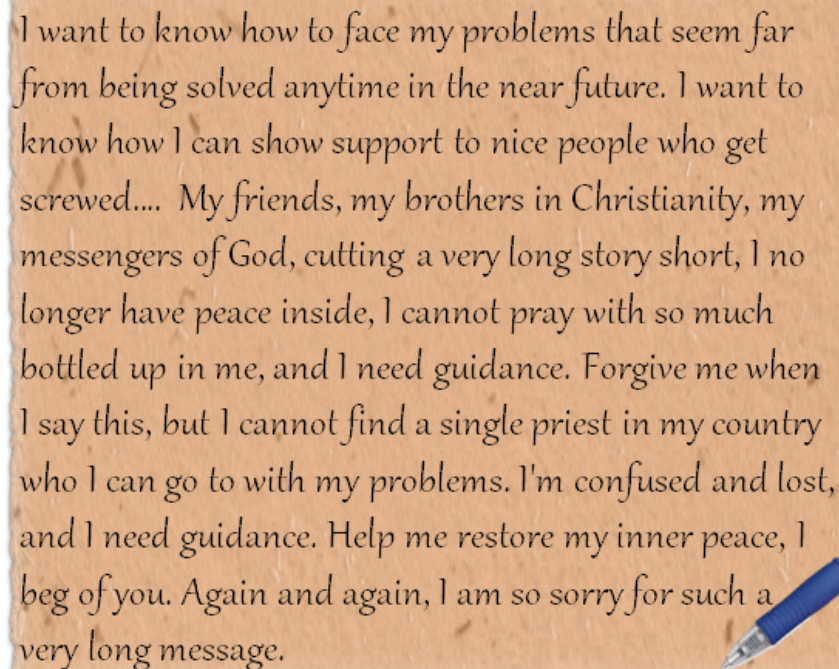
A caller suggested [Matthew 6:4-6](#). Just as God has called you, He will give you the means, the ability and the opportunity to answer. It has been said, you may not be able to do great things, but you can do small things with great love. You may not change your society or your government, but your daily secret struggle can be the source of happiness. The very difficulty of your task is your task.

 **Press conference, Lance Armstrong explaining why he did not give an interview to a certain reporter (This is Lance Armstrong after he was accused but before he admitted wrongdoing.)**

- *As a society, are we supposed to forgive and forget and let people get back to their job? Absolutely. I'm not sure I will ever forgive you for that statement. And I'm not sure that anybody around the world that has been affected by this disease will forgive you.*

Oftentimes we are judged by our own words.

How do we re-establish the peace of God in our hearts when we get lost?



I want to know how to face my problems that seem far from being solved anytime in the near future. I want to know how I can show support to nice people who get screwed.... My friends, my brothers in Christianity, my messengers of God, cutting a very long story short, I no longer have peace inside, I cannot pray with so much bottled up in me, and I need guidance. Forgive me when I say this, but I cannot find a single priest in my country who I can go to with my problems. I'm confused and lost, and I need guidance. Help me restore my inner peace, I beg of you. Again and again, I am so sorry for such a very long message.

Our first point is, ironically, to reclaim peace you have to understand that life will continually try to chase it from you.

1 Peter 4:12-14: (NASB) ¹²*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;* ¹³*but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.* ¹⁴*If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

If we are going to walk in the footsteps of Christ, we may walk through fiery ordeals. We should not be surprised by this. We should acknowledge that this is normal for a servant of Christ.



A cure for anxiety:

Matthew 6:31-34: (NIV) ³¹So do not worry, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Our second point to reclaim peace in our lives is to claim the blessing of your trial, namely that it is a proving ground of the grace within you.

Understand the denial, Tyler Hamilton, (former Armstrong teammate)

- *Are there records that back up what you say? Is it your word against his or is it bigger than that?*
- *It's much bigger than that. I understand the denial, because I denied it for what, six - seven years? It's kind of your first reaction. It's difficult to tell the truth, but I can tell you that it feels good. I kept this secret for way too long. I lied to my parents, my brother, my sister, my friends and co-workers. Enough was enough. It took its toll. It was very difficult to hold in. I was prepared to take it to the grave, but fortunately I was pulled in to testify in a federal case, and that was lucky for me. That sounds kind of funny to say.*

There is a principle here. We should pour out our issues before God and He will accept and strengthen us as a result of that. It feels good to tell God of our struggles and pain.

Third, pray with thanksgiving - even if you don't feel thankful - God knows and wants you to pray anyway!

Philippians 4:4-7: (NASB) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

We have to continually fight to regain peace and keep our head and heart in the right place.

More things and no focus on winning, John Wooden (former UCLA basketball coach), TedTalk

- *...Don't whine, don't complain, don't make excuses...get out there and whatever you're doing, do it to the best of your ability. No one can do more than that. ...I never mentioned winning (to my teams)...My idea is that you can lose when you outscore somebody in a game, and you can win when you are outscored. I've felt that way on certain occasions at various times. And I just wanted them to be able to hold their head up after a game. When a game is over and you see somebody that didn't know the outcome, I hope they couldn't tell by your actions whether you outscored an opponent or an opponent outscored you.*

If you put in your best effort, you have won, regardless if you outscored the other team. That philosophy translates to our Christian life. For us to win, we have to put our best effort forward one step at a time. Whether we end up winning or losing according to the standards of the world, God sees the winner.



That is what our Christianity is all about, and we can find great hope in that fact. We are judged by our intention. Even though our sin exists, it can be erased in the eyes of God if our efforts are to step forward. That gives us great hope.

So, fourth: Focus on focusing your focus!

Philippians 4:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

What are we supposed to think about? Timothy, we are talking to you out in the Middle East where you are fighting essentially alone against a tidal wave of darkness. You can't overcome the tidal wave, but if you focus yourself on what is true and pure and honorable and lovely and of good repute, dwell on those things. In so doing, you can again find hope.

Remember, Jesus "won" by being persecuted and crucified.

"People are often unreasonable and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives.
Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you.
Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough.
Give your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God.
It was never between you and them anyway." — Mother Teresa

We need to focus on what we need to look at, and it is not the "stuff" of this world. A Christian's success is different than worldly success. Success is truly living up to the standards of Christ's likeness, righteousness, and integrity.



**Can a Christian thrive in a world that rewards evil?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!**





***And now even more to think about...
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!***

To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest. - *Mahatma Gandhi*

Who lies for you will lie against you. - *Bosnian Proverb*

No man has a good enough memory to make a successful liar. - *Abraham Lincoln*

Make yourself an honest man, and then you may be sure there is one less rascal in the world. - *Thomas Carlyle*

A half-truth is a whole lie. - *Yiddish Proverb*

(Source: Excerpts from Wikipedia) John Robert Wooden (October 14, 1910 - June 4, 2010) was an American basketball player and coach. Nicknamed the "Wizard of Westwood", he won ten NCAA national championships in a 12-year period—seven in a row—as head coach at UCLA, an unprecedented feat. Within this period, his teams won a record 88 consecutive games. He was named national coach of the year six times.

As a player, Wooden was the first to be named basketball All-American three times, and he won a Helms Athletic Foundation National Championship at Purdue in 1932, seven years before the birth of the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship. Wooden was named a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame as a player (inducted in 1961) and as a coach (in 1973), the first person ever enshrined in both categories. Only Lenny Wilkens and Bill Sharman have since had the same honor.

He was one of the most revered coaches and was beloved by his former players, among them Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton. Wooden was renowned for his short, simple inspirational messages to his players, including his "Pyramid of Success". These often were directed at how to be a success in life as well as in basketball.

Seven Point Creed

John Wooden's Seven Point Creed, given to him by his father Joshua upon his graduation from grammar school:

- Be true to yourself.
- Make each day your masterpiece.
- Help others.
- Drink deeply from good books, especially the Bible.
- Make friendship a fine art.
- Build a shelter against a rainy day.
- Pray for guidance and give thanks for your blessings every day.



Wooden also authored a lecture and a book about the Pyramid of Success. The Pyramid of Success consists of philosophical building blocks for winning at basketball and at life. In his later years he was hired by corporations to deliver inspirational lectures and even appeared in commercials for Hartford Insurance and the NCAA. Following his death, all UCLA teams wore either a patch or helmet sticker with the initials "JRW" inside a black pyramid, in honor of his philosophy. It is generally known that he received lecture fees that exceeded the salaries he was paid as a coach. Wooden proudly claimed that these late in life windfalls allowed him to set up education accounts for all of his grandchildren. In a 2009 interview, John Wooden described himself politically as a "liberal Democrat," who had voted for some Republican presidential candidates. At the top of the Pyramid of Success was "Competitive Greatness" which Wooden defined as "Perform at your best when your best is required. Your best is required each day."

Wooden was also the author of several other books about basketball and life.

Among Wooden's maxims:

- Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. (from Benjamin Franklin)
- Flexibility is the key to stability.
- Be quick, but don't hurry.

Finally, attitudes that encourage us in our daily fight for righteousness and integrity:

Happiness / Contentment: 1 Timothy 6:6-7: (NASB) ⁶But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

1 Peter 4:12-14: (NASB) ¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Joy: Philippians 4:4-7: (NRSV) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Nehemiah 8:10: (NASB) Then he said to them, Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

"A smile is the light on your face that lets someone know you're home..."

Reverence / Humility: John 13:13-17: (NASB) ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. ¹⁶Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is



sent greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Proverbs 1:7: (NASB) *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Psalms 111:10: (NASB) *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.*

Perseverance/Determination: **Romans 8:38-39:** (NASB) ³⁸*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Compassion: **Matthew 9:11-13:** (NASB) ¹¹*When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners? ¹²But when Jesus heard this, he said, It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: I desire compassion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*