

**Note:**

- Italics used for notes to the speaker
- Regular text for specific discussion points to be brought up in the session
- The option to ask students questions may not be available in larger settings, please feel free to adapt the talk as necessary, while retaining key points

**Goal of the talk:**

- I. Students would think about their life purpose
  - II. Students would find new life in Jesus
  - III. Students would live like Jesus did
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**True Success – Talk-sheet*****What we can learn from the life of Jesus***

*Key Points: Learnings from the life of Jesus - Stay faithful to God's will, have the power of God, know your identity*

**Introduction:**

Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mary Kom, Michelle Obama, A.R. Rahman, Ratan Tata, Lata Mangeshkar, Bill Gates, Aamir Khan, Sachin Tendulkar

What do these people have in common?

Yes, they are all famous for different reasons – some for success in business, some for success in their chosen career, and others for change they brought to society. But more than their fame, what is common between them is the fact that each of them excelled in their field and as a result gained a spotlight for their work.

All of us look at the lives of people like them and are inspired, because we see in their lives something that to us describes what success is. Yet, why is it that even though most people look to and aspire to be like such people, a lot of us don't end up being successful?

We must differentiate here between fame and success. Not everyone will be famous, but everyone can be successful. In fact, fame is certainly not a measure for success. If it were, we wouldn't see so many famous people feeling so unfulfilled and unhappy about their lives.

Some other things success is not - Based on the people we mentioned - not all of them are/were rich, powerful, loved by all people, or good looking. Yet aren't these the measures we often use to define success?

If success then is not what we have popularly defined it to be, then what is it?

**Life Goals and Measuring Success**

Let's take a very basic definition of the word 'success' – 'Success' is 'the achievement of the goals which a person sets out to accomplish'. What that means is - when we finally arrive at the goal we were working toward, we can say that we are successful.

It really is that simple, isn't it?

So, if we apply that definition to how we define a successful life – A person is said to have succeeded in life when they accomplish their life goal.

But, how many of us have a life goal?

*Point to ponder* - If you do not have a life goal, how will you know if you have succeeded at the end of your life?

An important step to success is to have a life goal.

### **Setting a Life Goal**

One major hindrance to success is - being in the “wrong career” - that is, choosing a life path that wasn't ours to take.

(Play clip from Alice in Wonderland - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ISenpl1R94>)

Without a goal, we will follow any path and it doesn't matter which one we choose - Maybe we choose it because everyone else is doing it, or because someone we admire did it, or because we simply didn't put much thought in to our final destination.

But if we really do want to succeed, then knowing our destination is essential.

### **Lessons from the Life of Jesus**

Let's look at the story of someone who had a very unimpressive background by human ways of thinking, yet changed the world as we know it–

Nearly two thousand years ago in a small, unknown village, a child was born of an ordinary woman from a family that wasn't very wealthy. The child grew up in another village where He worked as a carpenter until He was thirty.

This man never got a degree, never wrote a book, never held a public office, never married and had a family, nor owned a home. He didn't travel even 300 kilometres from His birthplace. And though He never did any of the things that usually accompany greatness, great crowds of people followed Him. He had no credentials but Himself.

He became a travelling preacher. He healed the sick, cast out impure spirits, calmed raging seas, multiplied food to feed the hungry and most important of all He taught the principles of an unseen Kingdom, that radically challenged human thinking.

*(one solitary life - modified)*

This passage describes the life of Jesus. Jesus' life is one that was very clearly focused on His goal to save humanity and all creation. As we discussed in the last session, He came to save us from the mess we had made of His perfect creation.

There was a key moment in the life of Jesus, before He stepped out towards His final destination. We will look at a passage from the Bible that tells us about this key moment and then look at some lessons we can learn from His story.

### **Matthew 3:13-17 (NLT with additional explanatory notes regarding baptism)**

Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized (*An act signifying cleansing from sin and turning back to God*) by John. But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.” So John agreed to baptize him.

After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

### **This incident in the life of Jesus offers us some indicators of what is necessary for a successful life –**

1. Stay faithful to the will of God
2. Have the power of God
3. Receive your true identity from God

It is when we do not have these 3 important ingredients, that we stray away from the path for which we were made

#### **1. Stay faithful to the will of God –**

Have you heard of the phrase “a means to an end?” – it is used to refer to the process or effort required to arrive at the goal you desire. Eg: you work hard at your studies to score a high percentage in your exams. Working hard is the means to achieve the end of scoring a high percentage.

However, when the idiom “a means to an end” is used, it usually implies that the means is not important, what is more important is the end goal. Thus, people justify any form of corruption and wickedness because they reason, “The goal I want to reach is noble!”. It is like the Robin hood mentality.

Jesus, however, did not adopt that policy. In the passage we read, we see that even though Jesus was completely pure, and had no need to be cleansed from sin, He still submitted Himself to God’s perfect requirement for all human beings. He did not exempt Himself from following God’s command and by doing so, lived a perfect life without any sin and gave us an example to follow.

*Application:* When we stay faithful to doing what is right in God’s eyes, taking no short cuts, our character is formed so we can handle success without misusing it.

2. **Have the power of God** – Jesus being God was able to do anything, but when He became a human being, He took on the weakness of being human. We see the Spirit

of God coming upon Jesus in the passage we read. In His humanity, the Son of God, relied on His Father to strengthen Him for His mission on earth.

*Application:* Jesus, though He was God made Himself humble, we on the other hand often are the opposite - though we are human, we exalt ourselves to the status of God.

The first step to knowing God is acknowledging that we are not God. When we realize the greatness of God and are humble enough to confess our need for Him, we give room for Him to do things in our lives that we could never achieve in our own strength.

*Additional related verses -*

**John 15:5 (NLT)** *Jesus said, “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”*

**Matt 19:26 (NLT)** *Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.”*

3. Receive your true identity from God – In Matt 3:13-17, God the Father speaks on behalf of Jesus and announces that Jesus is His Son whom He loves. Jesus’ knowledge of His identity as the one and only Son of God enabled Him to walk in freedom from things we chase after as humans and instead focus on what was most important.

*Application:* When our identity is fully rooted in God, we do not feel insecure and chase after things that distract us from our true purpose. Instead, we find stability and security in the unchanging reality of who God is and His plans and purposes for creating us.

Jesus lived the perfect life. He was completely faithful to the Father, showing us how we too must live. But not only does He show us how, He also gives us the power to live like Him. Let us go back and look at the end of His life on earth and how He fulfilled His purpose –

While He was still young, the tide of public opinion turned against Him, His followers ran away, He was turned over to His enemies and sentenced to death on a cross between two thieves. When he died, he triumphantly cried out “It is finished!” For His task had been completed.

His body was laid in a borrowed grave, but three days later this Man arose from the dead – living proof that He was, as He had claimed, the Saviour whom God had sent, the Son of God in human flesh. He defeated death itself and in so doing transformed life on earth forever.

*(one solitary life - modified)*

**Eph 2:10 (NLT)** For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

**Conclusion:** Because Jesus fulfilled His purpose for coming to earth, we are offered a chance to be all that God created us to be. His victory over death is a sign of His triumph over all evil. Anyone who believes in Jesus is offered restoration, so that like Jesus, we will have our identity rooted in God, and have God's power that enables us to walk in God's ways and accomplish the purpose for which we were created.