

THE SUCCESSFUL LIFE #2

Risk—The Key To Success

Ecclesiastes 11: ¹ Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. ² Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land. ³ If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie. ⁴ Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. ⁵ As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. ⁶ Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

Introduction:

The Book of Ecclesiastes mirrors a period of time in Israel when there were unprecedented opportunities for financial profit and success. In the previous passage the reality of risk in any enterprise has been established (10:8–10). **Now the writer of Ecclesiastes seeks to advise the young people of his day concerning one of the greatest keys to success—the willingness to take calculated risks.** Success at work or in business demands taking risks. In fact, success in any enterprise involves risk.

For believers this concept is **expressed through faith.**

Faith acts, asserts itself, and operates without absolute proofs.

Yet **faith is fundamentally superior to sheer risk since it acts in trust and confidence in a faithful God.**

This passage emphasizes **five principles for godly risk taking.**

1. Success demands risk (verses 1,2).

¹ Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. ² Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.

A. The imagery of verse 1 is the annual floods of the Nile. The farmers would go out in boats to the flooded fields and scatter their seed on the waters heavy with rich silt. A bountiful harvest resulted.

God has given resources, blessing, and benefits to each of us. The stewardship of life demands that we be willing to risk or invest them in faith for an increase and as a hedge against difficult times.

B. Uncertainty and potential problems in the future are a reality.

v 2....for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.

2. Follow the laws of good business.

³ If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie. The writer uses the figures of clouds heavy with rain and trees that fall to establish the fact that...

A. Laws operating in the world must be heeded.

honesty, fairness, a just weight,

Financial and personal success cannot be attained when the rules are violated.

*Don't live on borrowed money

*Don't spent more than you take in

*Don't borrow more than your assests

These are just a few simple rules that keep peace of mind in the area of finance.

B. Don't put all your eggs in one basket

² Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.

3. Do not allow present conditions to keep you from working on you future.

⁴ Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

“What if” will never allow you to progress.

“I can do all things through Christ”...opens the door for action.

We don't stop saving money because interest is down.(we move it to a profitable investment)

We don't stop investing because stock market is down.

We don't stop investing because of a threat of war.

We don't stop giving alms when we are hurting financially.

We don't stop tithing because times are hard.

4. Trust in the sovereignty of God.

⁵ As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.

The point of this verse: **We don't always understand how God works.**

* In Solomon's day the modern scientific tools of meteorology to measure and predict weather were unknown. Even today predicting weather is imprecise.

* Perhaps you have seen a computer simulation of the formation of a human body in the womb. Do you understand how that happens? (Cooper's ultra sound, she looked at us and waved).

* We don't fully understand many things in life.

We often find it difficult to understand what God is trying to accomplish in the circumstances of our lives.

Faith does not operate on data but the mind of God.

Obedying Christ commands brings financial blessing beyond our best efforts.

Ill. **Peter is told to drop his nets on the other side of the boat and when he obeys the catch is enough to fill two boats.**

Luke 5

Show the video

Not only can Jesus bring fish (opportunity, finance, people) to you he can even make them jump in the boat with you.

Ill. **Peter is told to pay taxes when he had no money.** Jesus told him to put his hook in the sea and he would catch a fish with money in his mouth. He obeyed and the fish had enough money in his mouth to pay the taxes. Mat. 17:27

These are extreme measures and not to be taken as presumptuous acts of God. Jesus commands was to teach them that what they are doing will succeed if they will simply obey him!

5. Keep working.

⁶ Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

A. Keep sowing seed!

The writer of Ecclesiastes encourages his young audience to realize the value of both vocation and avocation. He emphasizes that **the successful person always has some thing cooking.**

Many people have discovered their professional training has been forsaken as hobbies have become the source of a livelihood.

B. Keep working

The harder you work the more successful you become.

C. Leave the increase to God.

Solomon urged his readers to work diligently, sowing their **seed** all day long, because they could **not know which** sowing would **succeed, whether this or that, or whether both would do equally well.** Thus in two examples, one from maritime trade (vv. 1-2) and one from farming (vv. 3-4 , 6) Solomon urged people toward constant, diligent

effort and prudent diversified investment of their energies and resources, recognizing that all is in God's sovereign control.

Pray for guidance, seek the counsel of godly people, be prepared to take risks, and step out in faith. The principles of Ecclesiastes 11:1–6 are a practical and reliable guide. The best possible risk in one's life is the total investment of one's life faith with a loving God.