**Study Series: Truth and Lies**

Author: Tim Chaddick

**Lesson Title: “Success that Lies” (pp. 30-39)**

December 20, 2020 Session 03

**The main point of this lesson is:** Satan tempts us to attempt to meet valid goals in ways that magnify self and leave God out.

Focus on this goal: To help adults evaluate the degree to which their efforts toward success are based on obedience to God.

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 4:8-11

Before the Session

Do an **Internet search** for various definitions of success. **Write** four or five of them on cards and **distribute** to volunteers as they arrive. (Step 1)

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Call on the volunteers to read** the definitions of success.

**Lead the group** to discuss the definition—what did they like? what did they not like? what was left out?

Briefly **compose** a group definition (**or modify** one of those read) and **record** it on the board.

**Ask:** If this is how we define success, what is failure?

**Stress** that for Christians, success must be understood to be based on obedience to God.

**Step 2. Day One – The Ladder of Success**

**Direct attention** to the opening paragraph of Day One (p. 30).

**Ask:**

1. When have you discovered the ladder of success you were climbing was leaning against the wrong wall?
2. How is it that we can have such varied perceptions of what success is and how to attain it?

**Refer** back to the group definition of success and **work** Day One activity 1 as a group project, **recording** it on the board as well.

**Request responses** to the Day One Discussion Question (p. 31).

Once again, **stress** that the believer’s understanding of success (and thus also of failure) must be tied to one’s obedience to God.

**Step 3. Day Two – The Offer, Part 1**

**Request a volunteer read** Matthew 4:8-11.

**Engage participants** in the Day Two Discussion Question (p. 31).

**Utilize** Day Two content (pp. 31-32) to supplement discussion.

**Call for responses** to activity 1 (p. 32). If debate begins about whether Satan could have given the kingdoms to Jesus, **point** to the author’s statement (p. 32), “It doesn’t matter; he’s a liar.”

**Stress** what the devil offered Jesus was not an unworthy or invalid goal—the world’s kingdoms would become His (Rev. 11:15). But he tempted Jesus to meet the goal—to achieve success—by an illegitimate means outside God’s plan.

**Invite a volunteer to read** the Day Two margin/pull quote (p. 32).

**Engage adults** in the Day Two Discussion Question (p. 32).

**Step 4. Day Three – The Offer, Part 2**

**Say:** Complete this statement: “If it sounds too good to be true, ….”

**Observe** that just like Hollywood movies and television advertisements, Satan’s offers are too good to be true. Like many scams, he is selling a shortcut to a goal with the hopes you won’t read the fine print.

**Pose** the Day Three Discussion Questions (p. 33).

**Drawing** from activity 1 (p. 33), **ask** what evidence adults might expect to see that a believer had bought into one of Satan’s crafty shortcut scams.

**Point out** that resisting the devil’s scams is a spiritual battle.

**Review** the author’s “steps to win this war” (p. 34) and **invite participants** to suggest any additional strategies they might offer.

**Work through** activity 3 (pp. 34-35) as a group.

**Step 5. Day Four – A Case Study of Moses**

**Engage learners** in the Day Four Discussion Question (p. 35).

**If not addressed** in the discussion, **ask** what aspects of Moses’ life would suggest he was not a success.

**Instruct** the group to scan through Day Four (pp. 35-36) for the author’s thoughts on Moses’ success.

After a couple of minutes, **call for responses**.

**Read** the last paragraph of page 36, then **follow up** with the Discussion Questions on that same page.

**Ask rhetorically:** Where is God in the success story you are attempting to write?

**Use** “Focus on this goal” (p. 40) to once again emphasize that any sense of success on the part of a Christ-follower must focus on one’s obedience to God.

**State** that success that makes God optional or secondary rather than essential and central is not success at all.

**Step 6. Day Five – The Refusal**

**Refocus attention** on Matthew 4:8-11 (p. 37).

**Solicit responses** to Day Five activity 1 (p. 37).

When discussion seems to stall, **ask** the Discussion Question on that same page.

**Read** (or **invite a volunteer to read**) the paragraph spanning pages 37-38.

**Ask** how Matthew’s Jewishness and Jewish target appear in the account of Jesus’ temptations.

**Direct attention** to the author’s comparison/contrast of Jesus’ temptations with the experience of the Hebrews in the wilderness (p. 38).

**Point out** that Jesus not only responded to each temptation by quoting Scripture, but each quote comes from the Book of Deuteronomy, received during the wilderness wanderings.

**Proceed** through each of the larger passage from which Jesus quoted (pp. 38-39), **pausing** after each to **allow learners to share** additional insights and implications suggested by the fuller passage.

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Read** the last paragraph of Day Five, **including** the three bullet points associated with it (p. 39).

**Refer** back to the two definitions of success on the board (Steps 1 and 2).

**Emphasize** success is determined not by outward appearance but by obedience to God.

**Encourage learners** to evaluate the degree to which their efforts at success center on such obedience.

**Close with prayer**, asking God to help participants align their perception of success with God’s desire for obedience in all matters.