

**Articles and Sermons :: Victorious Men and Women by Sammy Tippit**

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As we start a new year, the world desperately needs to see men and women of God. Darkness seems to be engulfing mankind at this critical hour of history. Therefore, men and women who are God's instruments will be a bright and shining light at the midnight hour. Therefore, we will be looking devotionally this year at the lives of men and women of God.

Paul wrote to young Timothy and said, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness" (1Tim. 6:10, 11 NIV). Paul referred to Timothy, even though he was much younger than himself as a "man of God." Age isn't the criteria for a man or woman of God. It's a heart-felt pursuit to know God, walk humbly with Him, and share His great love with a lost and dying world.

Paul mentioned several criteria for a man of God. First, he tells young Timothy to keep his focus on the main thing. Don't get distracted. Keep the "main thing the main thing." Don't let money or material possessions cloud your focus. He said that many had lost their perspective and consequently, found a lot of heartache and sorrow. There's a certain lure to materialism that can eventually be deadly. There's nothing wrong with having nice things. God created them for our enjoyment. However, when we begin to love those things rather than see them as God's provision for our needs, then we find ourselves headed down a slippery path that leads to heartache.

Our purpose must be first to seek after Christ and His righteousness. There are six characteristics that the victorious man or woman of God needs to pursue. We need to pursue righteousness - a right standing with God. The most important thing in our lives should be to stand in a right relationship with God. Pursue those things this year which will enhance your relationship with God rather than destroy it. You will find yourself victorious as you do that.

Pursue Christ likeness. Make the goal of your life to become like Christ. Let that be the focus of your life. It doesn't lead to grief. Such a purpose leads to joy and victory. But it's also an impossible task. You can't one day just decide that you're going to be more like Christ and then, all of a sudden, you're this mighty, victorious Christian. It's not in your ability to do that. You must live, walk, and breathe by faith. You must trust Christ to make you the kind of person that reflects His character. In addition to pursuing righteousness and godliness, you must also pursue faith. But how do you do that? The Bible says that faith "comes by hearing and hearing the word of Christ." Pursue faith by delving into the Word of God. Faith will spring forth from your innermost being like a fountain of refreshing waters.

But add love and gentleness to your faith. I've discovered that there are two types of Christians who are in hot pursuit of God. One type is what I call the prophets, while the other type is the giver of mercy. The prophet pursues righteousness, faith, and godliness. But the giver of mercy pursues love and gentleness. However, Paul didn't say pursue one or the other. He said to pursue both. Along with our standard of purity, we must pursue a loving, kind and gentle spirit. We must love those who hate us; care for those who need us; and be gentle with those who have fallen around us. We must be a people of grace and mercy.

A man or woman of God will be one who pursues Christ and His righteousness until the end. He will endure. Many begin with a bang but end with a bust. But the man or woman of God will finish the race. He sets his eyes on the finish line where Christ stands waiting for him. He's not running a sprint. He's running a marathon. That's why the author of Hebrews said, "looking unto Christ the author and perfecter of our faith." I would encourage you to place your focus on Christ this year. He's the beginning and the end of victorious Christian living. Look unto Jesus during this year and become a victorious man or woman.