

A Woman's Toolbox for a Successful Life
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Happy Mother's Day! Though I doubt you will be able to celebrate it the way you normally would due to the media induced panic and government over reaction, I do hope that if you are a mother that you will be able to rejoice in the children God had granted to you whether they at home or grown and on their own. I also hope that those of you who have a mother who is still alive will be able to contact her and at least wish her well.

In keeping with a practice I have had for many years, I want to take advantage of this cultural holiday to address related topics from a Biblical perspective. I have titled this sermon *A Woman's Toolbox for a Successful Life*, but perhaps it might be better called a sewing box instead of a tool box since throughout the sermon I will be making analogies to the things that are found in a sewing box or used in making an article of clothing. If the tools available to you are used properly, you can make something that will bless yourself and others. If not used or used improperly, then the result will be something inferior at best and a disaster at worst.

2 Peter 1:3-4 states that *"His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."* In short, God has given to you everything you need to be a godly woman and live a successful life. However, you have to be diligent to use what God has provided you. 2 Peter 1:5-8 continues, *⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Much of what I have to say in this sermon are principles that apply to both men and women, but some of it will apply specifically to women only, but that does not mean you men can check out at that point and stop listening. You men need to understand what God says to women so that you can encourage and help the women in your life to be all that God wants them to be, so you pay attention as well.

The Right Tool Box - Identity

My wife has several sewing boxes with different things in different boxes. When she has some project to do, she begins by making sure she has identified the correct box because only that one will have what she needs inside. And while my analogy may be weak, a successful life begins by proper identification of what you will need beginning with yourself. What good is having the correct tools if you do not know what to do with them, or even worse, you are unsure what you even want to accomplish other than perhaps feel good about yourself and enjoy your life on this earth.

Success in life begins with having a clear understanding of who you are in reality. What would you think of someone that imagined herself to be size 10 tall and made a dress for herself that size, but was in reality a size 16 short? What do you think of biological men that think they are women or vice versa? Both of those are disconnects from reality, but thankfully, they are rare. However, it is not rare to find

sinner that think they are good, or at least good enough, and it is also common to find people that live as if they will never give an account of their life to God. Both of those are also disconnects from reality with even greater tragic eternal consequences of a life that God will judge as a failure

A successful life starts with having a correct understanding of reality and self identification, and everyone starts off as sinners by nature and confirms it by their own selfish actions of disobedience to God's commands. Those who will recognize these truths and are humble have hope because God gives grace to the humble, and salvation from sin comes by His grace through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. God resists those who remain proud, and even if they appear to be successful in this life, as Psalm 73 describes, their eternal end will be cast down to destruction.

How do you identify yourself? Who and what do you believe yourself to actually be? I challenged you on this last week because there are many that claim to be Christians, but the reality is that they do not fit the Biblical definition and will be surprised when Christ rejects them at judgment (Matthew 7:21-23). Others may be true Christians, but they are immature and need to grow. Those that do mature will find reward at the Bema seat judgment for they have built on the foundation of Christ with gold, silver and precious stones, while those that have remained immature will find that their works of wood, hay and straw will be burned up and they will suffer the loss (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

You also must also correctly identify Jesus Christ. Any Jesus other than the one described in the Bible is a false Christ and cannot save you. The Jesus of the Bible is God incarnate, the Son of God existing from eternity past as one with the Father, born of the virgin Mary without human father, sinless, a voluntary sacrifice to redeem man from sin, physically risen from the dead on the third day, ascended to heaven where He intercedes and prepares a place for His followers, and promises to return for them one day to take them to be with Him forever and to also destroy His enemies and pronounce their eternal judgment. Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, and He is Lord.

Success in life begins with a proper understanding of your own identity and the identity of Jesus Christ.

The Right Pattern - The Bible

In the years that we have been married, I have watched my wife teach several people to sew. The first thing she does with them is go shopping for a pattern for something they would like to make. A very accomplished seamstress can make a pattern as she goes, but even then she will mark out where she will make her cuts and seams. Without a pattern, the project will be a mess.

You need the right pattern for a successful life, and that is found in the Bible. It is God's instruction book to man about reality. It reveals who God is, what He is like, what He has done and what He requires from man. It also directs man on how to live properly before God as explained in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, ¹⁶ *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."* The Bible directs you to the path of life, warns you when you stray off of it, tells you how to get back on it, and how to stay on it. That is true in both the general sense for all humanity, and it is also true in the specific areas of the roles God has entrusted to you including those as a man or woman.

We live in a time when there is great confusion about life in general, but also in the specifics of what it even means to be a man or a woman. God's word sets the pattern for us to follow. Apart from God's revelation, man is left to his own musings to develop some rationale for the purpose of his existence. But without God, there is no meaning except to exist for the moment and possibly pass your genetics on to a descendant who will also only exist for a moment of time. That brief time of existence is then spent in pursuit of things such as hedonism, fame, fortune or power, all of which Solomon summarized as vanity, empty chasing after the wind. Without God, man is also left without any basis for morality, so what is right or wrong is only determined by who has power for the moment and the survival of the fittest.

God's word, the Bible, gives a purpose in this life that is directly tied to what is eternal. The Lord God, Creator of everything, offers redemption to sinners so that we can return to our original purpose in bringing glory to His name as a creature made in His image that will exist throughout eternity future. As the old catechism puts it, the purpose of man is to know God and enjoy Him forever. Only the Bible reveals the pattern for how that is accomplished.

Soap - Washing the Fabric (Regeneration)

Diane tells me that once she has a pattern and the fabric she is going to use, she has to prepare the fabric for the work that will be done with it. She gets soap and washes the fabric to make sure the colors in it are set and any shrinkage will take place before she starts sewing.

That is a good analogy of what God does in the life of any individual that is going to be a Christian, a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. When God saves you, He cleanses you. Paul puts it this way in Titus 3:5, *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."* God takes dirty, filthy sinners whose sins were as scarlet and washes them as white as snow (Isa. 1:18). Whatever you were before, God washes the filth away as described in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, ⁹ *"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."*

How is this cleaning done? Through regeneration and renewal. Regeneration is a compound word made of "again" (παλιν / palin) and "genesis" (γένεσις / genesis) and refers to the new birth, being born again that I talked about last week. You were spiritually dead and the Holy Spirit makes you spiritually alive. Without that, you remain a sinner under God's just and righteous condemnation. Renewal (ἀνακαινῶσις / anakainōsis) is *"to cause something to be new and different"* (Louw-Nida). Your spirit is made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5) so that you become a new creation in Him (2 Cor. 5:17).

Recognizing your own identity as a sinner and God's identity as your creator is the starting point of a successful life. The Bible sets the pattern of truth that you will need to follow in order to have a successful life. Being washed clean from your sin by the regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit is the first step of preparation to live a successful life.

Measuring Tape - The Right Standard

The next item in the sewing kit that will be needed is the measuring tape so that the markings shown in the pattern can be placed in the proper places. The measuring tape is the right standard.

The right standard for living a successful life is the will of God as revealed by the Word of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The principles, precepts and commands God has set forth in the Bible must be applied to life. That requires both a knowledge of them and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as He both convicts and encourages us to do them.

What is the will of God for you? Primarily it is for you to become holy and blameless before Him (Ephesians 1:4) as you are conformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). It is easy to lose sight of that important truth as we get busy with life and become focused on our own desires instead of God's. Romans 8:28 is a promise, not a cliché. God does indeed work all things together for good for those that love Him and are called according to His purpose. You may not understand at the moment what God is doing or like your circumstances, especially if you are suffering for the sake of righteousness, yet even in the most difficult times God is busy making you what He wants you to be for eternity. That is why James 1:2-4 can say, ² *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be*

perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” That is true even in the midst of the increasingly dangerous consequences of government actions which have had minimal effect in stopping the spread of SARS-CoV-2, but is devastating the lives of those who have been shut out from working. The rat race of materialism has been dealt quite a blow as people are forced to slow down and consider that relationships with family, friends, neighbors and God are more important.

God’s will for you as a woman is also spelled out in His word. Again, you may not like it, especially if you have been influenced by feminism since its values are contrary to godliness, but success is dependent on truth and not the foolishness of an ungodly society that pressures women to develop masculine traits instead of feminine ones. I have spoken in detail about the will of God for women in their various roles in the past, and there is certainly not enough time today to repeat all of that, but I can summarize the major elements.

General Character: Proverbs 31:10-31 gives a wonderful description of the character traits of a successful woman. Among the general traits for all women who prove themselves to be valuable are these: trustworthy, continually good, industrious, prudent, diligent, entrepreneurial, strong, attentive, a hard worker, compassionate, confident, elegant, admirable, a capitalist, dignified, wise, watchful and godly resulting in being respected, honored, and acclaimed.

Titus 2:3-5 includes these general character traits that the mature are to teach and encourage the less mature to develop: goodness, sensibility, purity, kindness and even the practical skills of housekeeping.

Single: While the Proverbs 31 woman is married with children, the character traits apply to the single woman as well though applied in a different context. Her good will be done to other people such as extended family and friends who will also be the ones to rise up and bless and praise her instead of a husband and children. Among the character traits listed in Titus 2:3-5 for her to develop would be sensibility (soundness of mind), purity, kindness and the skills needed to care for and love a family should God so bless her.

Wife: Titus 2:3-5 includes these two specifics for older women to teach younger women - how to love their husbands and to have a proper submission (ὑποτάσσω / hupotassō) to them. The particular word for love here, φίλανδρος / philandros, is a compound word combining the love of a deep friendship with husband. Husbands and wives are to strive to be best friends, and since this is something older women are commanded to teach younger women, it is obvious that such a loving friendship is going to take some work to learn.

Submission, ὑποτάσσω / hupotassō, is the same as commanded in Ephesians 5:21. In this context it refers to a wife that places herself under the authority of her husband. This is submission, which is done willingly, and not “obedience,” which must be done regardless of your will. This is done, because God has specifically given the husband the responsibilities of being the head of the household (Eph. 5:23). This is a matter of God’s created order and purpose (1 Cor. 11:3,8-9) and has nothing to do with superior and inferior. The idea of submission is anathema to feminists, so to the degree you are uncomfortable with God’s command in this is the degree to which you have been affected by the ungodly ideas of feminism. The difference between godliness and feminism is actually summarized well in Proverbs 14:1, *“The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.”* Godliness builds. Selfishness and sin destroy.

Mother: Titus 2:3-5 includes this specific for older women to teach younger women - how to love their children. Regardless of whether children are born to you, adopted or just under your care, they are to be loved with tender kindness and affection as you train them up in the ways of the Lord. Without doubt, raising children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is hard work because children can be very exasperating. Some days it seems like the child wakes up with the mindset that “today is a good day to die, and I am taking the woman with me.” It is even harder in a society that advocates ideas, methods and goals in raising them that are in direct contradiction to God’s commands. Stay the course! Raise them according to God’s commands and not the foolish musings of psychologists. True love for children

is not defined by fuzzy feelings and words, but rather by a firm but gentle hand that guides, corrects, comforts, cares and nurtures. While you want to raise your children to be skilled and confident, you do not want them proud and full of “self-esteem.” They need to be trained to be humble and esteem God, parents, authorities, those who are older and others as more important than themselves (Phil. 2:3-4).

Older Woman: Titus 2:3-5 calls on older women to be reverent in their behavior which refers to both actions and demeanor that is fitting and proper for what is sacred. It is living out daily life in actions and attitudes of holiness. That would exclude such things as malicious gossip and being given to wine and include the character traits I have already mentioned. The passage is specific that older women are to teach and encourage younger women in developing those traits. Older women are to be diligent to instill into younger women the godly character they have developed over the years. You older women are to be proactive in this. Do not wait until a younger woman asks for help. You should be the wiser woman who is more secure in your relationship with God, so you take the initiative to befriend the younger woman. Though this will usually fall along chronological age lines, it also encompasses the idea of spiritual maturity. If there is a woman that came to Christ late in life, she will need the same kind of teaching and encouragement a young woman would need even though the specifics of her life situation would be different in having older or grown children instead of young ones and having to break a lot of bad habits in loving her husband instead of just developing good habits of doing so.

God’s will, not societal criteria or self desire, is the standard by which you measure how well you are fitting into God’s design for successful life as a woman.

Scissors - The Removal of the Extraneous (Believer’s Repentance & Confession)

The next tool in the sewing box are scissors. Just as you have to cut away the extraneous material, so you have to cut away whatever may be in your life that hinders you from your pursuit of godly success. Hebrews 12:1-2 describes this well, ¹ *“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, ² 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.”*

Notice that this passage specifically mentions both encumbrances and sin. Anything contrary to the precepts, principles and commands of God is sin, so that is usually easier to identify and cut out. Encumbrances are things that could be okay or even good in themselves, but they are detrimental to the pursuit of the actual goal. Since this is set in the context of running a race, a simple illustration is that while hiking boots are great on the trail, you don’t wear them to run a race because their stiffness and weight will slow you down. There are many things in life that are good in themselves and can be used for good purposes - hobbies, friendships, work - but if they are hindering you from keeping the priorities God has given to you, then they are encumbrances you need to modify or even lay them aside until your priorities are back in order.

There are three steps to laying aside sin and encumbrances. The first is repentance which is a changing of your mind about it to bring your beliefs into conformity with God’s standards. The second is confession which is directly related as you agree that God’s way is better than your own. The third step is appropriate action to lay it aside and replace it with what is according to God’s priorities.

Remember, Christians are forgiven and saved from sin, but we will not be fully sanctified until we reach heaven. Until then, God is conforming us to the image of His son, and that can be done the easy way or the hard way. The easy way is to continue to increase in your knowledge of God and His will and then work to change accordingly by repentance, confession and action. The hard way is to come under God’s chastening as described in Hebrews 12:4-11.

Cut away the sin and extraneous things that hinder you from fitting into God’s pattern for a successful life.

Pins - Creating Structure (Relationships)

The next tool in the sewing box are pins. I have watched Diane do this with all sorts of projects as she pieces things together temporarily until they can be permanently sewn. The godly relationships you develop in life have many functions, but one of them is to provide a model of structure for you to follow while your own walk with the Lord develops to the point that you have your own convictions about God's will according to His word.

There are many places Paul held himself out to be a model for others to follow such as Philippians 3:17, "*Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us,*" but his goal was always to get them to become like Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 he said, "*Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.*" In Ephesians 5:1 he said, "*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children,*" and in 1 Corinthians 2:2 he told them, "*For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*" The actual goal is be conformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29) and we are confident that will happen since God continues that work in us in the present (Phil. 1:6), and when Jesus does return, we will be changed to be like Him (1 John 3:2). The relationships you develop with godly people are the pins that help hold you together while the more permanent work is being done.

Needle & Thread - Binding Together a New Life (Righteousness)

The next tools in the sewing box are needle and thread which are used to bind the pieces of the pattern together to form the complete design. The needle God uses in our lives is His word which is "*living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart*" (Heb. 4:12). The Holy Spirit pierces us with the truth of His word, and the thread that follows that needle that binds the pieces together are the convictions of righteousness that develop from the truth. The mind, will and the actions are all set on the truth of God in righteousness producing godliness, and the confident assurance arising from that gives an anchor for the soul and keeps you from stumbling.

The reason that a major aspect of my ministry and my life is set on teaching you to know and understand the Word of God for yourself is because of this. I want you to have your own convictions based on a proper understanding of the Scriptures themselves because that will make you unshakable in your pursuit of truth and righteousness. If you only have opinions, you can be easily swayed. If you have convictions, you will be able to stand firm and enable others to stand firm as well as described in Ephesians 4:11-16. Biblically based convictions bind the pieces together so that you are clothed with God's design for what He wants you to be in this life as both a Christian and as a woman pursuing godliness. That is success.

I am never offended by any sincere question or challenge to what I teach because the mutual goal of every Christian is to follow Christ and become like Him. In humility, we are to pursue that goal together.

Patches - Mending Tears (Compassion, Forgiveness)

The final thing I will take out of the sewing box today are some patches. It is not all that difficult to get a tear in your clothes in the daily course of life, and you will need some patches to mend the tears.

In the course of life you will get hurt, you will be confused, you may even become discouraged and despondent. Patches of godliness will need to be applied to mend the tears that will fall from that. You will need them yourself and you will need them to apply to others. Colossians 3:12-13 mentions a few of these patches. ¹² "*So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;* ¹³ *bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*"

It is all too easy to become disgusted by what someone entrapped in sin does resulting in hardness of heart and even being judgmental. Galatians 6:1-4 directs those who are spiritual to seek to restore

anyone caught in a trespass with a spirit of gentleness and humility and help bear that person's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ of loving one another as He has loved us. This passage in Colossians expands on the attitude in doing that.

A heart of compassion encompasses mercy, concern, grief and sympathy. Jesus was compassionate and we are to be so also. There should be pity for those entrapped in sin even for those that do you wrong. Remember that Ephesians 6:12 makes it clear that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces behind them. People may be pawns of the enemy, but people are the mission field. Besides, Jesus told us to love even our enemies (Matt 5:44), and that can only be done by the power of the Holy Spirit working in us.

Kindness is having a sympathetic or helpful nature and is related to moral goodness. Humility means lowly of mind and is the opposite of pride. Humility considers others first as being more important. Gentleness refers to both behavior and attitude that is mild mannered. It is the opposite of being harsh. Patience is remaining emotionally calm even when facing provocation or misfortune. This idea is intensified in bearing with one another which includes the sense of enduring difficulty. Forgiving one another is extending grace to someone who has wronged you so that there is no resentment. It is the aspect of love that does not hold into account a wrong suffered (1 Cor. 13:5). The example for that is the forgiveness we have received in Jesus Christ.

These are the patches that mend the tears caused by our sins against one another. They are freely used by the godly because they are characteristics of a life being lived successfully before God.

Conclusions

Your life is only truly a success when you fulfill God's purposes for it. God's stated moral will is that none should perish, but that all come to repentance, for the saved will glorify Him by becoming like Christ in character. *Recognizing your own identity as a sinner and God's identity as your holy Creator is the prerequisite for success in life. *The Bible sets the pattern of truth that you will need to follow in order to have a successful life. *The Holy Spirit washes you clean from your sin by regeneration and renewal that comes to those who have faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. *God's will, not societal criteria or self desire is the standard by which you measure how well you are fitting into God's design for a successful life in the roles and responsibilities God has entrusted to you - Christian, woman, single, wife, mother, younger woman or older woman. *Repentance, confession and the resulting actions cut away the sin and extraneous things that hinder you from fitting into God's pattern for a successful life. *The relationships you develop with godly people are the pins that help hold you together while the more permanent work is being done. *The Word of God pierces you to bind you to truth and righteousness so that you demonstrate God's design for a successful life. *Applying the patches of godly character and living mend the tears caused by sin. The result of all of this is a life that is successfully lived according to God's will for His eternal glory.

Sermon Notes - May 10, 2020
A Woman's Toolbox for a Successful Life - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

2 Peter 1:3-8, God gives _____ needed for a successful life, but you have to be diligent to use it

The Right Tool Box - Identity

Success in life begins with having a clear understanding of who you are in _____

Everyone starts as sinners by nature & confirms it by their own _____ to God's commands

You also must also correctly identify Jesus Christ for a _____ Christ cannot save you

The Right Pattern - The Bible

You need the right pattern for a successful life, and that is found in the _____ - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

We live in a time when there is great confusion about life - God's word sets the _____ for you to follow

Only the _____ reveals how to know God and enjoy Him forever

Soap - Washing the Fabric (Regeneration)

When God saves you, He cleanses you by the _____ and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

God washes away the sin making you white as snow & radically _____ you (Isa 1:18; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

Regeneration = again genesis = born again. Renewal = to be new & different - a new creature (_____)

This is the first step of preparation to live a _____ life

Measuring Tape - The Right Standard

The right standard for a successful life is the _____ as revealed in the Bible through the Holy Spirit

The will of God is for you to be holy & blameless before Him and be _____ to the image of Christ

God is at work accomplishing His will in all _____ (Rom. 8:28; James 1:2-4)

God's will for you as a woman is revealed in His word - and it is _____ to feminism & ungodly society

General Character: Proverbs 31:10-31, Titus 2:3-5

Single: same character traits applied in different circumstances + pursue sensibility, purity, kindness & _____

Wife: Titus 2:3-5 - how to love husband = φίλανδρος / philandros = learn to be _____

Submission, ὑποτάσσω / hupotassō is done in _____ deference, not obedience (Eph. 5:20-23)

Submission according to God's created _____ & purpose (1 Cor. 11:3, 8-9)

Mother: Titus 2:3-5 - how to love _____ & raise them in the nurture & admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4)

Raising children can be _____ & exasperating - but stay the course & don't follow societies foolishness

Raise them to be skilled, confident & _____ esteeming God and others instead of themselves

Older Woman: Titus 2:3-5 - be reverent in behavior and be diligent to _____ the younger women

Be _____ to befriend younger women instead of waiting for them to make the first move

God's _____, not societal criteria or self desire, is the standard by which you measure a successful life

Scissors - Removal of the Extraneous (Believer's Repentance & Confession)

Hebrews 12:1-2 - cut away sin and every _____ to your pursuit of a godly, successful life

Encumbrances may be okay or even good, but _____ to the pursuit of the goal

To lay aside sin and encumbrances: 1) Repent 2) confess 3) Take appropriate _____

Christians are saved, but will not be fully _____ until they reach heaven

Cut away the sin and extraneous things that _____ you from fitting into God's pattern for a successful life

Pins - Creating Structure (Relationships)

Godly relationships provide a model of _____ to follow while you develop your own convictions

Paul was an example (Phil. 3:17), but always pointed to _____ (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1, 1 Cor. 2:2)

Relationships with _____ people help hold you together while the more permanent work is being done

Needle & Thread - Binding Together a New Life (Righteousness)

The word of God pierces us with the _____ (Heb. 4:12)

Conviction of righteousness developed from truth _____ mind, will and actions to godliness

Opinions are easily swayed, but convictions remain _____ and encourage others to also stand (Eph. 4:11-16)

Patches - Mending Tears (Compassion, Forgiveness)

Patches of godliness can mend the tears that will fall due to _____, confusion, discouragement, etc.

Colossians 3:12-13 expands on the _____ of restoration commanded to be done in Galatians 6:1-4

Compassion encompasses mercy, _____, grief and sympathy - Jesus was compassionate, so should be also

Other patches: kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, _____

Conclusions

Your life is only truly a success when you fulfill _____ purposes for it

The result of all these things is a life _____ lived according to God's will for His eternal glory

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up. 2) Count how many times the word "Christian" is mentioned. Talk with your parents what it means to be a Christian - what do Christians believe? How do they identify themselves?

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Do you lack anything to be able to live a life of godliness? What is God's part in enabling you to live in godliness? What is your part? Why is recognition of your identity as a sinner and Jesus identity as the Son of God and Savior so important? How does the Bible set the pattern for a successful life? What is a successful life according to God? How does that differ from the ways the world would define success? How does the Holy Spirit cleanse a sinner? Upon what basis? What is the will of God for your life? How does God use adversity in life to accomplish His will in your life? What is to be the general character of a godly woman (Prov. 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5)? What character traits should a single woman work to develop? A wife? A mother? What responsibilities belong to an older, godly woman? What is sin & how is it removed from your life? What is an encumbrance (Heb. 12:1) and how is it removed from your life? How do relationships with godly people help you learn to walk with Christ? How does the Holy Spirit bring conviction of truth? How does such conviction develop godliness and steadfastness? What effect does such conviction have on others? How do the characteristics of godliness (Col. 3:12-13) mend the consequences of sin? How well are you doing in your pursuit of a successful life? What needs to change? What is your plan to change?