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Success, individually defined is not isolated to an abundance of economic wealth. It can be broadly representative of many operational areas of life. Lest we forget, our interpretation of progress is a product of associative learning. However, Napoleon Hill, philosopher of personal success, in his seminal work “The Law of Success” defined it as the attainment of one’s definite chief aim without violating the rights of other people and development of power with which to get whatever one wants. He reasoned that power and success are practically synonymous terms since power is the coordination of knowledge and energy in a spirit of perfect harmony whereby success is based.

Jesus, cultural icon of his time and today, in the gospels of the Christian Bible that reference his words and works, (specifically his encounter with a rich young ruler) suggests a different orientation toward success. Although Jesus was surrounded by influence of a prosperity theology similar to today’s - in that evidence of God’s blessing was credible to the degree that one prospered materially he taught that - “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses.” After inquiring what he might do to inherit eternal life Jesus directed the rich young ruler to sell all he owned, distribute the proceeds to the poor and follow him.

These instructions will be explored in further detail later but it implies a philosophy of success in stark contrast to Napoleon Hill's. Hill's view of success as mentioned was based on power, power to ally others to one's cause and by doing so positioning oneself to get whatever he or she wants or needs. Jesus' view of success was based on sacrifice, that is, accumulating to give that other's may be positioned to get whatever they want or need. One outlook is "self-centric" and the other is "other-centric". One suggests, to the extent I am successful, you are, while the other says to the extent you're successful, I am.

Success, in this regard is not mutually exclusive, it's mutually beneficial. It is a shared experience between all those who have contributed in a productive manner, albeit to varying degrees. This variance in productive contribution is what determines the individual return received by each member. Yet, as of 2007, the top 1% of all domestic households (upper-class) owned 35% of all privately held wealth. The next 19% (managerial, professional, small business stratum) had 50% of all privately held wealth. Therefore 85% of domestic net worth was held by the top 20% while 15% was held by the bottom 80% of domestic households. Even further, high net worth households were estimated as of July, 2010 to be sitting on over \$10 trillion in cash while non-financial fortune 500 corporations were holding over \$2 trillion in cash on their balance sheets. The above statistics indicate that for every 10 people, eight are working directly or indirectly for the remaining two. For all intents and purposes the top 20% represent the decision makers of our society and to a large extent, perhaps greater than you realize, their decisions determine the current

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distribution of rewards tied to your efforts. This proves that while we all have a stake in each other's progress, some have a greater stake in yours than you do.

At the present, many of us possess very little influence over the predetermined allocation of benefits associated with our contributions. Some will argue that no one really does, because the invisible hand, prices, or supply and demand fundamentals quietly dictate this in the background. Be not deceived, the pie cutter is in the hand of someone and given the aforementioned statistics, it's not you. To this end, Napoleon Hill and Jesus Christ want to partner with all those that demand a greater piece of the pie. And aid in the formation of success in their lives through focusing their vision, defining and improving their strategy, revealing how to better leverage their ability to attract greater rewards and adapting their character to invite more favorable outcomes.

In the chapters to come, we will examine the sixteen principles outlined by Napoleon Hill through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Which begs the question, did Jesus provide the basis for the prevailing self help material that exist today? The comparisons are undeniable. My hope is to make the case that as these rules of conduct are adopted and implemented, the likelihood of success and conformity to the character of Jesus are increased.

Napoleon Hill was enamored with the recipe for earthly success, Jesus with ethics for eternal success. Together they raise the stakes, pool their capital and make you their investment vehicle of choice. During this reading, we are going to bring the best out of one another and move away from self-defeating behavior. We are going to observe

how to improve our lives and by proximity the lives of those around us. Bare witness and welcome success!