

## READY TO NAVIGATE 2023? CHECK YOUR ROADMAP!



I am reminded of the American Explorer, George Washington De Long, who wanted to claim the North Pole, for the USA. He was given a map that mentioned about the ‘**Open Polar Sea** (*free of ice*)’...that somehow hinted at the possibility of navigating the North Pole. This map assumed that one can break through the ice and somehow when the ice was broken, there was going to be the open sea.

This guy relied on that map and set out to claim the North Pole in 1879. But in less than one year, he was trapped and starved to death! He was deceived by the **WRONG MAP!** There was no open sea, it was rock solid ice all the way!

Consciously or unconsciously we all follow a certain roadmap to navigate through life. The question is, “**Is our map right?**”

As we prepare ourselves to step into 2023, it’s worth considering, “**What will be TRUE SUCCESS for us in 2023?**” Because our understanding of true success will determine our goals for 2023. If we think success is ‘*Money*’, then our goal will be to pursue wealth. If we think it’s ‘*Becoming Popular*’, then we’ll be updating our Facebooks and Youtubes! If we think, it’s ‘*Power*’ or ‘*Pleasure*’, we’ll be investing all our efforts respectively!

**Yasuko Namba** was the second Japanese woman (*after Junko Tabei*) to reach all of the Seven Summits of the world. Namba worked as a businesswoman for Federal Express in Japan, but her hobby of mountaineering took her all over the world. Namba's final summit to reach was Mount Everest. Her goal was to be the oldest woman in the world to climb Mt. Everest. So, at the age of 47, she signed on with Rob Hall's guiding company, Adventure Consultants, and reached Mt. Everest in May 1996, but during her descent, she ran out of oxygen and energy and couldn’t make it back and died at the summit. Her goal was only to reach to the top. She didn’t consider the amount of energy and resource needed to come back alive. She was pre-occupied with the wrong goal.

Dwight L. Moody says, “*Our greatest fear should not be FAILURE, but of succeeding at something that DOESN’T REALLY MATTER.*”

St. Paul had an over-arching life-goal that determined true success, “*So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*” (2 Cor. 5:9). The **ONLY CRITERION** of true success, for him, was, ‘**Leading a life that’s PLEASING to God.**’ In the Bible, success is always connected to God. C. S. Lewis says, “*God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it’s not there.*”

Genesis 39 says, “***And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.***” The **KEY** to success is, ‘**Intimacy with God.**’

“***And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand (Gen. 39:3).***” Notice the emphasis! In our workplace, in our society, will our employers, or our employees see God in our life? When Russia was under the Communists, the party issued an order to fire all Christian workers. But a particular Manager refused to fire one of his Christian workers. He explained, “*I am sorry Sir. But, if I fire this Christian, there will be a great problem in the factory. This Christian is our most precious employee. I cannot afford to fire this Christian.*” **If only, this could be said, of all of us, the Christians!**

“*And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the Lord was*

*upon all that he had in the house, and in the field (Gen. 39:5)*". True success is never self-limited...it extends to others. **How can we have true success, if we live ONLY for ourselves?**

*"And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused (Gen. 39: 8)."* **Because Joseph knew the ROADMAP!** He said, *"How could I do this great evil and sin against God?"* Joseph was sent to prison for being holy!

My friend, God allows betrayal, unfairness, disappointment and pain as he transforms our Character. The Bible tells that *Joseph walked with God even in prison!* And from being a slave in the prison, Joseph went on to become the Prime Minister of Egypt! Amazing indeed!

Let me close with this testimony by one of the most successful Pastors working at Fiji. He narrated, "Fiji had cannibal tribes back then. A group of missionaries decided to visit Fiji. They were warned not to venture there, because prior to them, many missionaries had made the effort and none of them returned alive. But, this particular group of missionaries were determined. They fasted and prayed intensely and went to the island to share the Good News. There they learnt that the Big Chief was gravely ill and they offered to pray for the Chief. The Chief said, *"My God doesn't seem to hear my prayers. I am ready to pray to your God, provided He heals me."* So, they prayed over him and it so happened that after their prayer, the Chief died! Now imagine, what would be their reaction, *"Lord, surely, we would be barbecued!"*

But they kept praying. And the Big Chief came back to life! He testified, "I fell asleep and two angels came to pick me up. They took me to heaven as well as hell and told, "Now, you choose, which place you want to be in? **If it's heaven, listen to these missionaries!**" On coming back to life, he declared, *"This day onwards, the God of this island is the God of these missionaries."* And that is how, when we visit Fiji today, we find lots and lots of Churches. **All because a few men, willing to risk their lives, were faithful to the call of Jesus!** This is True Success!

Billy Graham, the American Evangelist, on being asked by Lady Diana, in an interview, *"What he hoped the people to say about him after he had gone?"*, replied, *"I don't want to be said big things about me. I just want to hear 'the one person' say something nice about me – and that's the Lord! When I face Him, I want Him to say, "Well done, O good and faithful servant!"*

May we be guided by this roadmap that defines True Success as **'Living a life pleasing to God'** and navigate 2023 fruitfully, experiencing true happiness and fulfillment every day of the year!

***Praying we all see the BLESSING of God's Plans unfolding for us in the New Year! Wish you and your dear ones a Blessed 2023!***

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