



***Faithful Is Successful: Notes to the Driven Pilgrim.* Grills. N, Lewis. DE, and Swamidass. SJ, eds. USA: Outskirts 2014**

Nicollette Maunganidze^a

^a BS, MA, Founder and President of Global-I, Atlanta, GA, USA

Faithful is Successful (Grills et al, 2014) is a collection of memoirs authored by individuals who fall under the umbrella of “successful Christian professionals.” It explores the topic of success from the Christian worldview, drawing on insights from years of explaining how success in vocation can and should be achieved. Subthemes include the essential definition of success, how it is to be measured, and how each person of faith is expected to exemplify success. Success, the authors suggest, is a result that every person can only authentically assess after the fact. The refreshing honesty of each author’s disclosure, including contributions from a U.S Army serviceman turned hedge-fund co-founder in Africa and a respected artist working in Los Angeles, makes the book a page-turner. Some of the contributors are medical professionals: authors, Denholm and Grills, and editors, Swamidass and Grills. Their life experiences coincide with the theme of this volume: “Caring in Conflict.” Whether at work or at home, in new or old environments, some of the authors, and at times their families, have had to navigate life through seasons of interpersonal conflict.

This collection meets my life journey with providential timing. It expounds how the mystery of calling, success, and ambition and, ultimately, God’s presence in these aspects work to his honour. Focusing on one of these themes, each author chronicles their journey of integrating the sacred, their faith and the secular, their vocation, or, in other words, their struggle to infuse the secular with the sacred — if such is humanly possible. Vishanoff evaluates compartmentalizing — such as sacred vs

secular — as the result of man’s uniformed and egocentric attempt to understand the world. The collection is filled with liberating discoveries, demonstrating that such distinction cannot exist. . . ALL is sacred! Success in vocation is, therefore, achieved by the very same process that success in one’s faith journey and relationship with God is achieved: exploring and enduring the subject *His Way*.

“*His Way*,” a ubiquitous principle, appears, with continued reading, to be a masterful guide for responding to the questions at the root of this work: “What is Success? How should the “souled out” Christian achieve it, and measure it?” The answers, we learn, lay in each inquirer’s humbled and intentional return to the Creator of Truth, His Truth, and His Standards, despite the abounding and unrelenting temptations of, “worldly norms and pressures.” The authors find that this rediscovery of and submission to God’s standards for success requires accepting dispossession of our plans and acceptance of a plan that serves the existing needs within our communities and world.

Readers might want to be aware that one or two of the chapters contain dense and discipline-specific rigor. Also, the multiple authorship can result in the repetition of some thoughts and concepts. Take care to not judge these repetitions redundant. Although each author is unique, their journeys, insights, and purposes may take common pathways. Nevertheless, because every vocation has distinct standards and challenges, each of the authors can offer relevant wisdom. Each thought and concept, albeit elsewhere echoed, is valuable in its

context. The fundamental revelation of this collection is that there is no clear cut path to success. Because the principles governing the discussion all originate from one book, the Bible, the insights are applicable to every Christian despite age, gender, and nationality. The restricted authorship does, however, render the content most accessible to the working Christian man, woman, and home-maker. Accessibility, as well as the power of the overall message, might have been improved by including accounts from authors from other parts of the world and from other age-groups.

Upon reaching the end of this collection and strengthened in the understanding that your identity is rooted in nothing less than Christ, you may

choose to adopt one of the life-standards advocated: “waiting.” Abandoning the busy and numbing seat of “unmessy” *curricula vitae* and crisp 10-year forecasts, you may instead choose the involved wait: seeking, fasting, and praying. God, whom alone it is that you are seeking to please, will periodically modify your conscious wait, progressing you from one season to the next. What a blessed life if you should be that seeker who abides with the Creator as well as in His Truth, as He wills and does in and through you. This seeker is successful in the call, serving God not self, faithfully.

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Correspondence: Nicollette Maunganidze, nicollettemaunganidze@gmail.com

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