



BILLIONAIRE-A SONG PARALLELIZATION

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The Travie McCoy-Bruno Mars song collaboration, “Billionaire”, is a fitting song to be analyzed in connection to success—and its outrageous connotations. The opening line: I want to be a billionaire so f***ing bad is, in this writer’s humble opinion, an appropriate one-line summary of how badly people nowadays want to become increasingly wealthy because MONEY is easily equitable to SUCCESS. But is it, really?

Well, I’d be a real hypocrite if I said I didn’t subscribe to the same idea. We wear ourselves out practically every day in this dog-eat-dog world to come out top dog, higher echelon material, head honcho, the boss’ favorite employee. That’s because the distinction is parallel to fame, in the workplace at least, and fortune (PROMOTION, PROMOTION, PROMOTION). But trying to stay at the top of your game all the time can be draining, too. And competition gets so fierce every day that it seems you’ve got your work cut out for you. Pretty hard, huh?

“I want to be on the cover of Forbes’ magazine...” Forbes’ magazine regularly comes out with a list of the world’s wealthiest, and their success stories are highlighted, lauded, written about so glowingly, one gets to think if those wealthy people are for real. Well, they are real, ladies and gentlemen, and they got to those posts by dint of hard work, tons of patience, bolstered by heavenly supplications, and with courage, to boot.

“...smiling next to Oprah and the Queen”... Who wouldn’t want to be able to do that? And not just for the just-caught-Oprah and the Queen-passing-by, had-my-camera, took-a-self-photo type of thing. We all want, no wish, to really have a snapshot of ourselves on a pose-for-the-camera shot with these famous people. Why? Fame, people, fame. It’s simply sweet and addictive, a basic measuring parameter of success. Add to that, “...oh every time I close my eyes, I see my name in shining lights...” Yep, becoming successful in itself is such an undoubtedly powerful drug.

Will Rodgers once said, “You might be on the right track but if you don’t move on, you’ll get hit by a train”. Simply put, even if one starts on the road to success, but does not do his best to follow every small success through to get better at his game, he will get run over by others who are also on the same track. We should never rest on our laurels, we should continuously work on honing ourselves and further working on our skills to achieve even bigger successes. In the process, we must remember never to use other people for our own selfish ends. Be at peace with everybody, as those people we meet on the way up are bound to be the same people we shall meet on the way down.

And what is the other important ingredient/s? A genuine trust in the Lord plus a generous helping of humility. Even Bruno Mars would attest to that.

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to the essay, what elements are necessary to attain success?
2. What are the most common parameters by which people view success? Can you name others?
3. If you could have one but not both, which would you choose, to be rich or to be famous? Why?
4. In your opinion, does the writer correctly define success? What is your own definition of success?
5. Who are your models of success? Why?