

WISDOM UNIVERSITY

PROVERBS 11:30

THE GREATEST WINNER



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Everybody wants to be a winner. Nobody wants to be a loser. Why? Because winning is so much better than losing, isn't it? We love to win at sports, to win competitions, to win an argument, to win a trophy, to win at life. Winning is a great feeling. It makes us feel strong, successful, confident, and happy. Everybody wants to be a winner. But few want to be soul-winners.

Soul-winning is a phrase that's faded from Christian vocabulary. Charles Spurgeon wrote a popular book called *The Soul Winner*, but that was over a hundred years ago. Since then, the idea and practice of soul-winning has largely evaporated. Winning is still big and important to us, but soul-winning is now small and insignificant. But in losing soul-winning we've lost a lot more than soul-winning. However, if we can win back soul-winning, we'll win a lot more than soul-winning. Proverbs 11:30 teaches us that the greatest loser is a soul-loser and the greatest winner is a soul-winner.

CONTEXT

- **Preparation for Wisdom** (Proverbs 1:1-7)
- **Principles of Wisdom** (Proverbs 1:8-9:18)
- **Practice of Wisdom** (Proverbs 10:1-31-31)

We decided not to study every Proverb in a verse-by-verse commentary. We also decided not to study single Proverbs detached from their context. Instead we decided to zoom in on single Proverbs but also step back to show how they connect with and summarize the surrounding Proverbs.

The context of Proverbs 11:30 is the stark contrast between the wicked and the just, the foolish and the wise. And yet this stark contrast should not drive them apart but drive the wise to win the foolish and the just to win the wicked. In fact, we could say that the more we see the contrast, the greater the urgency and motive of the soul-winner.

This one-verse course is called "How to win in life, death, and forever."



But first, what does it mean to lose?



1. THE GREATEST LOSER IS A SOUL-LOSER

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures [wins] souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30).

How much is a soul worth?

The pain of loss depends on the value of what is lost. For example, when we lose something small (e.g. a dollar), it's no big deal. When we lose something valuable (e.g. a wedding ring, our car, our home), it's a really big deal.

Or, think of losing a part of your body. There's a scale of ascending pain depending on what's lost: a toe nail, our hair, a finger, a limb, a sense (sight, hearing, speech), our mind (dementia), our health, our life.

Or perhaps think of losing loved ones. Again, there's a scale of ascending pain depending on who we lose: a distant aunt, a cousin, a grandparent, a parent, a brother or sister, a son or daughter, a husband or wife.

None of these losses compares with losing our own soul. Our soul is our most valuable possession. It's far more valuable than any other possession, any amount of money, any part of our bodies, any loved one. As Jesus **said**, For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? (Mark 8:36).

Why is the soul worth so much?

Why is the soul so valuable? Its value derives from its purpose, location, nature, and duration.

Purpose: Our soul was made to connect and commune with God. It was made for God to live in and with. It was made to worship, love, and adore God.

Location: The soul was made for heaven. That's its ultimate home, its best environment, the place it flourishes most and best.

Nature: The soul is moral. It has a moral core. This moral sense is what separates us from animals. The soul has a moral compass, an ability to tell what's wrong and what's right.

Duration: Unlike the body which decays at death, the soul was made to live forever without any interruption in its conscious existence.

To lose your soul is to lose its purpose, location, and nature. You don't lose its eternal duration. The soul never ceases to exist, with full consciousness, no matter whether we win it or lose it.



APPLICATION

Calculate. Add up how much you will lose in this world if you lose your soul. How much will you miss out on by missing out on your highest purpose. Then add up how much you will lose in the next world if you lose your soul in this world.

Remember. Who wins when you lose your soul? The only winner is the devil. Do you really want to give him another victory?

Pray. Ask Jesus, the greatest winner, to help you not be the biggest loser. Jesus is the best soul-winner in history. He has won so many souls, that they cannot be counted. His trophy cabinet is bursting with trophies of grace. He's saved so many lost causes. He's won the most amazing comebacks. He's won many trophies in extra-time, in the dying minutes. No one is so lost that they cannot be won by Jesus.

YOU CAN WIN AT LIFE, BUT LOSE ETERNAL LIFE
AND YOU CAN LOSE AT LIFE, BUT WIN ETERNAL LIFE

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
But now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see



I don't want to be a loser.
How can I be a winner?



2. THE GREATEST WINNER IS A SOUL-WINNER

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures [wins] souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30).

Win your own soul

You can't win other souls until you win your own. To win your own soul you need to focus on the three areas where you are presently losing. Ask Jesus to win your soul by changing its purpose, location, and nature. Here are sample prayers for you.

Purpose: "Lord Jesus, my soul is not connecting and communing with God through you. My soul does not love and worship you. My soul is not fit for purpose. Change my soul so that it is fit for purpose."

Location: "Lord Jesus, my soul is bound for hell. It's heading to the wrong place. Please turn me around and fit my soul for heaven."

Nature: "Lord Jesus my soul is immoral. Its nature is all wrong. I've resisted my conscience so much that it's now numb. I don't know right from wrong and even when I do, I have no strength to do what's right and resist what's wrong."

There's no greater soul-winner than Jesus. He can win the most lost soul.

Win other souls

One of the most amazing things about Christianity is that when we win, we want to share our victory with others. We win so much that we want others to win as well. When we win our own soul we want to win the souls of others. You've won so much, you want others to share in your victory. But sometimes that doesn't happen or sometimes that win fades. How can we re-motivate ourselves to be soul-winners?

Enjoy how much others win: The biggest losers become the biggest winners. This person was about to lose everything and now they've won everything because you shared your victory with them. They win in this world by fulfilling their purpose. They win in the next world by living forever in heavenly joys and glories. They gain spiritual, eternal, and incorruptible riches. They gain spiritual experiences, emotions, connections, friends. They get communion with the Trinity. They gain a new family, etc.

Enjoy how much you win: Soul-winners gain a special measure of the Lord's presence (Matt. 28), victory over our own fear and embarrassment, unity with other soul-winners, fellowship with Christ's sufferings, the eternal thanks of those who win their souls



Enjoy how much the church wins: Soul-winners strengthen a church because it increases the family, it refreshes the family, it adds talents and resources to the family, it amplifies the songs of the family, it spreads to other family members. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.

Enjoy how much God wins: God wins a worshipper, a family member, a friend, a communicator, a servant. God wins praise, glory, thanks.

Enjoy how much the Devil loses: Sometimes you just love to see certain people lose. Maybe it's an old adversary or opponent. Maybe someone arrogant or over-confident. Maybe it's a rival team or politician. It's especially delicious not just to win but to see certain people lose. There's nothing more delicious than to see the Devil lose.

APPLICATION

Train to be a soul-winner. Winning takes practice. See books but also start.

Celebrate every win. There is no greater victory and therefore no greater joy.

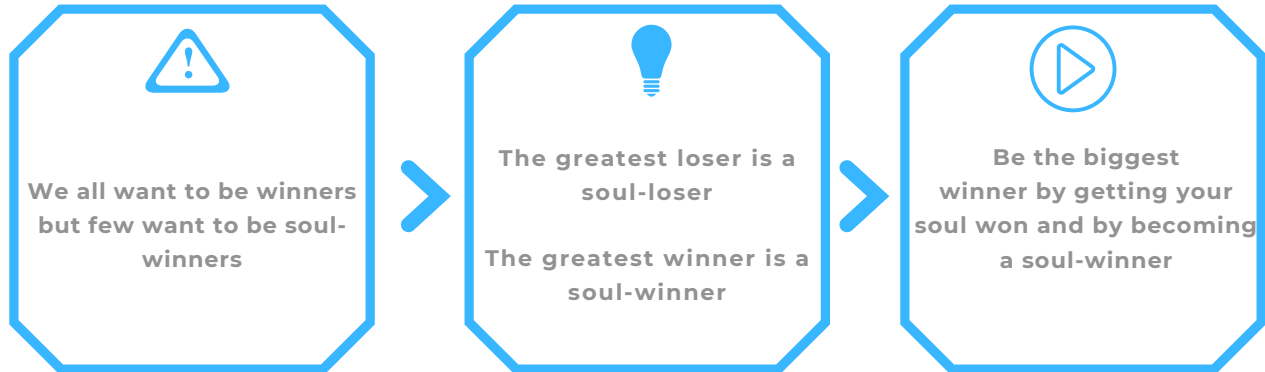
Dream of big wins. Football coaches are judged on how they do against top seeded teams.

Give God the glory for every win. He's the only one ever weighed and not found wanting.

MOST WINS DON'T LAST LONG
BUT THIS WIN LASTS FOREVER



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: Soul-winning Jesus, win in me and through me by making me a won soul and a soul-winner.

FURTHER STUDY

Online Articles

- [Tim Keller's Top Evangelism Tips](#)
- [8 Simple Instructions for Sharing Christ](#)
- [Five Essentials to Leaving a Legacy that Will Outlive You](#)

Books

- [The Soul-Winner](#) by Charles Spurgeon (free online book)
- [God-centered Evangelism](#) by R. B. Kuiper
- [The Broken-Hearted Evangelist](#) by Jeremy Walker
- [Jesus the Evangelist](#) by Richard Phillips
- [Conversational Evangelism](#) by David Geilser

Discussion Questions

1. What was your greatest win in life and what did it feel like?
2. What was your greatest loss in life and what did it feel like?
3. What are the best biblical examples of Jesus being a soul-winner? What can you learn?
4. What are the best examples of soul-winners you've known? What made them so good?
5. What attempts have you made at soul-winning? What did you learn from this?
6. What can you do to become a better soul-winner?

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