

# **1 John 2:28-29 – Formula for a Successful New Year!**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: If you want to bake a good cake, you need to have a good recipe and you need to follow it. If you want to have the answer for your chemistry question, you have to have the formula and you need to follow it. If you have to shovel snow, you have to have the right shovel and lift the snow in the right way. If you want wealth, you have to have a skill and work. You don't hope to win Lotto 649. For everything in life, there is a method for success.

Having a good formula and following that formula are also essential for successful Christian living. If you don't have a good formula and follow it, you won't succeed, but become frustrated. You will become frustrated because your methods will fail. Only God's formula works. Hear from God today about that formula and see how he encourages you to follow it.

Our headings are: get

**For Success: Abide in Christ**

**For Success: Practice Christ's Righteousness.**

Our goals are: That you will be **commit yourself to Christ and his church**, and that you **endeavor, with God's help, to work hard, in spite of failings from time to time, to practice righteous living.**

## **For Success: Abide in Christ**

28 And now, **little children, abide in Him**, that **when He appears**, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

**1. John called his "little children" to abide in Christ.** He often addressed God's people this way.

**2. Why did John address them his little children? He called them his little children to show his loving care for them as their spiritual father.** Everyone loves children. And isn't it easier to correct a wayward child or comfort a hurting child by starting off with "son" rather than "you?" In *this* case, John wanted to comfort them **because he knew they were going to face severe trials.** They were going to **witness the destruction of Jerusalem.** This was a **stab in the souls** for dispersed Jews. Further, they were going to **face increasing persecution from Rome**, the great beast, and the Jewish establishment, who were sitting upon the great beast's lap. This was a **stab in the body** of God's people.

**1John 2:18** Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now **many antichrists have come**, by which we know that it is the last hour.

Surely it is easier for a child to go into surgery with his mother holding his hand. Surely it is easier for a child to walk through a dark room if her father were holding her hand. So John holds his children's hand.

**3. Now look what John called his spiritual children to do! He called on them to "abide in Christ."** This is best translated as a continuous action: **Keep on abiding.** "Abiding in Christ" meant that

**a. To abide in Christ meant that Christians had to keep their faith and hope in Christ**, the one who loved them. You fight better when you have confidence in the General. Calvin: "For faith is not a naked and a frigid apprehension of Christ, but a lively and real sense of his power, which produces confidence." With strong faith, John's children **would not lose hope during trial and sin** against their Lord. Enduring their trials was the measure of their success.

**1John 2:1** My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin...

Success was not determined by how much money they saved up during the year. Remember Job! Faith, Family, Friends.

**b. To abide in Christ meant that Christians had to submit to Christ's under-shepherds in teaching and discipline.** Under-shepherds are to care for the weak, needy and sick through prayer and the preaching, and punish the rebellious through exhortation and excommunication.

**c. To abide in Christ meant that Christians had to know truth by personal study.** The Word hidden in the heart prevents sins. Truth reassures! Who has a good relationship with anyone and doesn't regularly talk to him?

**d. To abide in Christ meant that Christians had to fight against those who wanted to destroy God's house.** They had to defend the house...especially defend the ones who being attacked...like persecuted brethren.

**e. To abide in Christ meant that Christians had to be planted in the courts of God like evergreen trees bearing fruits of repentance.** This meant they had to be living breathing members in the church – not occasional visitors.

**Psalm 92:12** The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those **who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God.**  
So “abiding in Christ” is not some esoteric term. “Abiding in Christ” describes specific actions!

4. **John wanted his children to know that if they remained in Christ, that when Christ returned at the end of the world they could look him in the eye with confidence and that they would then receive his eternal benefits.** The only one who won't look for Christ's return is the one who had his eyes on his own formula for success and so his benefits would be limited to this world.

**5. How attached are you to Christ?** You can answer this by how attached you are to God's people!  
After all, we are the body of Christ. Don't be detached from us. Don't amputate yourself from us. If you are, you will wilt and die! If you are part of the body, you will **pray for it**. If you are part of the body, you will **communicate with the other parts**. If you are attached to the body you will be a **faithful student of Christ's Word so you can learn to care for the body**. Hear these words from a poet showing dependence on God and serving the body.

**A New Year's Prayer-Kay Hoffman**

Another year is dawning With the chance to start anew.

May I be kinder, wiser, Lord, In all I say and do.

**Not so caught up in selfish gain That I would fail to see,**

The things in life that mean the most, Cost not a fancy fee.

The warm, kind word that I can give, The outstretched hand to help,

The prayers I pray for those in need--More precious these than wealth.

I know not what may lie ahead Of laughter or of tears;

**I only need to know each day That You are walking near.**

I'm thankful for this brand new year As now I humbly pray,

My hand secure in Yours, dear Lord, Each step along the way.

**For Success: Practice Christ's Righteousness**

29 If (since) you **know that He is righteous**, you know that everyone who **practices righteousness** is born of Him.

**1. Because Christ is righteous, those who abided in and were equipped by him, and naturally had to practice righteousness.** This was John's transition from doctrine to practice.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Consider how John earlier described living in Christ.

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me**, and I in him, **bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.

**2. But back up a minute: How did they know that Christ was righteous? They knew Christ was righteous by their experience (ginosko) of him.** They experienced that change when they were born again. He transformed them. He gave them new desires.

**3. Having experience Christ's righteousness, God required that they practiced righteousness. (Better: Keep practicing...) They had to start living as** Christian children. They learned that being in God's family was a privilege and privileges led to duties. They started to do like their brothers and sisters did. It may have taken a while for them to get into the right habits, and they might have made a mess of it from time to time, but they started to read God's Word and to pray. They had to keep growing and moving. You know what happens if you are on a moving treadmill and you stop walking! This is the same in the Christian life. It is a dynamic life.

1John 2:5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. **By this we know that we are in Him.** 6 He who says he **abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.**

**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and **let us run with**

endurance the race that is set before us,  
This moving forward continues all the days of the Christian's life.

#### **4. How can New Horizon members practice righteousness and enjoy the Lord's blessings?**

**a. You practice righteousness by teaching and disciplining your children.** Don't be too busy to do this!

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

**b. You practice righteousness by teaching your wife** in order to present blameless before the Lord...and by making it easy for her to receive what you say by caring for her. **A wife practices righteousness by submitting to her husband** and by making his work easy. Ephesians 5.

**c. You practice righteousness by giving up the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life.** This is a daily battle. Consider Moses!

Hebrew 11:24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

**d. You practice righteousness by letting Christ's influence on you be seen, heard, and felt in the world.** Speak up against sin. Speak up about Christ's love for sinners. Let your politicians hear from you in 2014. Make it duty to regularly attend the 2 worship services each Sabbath.

#### **5. If you move forward in practicing – doing what you have learned, you won't be ashamed when Christ returns,**

rather, you will receive a reward from him.  
Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; **but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.** 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

1Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

#### **6. Remember John's warning to those who might be in the church but don't practice righteousness.**

1John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

#### **Conclusion:**

If you want to be successful in 2014, you **have to remain in Christ** by being in his church and having a real relationship with him and the other people in his body, and then **practice righteousness.**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: **Because you have experienced salvation in Jesus Christ,** you should be a daily student of the Word, you should be a woman of prayer, you should long to gather with the saints each Lord's Day, and you should long to submit to Christ's under-shepherds. **Because you are abiding in Christ, you will then practice righteousness.** You will fight against your sinful nature. You will be the best father, husband, mother, wife, or leader you can be! When you fail, you will keep trying...keep practicing...so that when Christ returns, he will say: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Finally, without true righteousness, no one can come close to the Lord; without true righteousness you are God's enemy. Only Christ has true righteousness! Your righteousness is like filthy rags. How do you get true righteousness? Surrender and say: Lord, I don't want to be your enemy. I believe Jesus died for me. Set me free from my sins. Let January 1, 2014, be the day you surrender and receive Christ's blessings!