

Use The Scene to introduce “God and Justice (The Challenge of Islam),” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for October 12, 2014. The lesson is found on page 37 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

According to Dictionary.com, *success* is “the accomplishment of one’s goals; the attainment of wealth, position, honors, or the like.” Recently, a university founded to help working adults achieve their dreams conducted a survey to find what success really means to people today.

Dr. Siebert Irving Strayer founded Strayer’s Business College in 1892 to teach business skills to former farm workers. Strayer recognized that the American economy was shifting from the farm to the factory, so his institution focused on teaching office skills such as shorthand, typing, and accounting. Today Strayer University enrolls about 38,000 students through its online learning programs and at 100 campuses located in 24 U.S. states.

This summer, the university released findings from its national “Success Project Survey.” The survey found that only one in five Americans defines *success* as “attainment of wealth.” Rather, 90 percent of those surveyed believe that success is defined by happiness, more so than money, power, or fame. Likewise, success is most often related to attaining personal goals (67 percent), having good relationships with family and friends (66 percent), and loving what you do for a living (60 percent).

Furthermore, the survey found that people today view the path to achieving success differently than one might expect. Typically success has been seen as the result of someone being driven and hardworking. But participants in the research who consider themselves to be successful are more likely to say they achieved success because of a supportive family network (54 percent) than because of their personal ambition (31 percent).

“I think people will be surprised to hear that the vast majority of this country no longer views traditional wealth- and fame-based notions of success as having ‘made it,’” says Michael Plater, president of Strayer University. “This indicates a clear change in the way Americans are thinking about their personal journey,” he says. “It’s no longer about the car or the house.”

In response to changing ideas about success, Strayer University has instituted “The Success Project,” a new initiative to break down the perceived barriers that keep individuals from succeeding in their personal and professional lives. Talk show host, entertainer, and author Steve Harvey has joined with the university to promote this initiative. Harvey sums up his view of success by saying, “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you know why.”

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

Review the quote about success from entertainer Steve Harvey at the end of this article. What do you think he means? Do you agree or disagree? Defend your views.

List some ways people are encouraged to seek success today. (Ex: working hard, being a part of the right social groups, attending a prestigious university) How would you advise people to seek success?

Many people have differing ideas about success and how to achieve it. Even world religions do not agree on the matter. Today we will look at what results in success in God’s eyes.