

SUCCESS OR FAILURE
Joshua 1:8, Matthew 6:33
By Raymond White

We all have goals that we are trying to achieve. Love and family, business and financial, intellectual, spiritual; in every area of our lives there are objectives that we reach for.

Our goals often compete with each other for our time and attention, and we are constantly weighing and rebalancing priorities. Sometimes we discover that what is most important is not the most expedient, and things we thought we needed to do right now actually has to wait.

For each goal, we anticipate success. Without the expectation of success, there would be no point to having a goal.

The bible has some good advice on how to achieve success. It's not all spiritual as in, for example, how to get to heaven. Much of it is very practical and very specific to our day to day problems of life — tactical if you will. But this essay is not about that, it is more strategic, more about achieving success in a general sense.

Here then are some biblical advice on how to be successful, in a general way.

***Matthew 6:33** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

First things first. This is God's directive to prioritize. Before you try to secure the things of this world you ought to first secure the things in the next. Then you're free to obtain the things of this world.

Jesus is not a party-poop. He knows that life is to be lived, and "all these things" you should have. Just get yourself right with God first. That's all he's saying. Why? For one thing, today could be your last. But setting that fatalism aside, being right with God actually helps you achieve everything else, and guilt free.

Here is one of my favorite sayings: "He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose." Once you are secure with God, then you can work down the list.

***Joshua 1:8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

The law, that is the Mosaic law, was the constitution of a new nation; namely, Israel. And Joshua's advice was to know that law and live by it and you will be successful.

This was true spiritually (obey God and he will bless you), but it was also true practically. It helps to know the laws that you are dealing with. If you are starting a business, you need to understand the laws concerning your business: maybe that's corporate law, or contract law, and if you hire people, there are piles of laws that you have to know and apply. And then there is ethics: how to treat people and just be fair.

Basically, when you're going to play a game you need to first know the rules of the game. And it is so with all the games of life. Everything you might endeavor to do you will find yourself swimming in laws, rules, regulations, moral obligation, and just common sense. Ignore all that and you do so at your own peril.

2 Chronicles 27:6 *So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.*

2 Chronicles 28:5 *The LORD his God delivered him [Ahaz] into the hand of the king of Syria :6 For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.*

Whether you win or lose, is it really just a matter of being on God's side so that he'll be on your side and give you the victory? Well, yes, it is that. But in addition, it is also about stocking up passion among your followers, your teammates, your coworkers, your employees, all those people that have joined you in your cause.

Winning usually amounts to inspiring passion in those who are with you, and nothing inspires passion more than knowing that they are involved in the *right* cause, that God is on our side so to speak. That's first. Give people the goal of making a difference. If you lead them to do good in the world, they'll follow you anywhere, and they will win.

Psalms 18:36 *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.*

If I believe that God is protecting me, I can be bold to take bigger step and not worry that I'll slip. So, be ambitious. Try to do something great. Don't be so timid. Someone said, "If you're going to dream anyway, dream big."

David the shepherd boy because David the king because he decided to take one gigantic step forward: he accepted Goliath's challenge. That's the kind of thing you need to do. Whether it be college or a new business or marriage, at some point you have to move past baby steps and start taking giant steps toward your great and noble goals.

Proverbs 16:3 *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

When you finally decide to do things God's way and for him, then you succeed. And the reason you succeed is because if your objectives are in harmony with God's will, then they get traction. Things just start working out better because he's on your side. What is in your mind to do will actually work.

Proverbs 16:9 *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

This is very practical. You may know what you want to accomplish but sometimes you need God to reveal to you how to do it. He will bring you to the success you seek by putting ideas into your head. We call that inspiration. If an idea is big, we call it revelation.

In any case, we often get a sense that such ideas come to us from outside ourselves, and that happens best when the goal is righteous, because without righteousness, we're on our own and we may or may not have the wherewithal to move from one step to the next. With God, the odds are much better.

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

There are two fears that impede us: FOF and FOP — fear of failure and fear of people. Sometimes you need to just believe that the good things can happen and push forward anyway. Overcoming fear gets inertia working for you instead of against you, and one way to overcome fear is to be confident that God is working with you and will lead you through the maze necessary things.