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S U C C E S S

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"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," Joshua 1:8.

Introduction: I believe this is the only time the word *success* is found in the Bible. A great Greek writer who lived in 500 B.C. said that "success is man's god." And it is true that people have always laid great stress on success. Webster's definition: "Success is the favorable or prosperous termination of anything attempted." If I attempt to get wealth and get it, I have been a success. I expect more people measure success by the dollar mark than by any other standard. If fame and prominence is my goal, and my name is heard over radio and read in the press--if all I do and say is followed by the multitudes--then I am a success. But these ideas of success leave out a very important question: "Where and what shall I be in eternity?"

Books have been written on success and rules have been laid down for success. I've read the story of a certain man who gives himself the one-year test, in trying to evaluate the importance of the various elements that make up his life. He merely asks himself how important the thing he wants today will be one year from now. Most of the things that seem so essential at the moment will, he decides, have been forgotten a year from now. Why bother with them at all? Why give

them importance? Why not concentrate on those things which are most likely to underwrite my success?

This rule for success would be very good if human existence ended at death. But it forgets the eternity of man. The better test might be called the eternity test. What will the thing I want today be worth in eternity?

However, the man under consideration is wiser than most men; for most men live for the absolute present--what gratifies for the moment is all they consider. For success in this life, the one-year test is good.

The book of Joshua tells of the death of Moses before Israel had crossed the Jordan River. The responsibility of leadership fell upon the shoulders of Joshua, the minister of Moses. Joshua is told to arise and lead the people across the river. This was a big order and a trial of faith, for Jordan was flooded--and how was that great crowd of men, women, and children to get across with the river impassable and no ferry-boats in sight, to say nothing of the watchful eyes that were upon them from the other bank? To cross a stream in the face of an enemy is a ticklish operation, even for modern armies. And not a hint is given as to the means of making the crossing. He is just commanded to do it, and God promises to be with him. It was a faith operation, for all the circumstances were against getting across. Faith is always tried by pitting visible circumstances against the invisible God and His word.

Here is something to note: God's word of promise is made plain and emphatic. He promised to be with Joshua as he had been with Moses.

He promised that no man would be able to stand against him. He repeated his promise to be with him. He tells him that the land of the enemy is His gift to them and that he is to "divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them." And then follows the conditions and rules for success--verses seven and eight. We can apply these rules to God's people of this or any other generation. These rules for success are just as plainly told in the New Testament as here in the Old Testament.

Man Must Have A Saviour.

So far as eternity is concerned, there is not a stop towards success without Jesus Christ as Saviour. Man, as a sinner, faces the law of God, and must be redeemed from its awful curse. God's law is backed by His justice, power, and holiness, and the sinner has no chance of escape from its awful penalty, apart from a Saviour. Galatians 3:10-13, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

The Saved Man Must Be Strong and Courageous.

The Christian life is not a play party; it is a warfare. It is not a

picnic; it is a battle. The church is not a lounging room, it is a feeding and training station. The church must have cradles and bottles for babies, but babies should grow up, and get to where they can get out of the cradle and give up the bottle, and do some fighting. Imagine a 50-year old man lying in a cradle with a bottle in his mouth, or crying at the top of his voice for attention. He would be a ridiculous sight with his arms and legs hanging over the sides and end of the crib. And yet that is the picture of a lot of church members.

The babies of World War I were the soldiers of World War II because they grew up and were strong enough to fight.

Joshua had a difficult and dangerous assignment and he must be brave and strong. But his strength and courage must be in the Lord. He had no strength of his own to drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in the land of promise. Without the Lord, bravery would be foolishness and strength would be weakness. The strong city of Jericho was taken because God was with Israel, while the weak city of Ai was too much for Israel without the Lord.

The teaching of the New Testament is to the same effect. Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing." Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Ephesians 6:10, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." II Timothy 2:1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The word for strong in these two passages means "to make strong inwardly." It means moral strength or heart courage. It is the kind of strength we need for Christian warfare. Physical prowess counts for little or nothing. A man may be a giant physically and yet be as weak as a baby morally, and spiritually. The church needs spiritual giants today.

The Saved Man Must Pay Attention to God's Word.

This is a necessary rule for success. "This book of the law must not depart out of thy mouth; but thou

shalt meditate therein day and night." This book of the law referred to the pentateuch generally and perhaps to Deuteronomy especially. It contained instruction for successful warfare and it must be known. Joshua needed to know it and more than that he needed to meditate upon it--he needed the strength that its promises would give. By meditating upon it he would get inward strength that would enable him to win battles too much for his outward strength. With the inward strength of faith, God would be his outward strength for victory. Trust is strength because trust touches the Rock of Ages. Trust connects with God the source of power.

If God's people would meditate upon the Word of God they would have more strength. Meditation is to the spiritual man what chewing is in the physical man. Chewing our food enables us to digest it and get strength from it. Meditation grinds up the food of God's word. It is not enough to know the letter of the word; we must ponder it for strength and courage.

The Saved Man Must Observe To Do All That Is Written.

"Thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein." Meditation is not that we may be able to quote scripture to others, but that we may do what scripture commands. To be a success we must not merely be hearers of the word; we must be doers of the word also.

Courage and obedience make the perfect soldier. And they must go together like Siamese twins. Courage without obedience would be useless and there could be no obedience without courage. Courage is inward strength for outward duty, but what is the use to have inward strength if nothing is done?

The man of God has responsibilities, and he must not turn his back upon duty. The word duty comes from the word due. It means that we owe something and we ought to pay our debts. What are some of the duties of the saved man? Whatever

God has commanded. For the Christian soldier Christ's commandments are his marching orders. And what are these marching orders? What are Christian duties?

The overall duty is to be His witnesses--we are to make him known to the world--we are to promote the preaching of His Gospel to the ends of the earth. In connection with this, we ourselves must wait upon the preaching of His word. We won't be much interested in helping preach His word to others if we ourselves despise the preaching of it. This problem of church attendance will be solved when people get the spirit of obedience to God.

If we are not victorious it will not be for lack of divine power but lack of the spirit of obedience on our part.

The Duke of Wellington was once asked what was to be done about a difficult mission. Wellington replied, "What are your marching orders?" The commission was read again, and Wellington said, "There is nothing to ask questions about. Do what you are told to do. Don't stop to consider the difficulties."

Joshua was a soldier like Wellington. God commanded him: Go across the Jordan; keep this book in your hand; meditate on it day and night, just obey, obey, obey. And from the day he received his orders until he died, he never swerved.

Oh, how much we all need the spirit of obedience to the Lord that characterized Joshua. And this will spell success when He returns to reward the faithful.

