

SUCCESS

"... and then thou shall have good success." Joshua 1:8

God has not brought the Church nor the Christian into existence to fail. God has promised that we will succeed – but only on His terms. The housewife may not substitute sawdust for flour. The laws of science will not permit it. Nor may one substitute water for gasoline and expect proper performance from an automobile. There are inexorable demands in the laws of nature – and we have learned to submit to their requirements.

The principles of Scripture are even more inexorable. And their violation will guarantee failure. One may not substitute doubt for faith or disobedience for obedience.

Joshua was promised success – but only on certain conditions. He was given (1) a specific goal, (2) an enablement to achieve that goal, (3) a book of instructions, and (4) an exhortation.

Goal. The goal was to lead God's people into the Land of Canaan. Therefore, the condition for success was very clear – to glorify God by fulfilling His will. This same principle applies to every Christian. We have been given the goal of glorifying God. Joshua did this by leading God's people into Canaan. You may do it by working in the factory, or in the home, or in the school. Any lack of concern for the glory of God will insure failure. Thus Joshua is the historical proof of success – on God's terms.

Enablement. Joshua was also given enablement to achieve the divinely specified goal. This power was the eternal God. The promise was, *"I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."* Could there be a greater encouragement? Whatever Joshua needed God promised to be. And so it is with every Christian. God has given us a goal for daily life, and He has given Himself so that we may achieve that goal. He is *"... wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."* (I Cor. 1:30) Therefore, Christian service may not be accomplished by shrewd ingenuity. Any clever manipulation of people for personal advancement will guarantee failure. God is not a wind-up toy. He may not be taken off the shelf to go through His paces when human cunning has waned. God is not at our sinful disposal. His wisdom will not be given to those who plan on using it apart from *"... righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."* Nor may we "use" God in the area of sanctification in daily life. He is our sanctification. There is no genuine holiness apart from the grace of God. Sanctification involves freedom from sin and conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. God has given us Himself just as He gave Joshua Himself. Daily success is available but only when we are honest about sin and righteousness.

Instruction. A book of instruction was given to Joshua. He was commanded to obey it. This was the third condition of his success. Disobedience would have precluded success and guaranteed failure. As with Joshua, the Christian need not guess or speculate about the will of God. God has revealed Himself, and our failures are largely traceable to disobedience. God has given us His Word. We must learn how to put it into daily practice. One of the tragedies of our day is our neglect of the Scriptures. We drive a twenty thousand dollar car and carry a ten dollar Bible. We do not know the names of the books of the Bible, let alone their content. Many Christian homes are without an adequate concordance. Many Christians have never learned to use one. In many of our fundamental Bible-believing churches only a few of the Christians read the Bible daily. It is relatively easy to recruit players for the softball team or the bowling league – but just attempt to start a Bible study! Such neglect of the Scripture is a sin. Joshua could not neglect his book of instruction – **nor may we.**

Exhortation. The last condition for success which God gave to Joshua was an exhortation. He was told to “*Be strong and very courageous . . .*” This simply meant that he was to believe God and live accordingly. It was not easy. Joshua was faced with many seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The goal God had set for him was humanly impossible to achieve. But God had given Himself to Joshua. “*For with God nothing shall be impossible.*” (Luke 1:37) And so it is with the Christian. Only God can deal with sin and only God can produce holiness. Only God can reach the non-Christian and only God can build the Church. Our responsibility is to believe God and live accordingly. God has not brought you into existence to fail. God has promised that you will succeed – on His terms.

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