

God's Formula for Success

By Patrick and Dwaina Six

What is going on in your life? If you are like most of us, there is pain in your **past**—you have experienced disappointment, failure, and loss. Maybe there is considerable pressure in the **present**, and perhaps you are fearful of the **future**.

There is a man in the Bible who can really **identify** with you. His name is Joshua.

His vote to take the land of Canaan was vetoed by the voice of the people. For the next forty years, he would travel through a wilderness desert... living with the consequences of that veto every day. Would you say Joshua knew the pain of disappointment, failure, and loss in his past?

For the present, Joshua had a huge job ahead of him—REALLY HUGE! He had the pressure of stepping into the shoes of a revered and successful leader. He had the daunting task of leading a stubborn and rebellious people into the land God had promised to give them. This job was bigger than one man, and Joshua knew it. Can you imagine the pressure this man was under?

Surely Joshua experienced fear about the future. He knew God had promised the Hebrews an abundant land. But he also knew they would have to fight for that land. There was dissension from within and imposing enemies from without. Might that cause him to fear the future?

We can't even imagine the mixed bag of emotions Joshua was experiencing, but God understood. **The LORD spoke these words to Joshua :**

Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong

*and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.** (Joshua 1:6-9 –NASB)*

A couple of years ago, our family began committing this passage of Scripture to memory. Due to our circumstances at that time, we found great comfort in the instruction and promises we found in these few verses.

You WILL be prosperous and successful

We were reading and praying together a few days ago when the Lord brought this passage back to our minds. As we meditated on these words, we began to see their wide application.

Let's look at what the text actually tells us, and then we will share some ideas about applying it.

What does God tell us to do in these verses?

- Be strong and very courageous. (He says this three times!)
- Be careful to obey the law He gave to Moses
- Do not turn from His law

- Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth
- Meditate on this Book of the Law day and night
- Do not be terrified
- Do not be discouraged

What does God promise?

- He will be with you just as He was with Moses
- You will be prosperous and successful. (He says this twice!)
- He will be with you wherever you go

As you look at your past, present and future, you might feel a little of what Joshua felt. What are the issues that cause you to feel this way? Are you encountering some marital difficulties? If you are in a second marriage, are there some pains from your past that are making your present difficult and breeding fear for your future?

What about your finances? Have past mistakes left a shortage in your bank account? Does this situation cause you to fear the future because you don't know where you will get the money to pay your obligations?

Perhaps you have received a promotion, but you are following someone who was tremendously successful and respected. Their past performance puts considerable pressure on you in the present, and your future is uncertain because it is all based on your performance.

Maybe you or someone you love is facing some health issues that generate a spirit of fear in your heart. Doctors are doing what they can, but they are running out of options, and the future is uncertain.

Success Formula (cont')

Wayward children can cause a boatload of questions about your abilities as a parent. Where did we go wrong? (**Past**) What do we do now? (**Present**) Will our child ever come back around? (Fear about the **Future**).

Maybe what you are going through is something totally different. Whatever your situation, it would be easy to get so caught up in the circumstances of life that pain, pressure, or fear begins to unravel you. **But God tells us how to live a better way.**

Based on what God told Joshua to do, here are our recommendations:

You need to be in God's Word. We know this to be true experientially -- married couples need to read Scripture and pray together on a consistent basis. We can sure tell when we've jumped up and started on our day before we carved out time to read some Scripture and pray together. Evangelist Billy Hanks said, "If you are too busy to spend time with God, you are busier than God intends you to be." Make the adjustments necessary to make God the priority He should be! You'll be amazed at the benefits to you individually and as a couple!

You will need a plan for reading God's Word together. There are many reading plans available either through your church or Christian bookstore. (Check out GTO's Experiencing Oneness interactive

couple's study at www.marriages.net).

Then, **meditate on the Scripture you've read.** That just means thinking about it throughout the day and asking God how to apply it in your life. If you know how to worry, then meditating will be a cinch, because meditating is like worrying, except it's positive. Also, take time to write down the things God is showing you. Keep a journal of your discoveries. We even recommend you date your entries.

If you are too busy to spend time with God, you are busier than God intends you to be

Memorize God's Word. We believe this is what God had in mind when He told Joshua, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth." We believe He was telling Joshua that God's Word should always be a part of him. Begin by taking a week to memorize the first verse and reference. The next week, continue to review the previous verse while memorizing the next one. Repeat this process until you have the passage memorized. You will find that, as you encounter different situations, the Holy Spirit will remind you of Scriptures you have hidden in your heart. You may not always have a Bible with you but, through memorization, you will always have God's Word!

Choose to obey God's Word. It is possible to read and meditate, and even memorize Bible verses without obeying God. Obedience is not always easy, and sometimes it is even scary! But, wow! The blessings are amazing! One of our favorite books is by John Ortberg entitled, "*If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got To Get Out of the Boat!*" The truth is, you will not have the success that God speaks of in Joshua chapter one until you commit to obedience, even if it means you have to get out of the boat.

Put away fear and discouragement. Choose to become stronger spiritually! Choose to have the courage to act on what God is leading you to do! When you do these things, **then God promises His presence.** He walks with you through the good times and the hard times. He promises success -- not as the world counts success necessarily, but success and prosperity in the things that really matter -- the things that have eternal value.

Notice in Joshua 1:9 that these instructions are not optional. They are **commanded**: "*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*"

Patrick and Dwaina Six are a couple who have spoken and ministered effectively to many couples together through the years.

Growing Toward Oneness Marriage Ministries provides books, CD's and other marriage resources and services to enrich your marriage.

Please visit their website at www.marriages.net

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