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## God's Success Formula

Three articles on Joshua 1:8

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X equals **talk** the word + Y equals **meditate** the word + Z equals **act** on the word = **SUCCESS!**

### A Supernatural Success

How much do you want to succeed in life? Don't answer that too quickly. Obviously, no one aims to fail at anything they do. But I've been amazed over the years at the people who have come across the formula for success, only to leave it lying on the table, while they stay depressed, defeated, sick and broke.

Such people initially think success is easy for those gifted with great abilities. But the truth is, real supernatural success is no picnic for anyone. It takes courage and faith. And it has nothing at all to do with natural ability.

If Joshua were around today, he could tell you just how true that is. When God called him to lead Israel after Moses's death, he faced an overwhelming task. As Moses' successor, Joshua had some big shoes to fill. Several million people were under his command and he knew if they didn't stay in line with God, His blessing would not be on them. Without God's blessing, they would never be able to take the promised land.

Joshua had to succeed. The future of the entire nation was at stake. And succeed he did! How did he do it? By following God's own formula for success.

If you're wishing God would give you such a formula – wish no more. He already has! It's the same one he gave Joshua and it will work just as well for you today.

### Who's With You?

"But you don't know me! I've tried and failed with every formula out there. I just don't have what it takes to succeed."

If that's what you're thinking, you haven't tried the formula in God's book. With His formula, you don't have to "have what it takes." Look at what God said in Joshua 1:5 and you'll see why: "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you."

You may remember, in Exodus, that God told Moses something very similar when Moses claimed he wasn't qualified to go before Pharaoh and demand Israel's freedom. He felt personally inadequate for the task. "Lord, who am I to go and do these things?" he said.

But God answered, "certainly I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12). In other words, "it doesn't matter who you are, Moses. It matters who I am. For I am with you! "

**That's the great thing about God's success formula. It's not based on our abilities – it's based on His abilities. We may be inadequate in a dozen different ways, but the one who is with us is more than enough.**

### An Act of Courage

It's great to know that God is connected with you and that He never leaves you nor forsakes you. But you must be connected with Him before he can release His power on your behalf. You do this by obeying his Word. Joshua 1:7 says:

"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go."

Do you know that obeying the word is an act of courage? When you obey the word and believe God in a situation, you're swimming upstream. You're going against the current of the world.

When most of the people and all the circumstances around you are screaming unbelief in your ears, it takes courage to stand on God's Word and not be moved. But once you make the decision to do it, you'll be ready to activate God's three-part formula for success. You'll find it spelled out in Joshua 1:8:

**"(One), this book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, (two) but you shall meditate on it day and night, (three) that you may observe and do according to all that is written in it. (Result) For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will deal wisely and have good success."**

There they are. The three simple steps directly from the mouth of God that enabled Joshua to conquer the land of Canaan and bring Israel into their inheritance. Steps that will enable you to live like the conqueror that God designed you to be. Let's look at them one by one.

### **Success Step One**

"This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth." That's the first element of supernatural success God gives us in this verse. I like to say it this way: speak the word.

When I say speak the word, I don't mean just every now and then when you're feeling spiritual. I mean continually. In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, God said you should speak his word. "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.... Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

That's pretty much all the time, isn't it? At home, at work, at the grocery store, wherever you are, keep the Word of God in your mouth. Romans 10:17 tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." So when you're continually talking about God's promises, what he says and what he'll do, you're going to be growing in faith because you're hearing the Word from yourself all the time.

Some people find it hard to speak the Word that much. They just can't seem to do it! If you're one of them, let me tell you why.

Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45). If you're focusing most of your attention on natural things – watching secular television, going to the movies, thinking about worldly matters, worrying about your job and family – then that's what is going to be in your heart in abundance. And that's what you're going to talk about.

To change what's coming out of your mouth, you must refocus your attention. Turn it toward God's Word and keep it there. Fill your heart with an abundance of the Word and your mouth will get into line.

### **Success Step Two**

This brings us to the second step of God's success formula - "you shall meditate on it (the Word) day and night "

When you meditate on God's word, you do more than just read it. You take it into your heart in a very personal way and apply it to your own situation. When you read a scripture about the blessing of prosperity; for example, don't think, hey, that sounds nice, but I could never have it. Instead, apply it to yourself and say, hallelujah! That's God's Word to me. He says he'll meet my need liberally, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus and I'm expecting Him to do that in my situation.

If you've been reading the Bible like a history book, make a change and begin to see it as God directly talking to

you. Take time to meditate on it—think about it. Digest it. Take it so personally that it moves from your head to your heart, and it will become powerful and active in your life.

### **Success Step Three**

The final step of God's success formula involves action. We must act as though the Word we've been talking and meditating is true – even when circumstances seem to say otherwise.

If that puzzles you, read what Jesus said to Mark. "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:22–24)

Notice, Jesus did not say you should believe you receive when you see it. He said to believe you receive when you pray.

**If you follow His instructions, how do you think you should act? Should you walk around depressed and joyless? Should you stand around wringing your hands, worrying? No! Rejoice and praise God for the answer to your prayer. Act like you've already received it.**

Here is where many people will miss it. They know God's Word works but fail to act on it.

You may have been studying the word for twenty years and know how to live by faith better than anyone around. But, remember, it's not what you know that will bring you through to victory – it's what you do.

You can walk in faith consistently through ten trials and experience great success. Yet on the 11th one if you neglect to act on the Word, you'll fail. Although the string of victories in your past is a wonderful thing. It's what you do today that will get you through today's test or trial.

### **More Than Mental Assent**

One of the greatest enemies of real faith is the thing I call "mental assent." People who operate in mental assent read the Word and they believe it, but when pressure comes, they don't act on it.

Mental assent says, "I believe the Bible from cover to cover. I believe I'm healed by the stripes of Jesus because the Bible says so. But when sickness actually attacks, it stops saying, "by his stripes I'm healed" and starts saying, "I'm sick."

**Real faith believes what the Word says, though sight and feelings say something different. Faith doesn't care what the symptoms are. It doesn't care what the circumstances look like. It's not moved by what the banker, the doctor, the lawyer or the bill collector says.**

Faith in God's Word will change the symptoms. It will change the bank account. It will bring the money to get the bills paid. Faith will turn every defeat into victory. It is God's success formula!

But you have to give faith an opportunity to work. You have to keep God's Word in your mouth and meditate on it in your heart so that "you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you'll deal wisely and have good success."

### **No Sorrow Included**

Now, think again about the question I asked you earlier. How much do you want to succeed in life? Enough to change what you're saying or where your attention is focused? Enough to act on the Word of God, even when the rest of the world is telling you it will not work? If you want it that much, the Word of God guarantees you'll get your fill of success in life. Good success. Not the kind of the world gives, but God's own brand of success.

Success the world's way has a price tag of misery attached to it. But Proverbs 10:22 says, "The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it."

I will warn you that Satan won't like it if you choose God's way of success. He'll do whatever he can to stop you, and since he knows God's success formula, he knows exactly which tactics to use. He'll pressure you to say negative things. He'll try to distract you from the Word and get your attention on anything else – it doesn't matter what it is – as long as it isn't the Word.

**His goal is to stop your faith. He knows it's the only force that can cause impossible situations to change.**

He also knows faith comes from the Word of God. So when he sees the Word going in your heart and hears it coming out of your mouth, he doesn't just sit there. He starts talking. Doubtful thoughts will begin to come into your mind – thoughts that are just the opposite of what God's Word says.

But those thoughts don't become yours unless you believe and speak them. That's what he wants you to do, of course. If the Word says you're healed, he'll tell you you're sick. If the word says you're forgiven, he'll say you're still guilty. If the Word says your needs are met he'll tell you they're not.

But if you won't let go, but keep the Word in your mouth and in your heart, you can't lose. There is no force the devil can bring against you that will overcome the word of God. It will make you a winner every time.

So, if you've been wanting good success and it's been alluding you, quit wondering if you have what it takes to make it. Remember, instead, who is with you. Then turn to the Word of God and put God's success formula to work in your life. Start meditating it, speaking it and doing it.

Before long, you won't be chasing success, it'll be chasing you!

## **God's Success Formula – Part 2**

"This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe and do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will deal wisely and have good success." (Joshua 1:8)

God's success formula begins with keeping His Word in your mouth. Speak God's Word. God gave Israel these instructions:

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

God told Israel to talk His Word when they sat down, when they walked, when they lay down and when they rose up. That is all of the time!

How could that be possible? Jesus said that out of the abundance of a man's heart his mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). The words you put in yourself are the words that come out. What words do you see and listen to most of the time—television, radio, newspapers, novels or God's Word?

Listen to yourself talk and you will know what is in you in abundance. If you are talking doubt, fear and sickness, that is what is in you in abundance. Your source of information must be changed!

The stream of things in this world is negative. Unless you take action against the world order with the Word of God, your mouth will speak from experience, circumstance and tradition.

**You receive in this life just what you say with your mouth. The word in your mouth is your faith speaking. The words you speak are what you believe. The mouth speaks according to what you put in your heart.**

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things..." (v. 35).

Put God's Word in your heart and you will speak God's Word with your mouth. God's Word in your mouth will cause good things to happen in your life.

### **Meditate in God's Word**

You put God's Word in your heart by meditation in His Word. You do not change believing in your heart by just wanting to change it. You only change how you believe by the Word of God.

### **Meditation in God's Word is a necessity in God's success formula.**

Keep His Word before you and meditate—dwell upon the Word in your thought life—day and night. Meditation is more than just reading. Meditation is fixing your mind on the Word so that you do all that is written therein. You will gain revelation and insight into the Word that you never could gain by only hearing.

In meditating in the Word, you are applying that Word to yourself personally. You are allowing the Holy Spirit to make God's Word a reality in your heart.

You are carefully pondering how this Word applies to your life. You are seeing yourself as He sees you!

Through meditation, the integrity of God's Word becomes a reality to you. As the truth is revealed in your spirit, you will begin to do all that is written in it. Doing God's Word is the end result of keeping God's words in your mouth and meditating on His Word. Only acting on God's Word guarantees success.

Beware of the trap of mental assent. It is subtle because it sounds good. A great deal of the time mental assent can be tagged by the words "but" and "if." These two little words will rob you of your confession of faith. When it comes to believing God, put them out of your vocabulary and replace them with the Word of God.

### **Acting on the Word**

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." (*Matthew 7:24-27*)

Knowing what the Word says is not enough. You must act on that knowledge to get results. Both men heard the Word and both houses experienced the storm, but the results were different!

Acting on the Word put a foundation under the wise man's house that could not be moved, and his house suffered no loss.

The foolish man, who heard the Word but did not do it, had no foundation when the floods came. His house may have been easier to build, but it had no power to stand.

Because meditation makes God's Word a reality to you, it shuts the door to mental assent and opens the door wide to doing God's Word. It not only gets your thoughts but also your actions in line with God's will for you.

As truths are revealed to you in the Word, apply them to your circumstances and do them. Be the wise man that acts on the Word. When the adversities of life come against your house, it will stand because the foundation of doing God's Word will make it stand.

**In His Word you will find God's answer to every problem common to man.  
For every evil Satan can throw at mankind, our Father has provided the Word  
to overcome that evil. Prosperity and good success are yours through God's Word.**

**"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall  
ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).**

### **Meditate on the Word of God – Part 3**

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou may 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).

Meditating on the Word of God. It was an essential element of success in Joshua's day. It still is. Unfortunately, however, most of us today don't know it.

We read the Word of God, we listen to preachers preach it. We even get together and have discussion groups about it. But meditate on it? Most of us don't have any idea how to do that. Nor do we realize that we're short-circuiting God's own formula for success and consigning ourselves to failure by doing without it.

The truth is, meditation isn't nearly as mysterious and complicated as most believers think it is. Scriptural meditation simply means thinking about and reflecting upon the Word of God. It means pondering a particular scripture and mentally applying it to your own circumstances again and again until that scripture permanently marks your consciousness.

Why is meditation so important? Because it can affect your life in a way that almost nothing else can. It can, quite literally, alter your mind. Take a look at the story of Abraham and I think you'll see what I mean.

When God first told Abraham (or Abram as he was called then) he was going to have a son, Abram was an old man. His wife Sara was also old, well past the age of childbearing. What's more, she had been barren all her life.

An aging, childless couple - that's how Abram and Sara saw themselves. It was an image that had been imbedded deeply in their minds for years. They'd totally given up any other hope. In fact, they'd already made plans to leave his estate to their servant Eliezer of Damascus.

So, when the Lord spoke to Abram and told him He was going to give him and Sara a child, Abram literally couldn't imagine such a thing. It contradicted his entire mind-set. Knowing the mental struggle Abram would have, God didn't just make him a verbal promise and leave it at that. He did something else. Let's look at Genesis 15:5 and see what it was: " Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

God didn't just leave Abram with his old image of himself as barren, old man. He gave him a new image to ponder, an image of God's promise being fulfilled. Can't you just see Abram staring out at the stars, trying to count them? Looking into the sparkling light of one after another and visualizing the faces of his grandchildren and great grandchildren? Filling the eyes of his heart with the promise of God?

A few years later, when that vision was growing dim (and after Abram and Sara had tried to help God's plan along by bringing Sara's maidservant Hagar into the picture), God spoke again. And, once again, He did something that would permanently mark the minds of both Abram and Sara. He gave them new names: Abraham - a father of many nations, and Sarah - a mother of nations (Gen. 17:5,15,16).

By changing their names, God made sure that His promise to Abraham and Sarah became more than words to be heard and forgotten. He arranged it so that every day, countless times each day, whenever they heard or called each other's names, His promise would again come to mind. From that day on, they were never able to separate themselves from it. It became a permanent part of their identity.

That is meditation. It is tremendously powerful, and by focusing on the scriptural promises God has given you, you can put it to work in your life just as Abraham put it to work in his.

How? Let me show you. Say, for example, you have a desire to give, yet financial failures have held you back. Put meditation to work for you in that area by going to 2 Corinthians and reading God's promise about it: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you so that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

Spend some time thinking about that promise. Visualize yourself writing a generous check to someone in need. Then begin to act on that image. When the Spirit leads, give whatever you can. It may not be much at first, but don't worry about that. Just keep developing that image inside you. See yourself giving more. In your mind, practice writing those checks again and again. Each time you do, the promise of God will become more real to you, and your faith will grow.

"Oh my, surely you're not saying I should use my imagination!"

Yes, that's precisely what I'm saying. What do you think God gave it to you for? Coupled with the Word of God, your imagination is a tremendous thing. Let it help you visualize God's promise. A hazy hope is not enough. You need a detailed picture!

I first learned how to use my imagination that way as a kicker for my high school football team. I'd lay in bed and visualize myself making the kick. I could see the turf beneath my feet, the laces on the ball, and the goal posts in front of me. Then, in my mind's eye, I would visualize the football sailing between the posts. I'd do that over and over, building an image of that successful kick within me. Let me warn you though, sometimes creating such new images are tough - especially when there are old images blocking the way.

Years ago, when I was many, many pounds overweight, I read countless books on weight loss. One thing almost all of them said was this: "See yourself slim." I tried. But I just couldn't do it. Every time I shut my eyes, I saw that same fat guy I'd seen reflected in the mirror 10 minutes before. Even when I succeeded in losing some weight, that inner image didn't change. So, I'd end up putting the weight right back on again.

I finally went on a fast, meditating on the Word of God and staying in prayer, until I overcame that image. Why is it so hard to change those old mental images of ourselves? Because we've spent years developing them. But, regardless of how tough it may be, if we're ever going to enjoy the blessings God has for us, we're going to have to do something about such images.

Quite often when I talk about visualizing and imagining the Word of God, I find believers are wary of such things. They say it sounds like positive thinking or transcendental meditation. Well, where do you think the devil got those things? You don't think he ever came up with anything on his own, do you? Of course not! He's a thief. He just stole that passage about meditation from the first chapter of Joshua, took out the part about the Word of God, and gave it to some folks who were foolish enough to fall for it.

The very fact that he stole it indicates just how powerful it is! So, put the powerful art of meditation to work for you. Use it to change the inner images that have held you back for so long. You'll find, just as Joshua did, that it is truly one of God's most effective "secrets" for success.

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