

# Keys To A Revolutionary Life

Unique Perspectives on your Destiny



Thomas P Hill

# **Keys To A Revolutionary Life**

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By Thomas P Hill

Previously published as *5 Steps To Success*, and *Secrets of Successful Christian Living*

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Smashwords Edition.

All scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 92-784664

ISBN:

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# Introduction

You have probably read at least one book on success. You may have attended a seminar or heard someone speak on how to attain it. Maybe you have studied it as I have.

Why not? Everyone wants to learn the keys to successful living. As Samuel Johnson said:

*“Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes and seeing them gratified.” (1)*

To reach our goals, we tried the plans and philosophies of those whom we read and heard. Their ideas squeezed us into their mold and shaped our lives. We overcame difficulties and reached our dreams. When measured by these human standards, we achieved success. We built our house of success.

Yes, we can reach it without following God’s plan. But when we do, it resembles a house built upon the sand, a vain and meaningless achievement; in short, we miss the essentials of true prosperity. To build success properly, we need to know God’s design for it. God reminds us in Psalm 127:1:

*“Except God builds the house, they labor in vain that build it.”*

Since God created us, He knows the ingredients for genuine success. In the Bible God outlines His view of it and demonstrates it in the life of Daniel. Daniel’s life provides a pattern for us in as much as God prospered him regardless of his situation. We face the same traumas and triumphs that Daniel experienced.

These chapters define the Biblical principles of prosperity. They differ from the popular ones we have read and heard. When we adopt and obey God’s laws, He will shape our lives with them. Then, we will discover life beyond our dreams. For by the exertion of His power within us, He will do beyond our imagination.

# Chapter One

## **Success Rests In A Fat Bank Account.**

Someone once said that a successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend. A successful woman is one who finds such a man.

To many, success rests in a fat bank account. That is, many people believe that if you cannot save money, the seed of success is not in you. They agree with Somerset Maugham who said:

*“Money is like a sixth sense, and you can’t make use of the other five without it.” (2)*

## THE ILLUSION OF SUCCESS

### **It Includes Fame And Fortune.**

We equate prosperity with fame and fortune. That perception permeates our society. Books on prosperity fill the shelves of our libraries and stores. They tell us step-by-step how to climb the ladder of success.

They promise a life of prominence and prosperity. But, they do not tell us that their ladder of success contains many splinters. Sadly, we do not realize it until we slide down.

Unfortunately, most Christians have adopted the standards of the world. And we have allowed them to squeeze us into their mold. These standards have determined how we evaluate others and ourselves.

We have come to believe that prosperity includes riches; only those who achieve outstanding accomplishments have attained success.

### **It Depends Upon Our Possessions.**

As a result, we measure prosperity by what we can see and touch: when the affairs of life go well, we enjoy “success.” When they do not, we suffer as “failures.”

Therefore, success becomes an exclusive experience of a select few. Millions never taste it—all but a few live lives filled with feelings of failure and frustration. The poor hide hollow hopes; prosperity escapes the helpless. Countless crowds live and labor in obscurity and cannot hope to become a “success.”

In short, the belief that success lies in a fat bank account has become a respected myth.

## THE REALITY OF SUCCESS

### **It Depends Upon God’s Purpose For You.**

The Bible teaches differently about success. In the Old Testament, the words translated for success and prosperity appear in excess of 65 times.

According to *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*:

*"(It) generally expresses the idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure. The source of success is God."* (3)

Therefore, genuine prosperity includes adjustment to the ends and purposes that God has for you. Whenever we let God work in our lives through His Spirit, we accomplish His will for us.

Then we experience His prosperity. Thus, obedience to God's Word becomes the standard, not fame and fortune.

### **It Includes The Rich And The Poor.**

The Bible does not describe success in terms of position or possessions. Neither does Biblical prosperity know any political boundary or nationality. Education does not guarantee it, and a lack of training does not stop it.

History records Godly men and women who have suffered adversity, poverty, and human failure. Yet, their lives show the evidence of the prosperity of God.

God's prosperity takes in the rich and the poor. He does not prefer one rank above another. He prospers both the nameless and the famous. The Bible illustrates this truth especially in the life of Daniel.

Daniel adapted to the will and purposes of God for his life. As a result, he knew God's prosperity when facing obstacles or opportunities.

Daniel, kidnapped when a teen-ager, grew up without his parents, an exile in a foreign land. Yet, God prospered him, and he found well-being in life. Later, God empowered him to interpret dreams, and Daniel governed in the palace of the king.

Daniel experienced poverty and plenty, honor and dishonor. But, God caused him to prosper regardless of his circumstances.

I read about a little urchin boy who wandered the streets of New York City. A sympathetic mother saw him and took him home with her. When they got home, she scrubbed his body clean.

As she washed his hands, she noted that he clutched something tightly in his left hand. With great effort, she peeled back each little finger of his hand.

After she had finally opened his palm, she exposed a crust of bread. Lovingly she discarded it. Then she completely bathed him, clothed, and fed him.

That story illustrates how we Christians so often respond to the activity of Jesus Christ in our lives. We hold tightly to our skimpy, earthly pleasures, and it deters us from receiving the immeasurable riches available to us in Christ.

God's thoughts far exceed our thoughts and His ways surpass our ways.

In Ephesians 3:20, we read:

*“(Christ) is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh within us.”*

We must reject the temporal traditions of our times. They continuously change and create instability. Such outward expressions do not portray the One Who indwells believers.

Christians must adjust to the will and purpose of God in their lives. We need to allow Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to renew our minds.

When we yield to the Spirit of Christ, He transforms us from the inside out. Old things pass away; all things become new. We no longer pattern our lives after the laws of the world.

Rather, we yield to the promptings of the Spirit. Then we accomplish the end and purpose that God has for us, and we experience success as God intends it.

God's success produces moral goodness and gratification. Joy and peace satiate our lives regardless of our position in life. Our hearts sing praise to God in poverty or plenty. Hence, we discover life complete and put our stamp of approval on it.

**Biblical Law #1: Success is the accomplishment of the end and purpose of God in your life.**

## Chapter Two

### **Keep The Faith, Brother!**

During the 1960s, “Keep the faith, brother!” became popular. People reassured each other with that expression when their hopes and dreams became frustrated.

After the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., his advocates reassured one another with it. They believed that the only limitations they faced would come from that which they viewed as insurmountable. They expected to attain their plans, and they did.

We exercise faith constantly. We could not live without it: it activates all human action from the simple to the complex. Faith exists within the human breast. God fixes it there as a natural faculty of man. Faith brings to fruition all that we do.

Faith governs our lives. For example, it determines the meals we eat. We believe food has value, so we eat it believing that it will benefit our bodies. When we enter a restaurant to eat, we enter with faith that the food will taste good. Faith chooses the cars we drive. We start them and drive them by faith. We set the alarm clock and turn the light switch in faith that they will work. It dictates whom we marry and our intentions for the future. We send our children to school in faith.

However, mankind has misplaced their faith. For some, they profess blind faith in a “higher power.” These blinded people rely upon some impersonal nebulous force to help them attain their goals.

As their success by the world’s standards grows, then faith in their “higher power” grows, too. Faith in their spiritual force, they say, helped them achieve prosperity.

For others, however, a set of principles on success has captivated them. The success gurus preach them with religious fervor. Their students follow them with equal zeal. These rules of prosperity control their lives. As they achieve their goals, they credit their faith in the principles of success that they followed.

As George Bernard Shaw has said:

*“We have not lost faith but we have transferred it from God to the medical profession.”*

(4)

Indeed, mankind has misplaced their faith. A set of principles on success or an impersonal “higher power” has captivated us. We believe them instead of God; hence, we sample only simulated success.

IT REQUIRES FAITH IN GOD.

**Faith In God Secures God’s Riches.**

Success and prosperity by God's standards require faith in God. Without it we waver like the waves of the sea. Apart from it, we cannot receive anything from God. To complete what He has in mind for us, we must "Keep the faith... in God."

Faith brings down God's prosperity. It's like an angel who transmits the heart's cry to Christ. Withdraw that angel and we send no prayer nor do we receive answers. Prayer fails for want of faith. Faith secures aid from the Eternal God in time of need. It delivers the hunted to their Refuge.

Faith joins us with God through Christ and dresses us with His nature. Through faith, we defeat the enemy of our souls.

Daniel's life exemplifies this truth. The obstacles and opportunities that he met we meet, too. When we rely on God as Daniel did, we experience God's success in our lives, too.

### **Faith In God Brings Righteousness.**

Daniel believed God, and God called him righteous. In Ezekiel 14:14, God described him as "righteous."

Daniel's faith in God never wavered. Those about him sought for knowledge from the stars to understand the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. The enchanters and sorcerers relied on magic potions. They gave up the splendor of the Immortal for images formed like creatures and mortal man, and then they worshipped them.

But, Daniel learned truth from the One Who made the stars. He knew the power of the Everlasting.

Daniel loved God, and his faith in God gave him right standing with God.

Our good works do not pacify God. Neither does church membership nor faithful attendance in church pardon us before God. In Isaiah 64:6 we read:

*"We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..."*

The best deeds of rightness and justice cannot ever justify man before God. Man has a sinful nature, which separates him from God and needs redemption. Since no one can please God by good works, God in grace and mercy provided a way for sinners to become righteous.

He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem sinners. His death on the cross paid the penalty for the sin of people like you and me. Everyone who trusts Christ's substitutionary death as sufficient for them experiences salvation from their sins.

The Bible unequivocally states this truth in John 3:16-17:

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."*

Further, in Galatians 2:16, God says:

*“A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*

Again, in Titus 3:5, He affirms:

*“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...”*

Right standing before God does not result from good works. God counts man righteous only through faith and complete dependence on Jesus Christ. When man places his faith in Him, God then declares him righteous. It comes solely from our faith in God. God says in Romans 4:5:

*“But to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

To experience success as God designed it, we must first put our faith in God and in His provision for our redemption, Jesus Christ.

### **Faith In God Resolves The Rigors Of Life.**

Daniel also believed God in the rigors of everyday life. As a teenager, he suffered as a captive POW. The Babylonians captured him in their siege of Jerusalem. They brought Daniel to their land as an exile. They indoctrinated him in their language, learning, and lore.

For three years, he studied the culture and creed of the Chaldeans. Though of royal Hebrew blood, he served as a helper in the courts of his conquerors. Despite his lowly rank, his faith in God did not waver. Daniel, though frustrated and outcast, believed God and experienced God’s prosperity.

However, we commonly reserve success only for the rich and famous. But, prosperity does not always come dressed in fine linen. Nor does it feast exclusively at luxurious banquets. It does not only reside in mansions, either.

We can enjoy God’s success as a celebrity or as a captive. His prosperity comes to those with rags or riches. We can enjoy it in little cottages or lordly castles. When we pursue God’s purpose and plan for our lives, God prospers us beyond our dreams.

In faith, Daniel rejected the customs of his captors. According to the customs of the day, a monarch fed his captors from his personal kitchen. Daniel’s diet contained food from the king’s table. Their meat included pork and other meats, which God called unclean.

In addition, God had assigned specific preparations for those meats that the Hebrews could eat. Finally, the king often ate meat previously sacrificed to idols.

God taught His people not to defile themselves. Daniel knew God’s restrictions. In faith, he rejected the traditions of the Babylonians. Instead, he espoused the principles of the Almighty. It says in Daniel 1:8:

*“Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat...”*

A test diet of beans and water made Daniel’s face fairer and fatter than ones who ate the king’s meat. God honored his faith and caused him to prosper.

The modern Christian finds himself in a similar situation. The world urges him to find success by conformity to its principles. Its motto proposes that prosperity depends upon how things look. It says that the attainment of personal desires brings success.

God commands the Christian to reject the customs of the world. Do not allow them to shape your life. Instead, allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind. He will transform your life and bring complete, durable happiness.

The Bible states in Romans 12:2:

*“And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

In the daily routines of his life, Daniel trusted God. He did not permit the world in which he lived to squeeze him into its mold. God met his need.

God has promised to provide our every day needs, too. As we trust Him, like Daniel, our faith grows.

As a result, we know the prosperity of God. He is not like the big supply sergeant in the sky, however. He sees our needs differently than we do. God meets the needs of the lonely, homeless, and impoverished with prosperity that defies circumstances.

In Philippians 4:19, we read

*“God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said:

*“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

To have the prosperity that God gives, we must trust Him. God calls His children to live a life of faith. Our faith in God springs into life when we trust His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Spirit confirms our sonship.

When we depend upon His provision for us, we become righteous before God. Therefore, success God’s style starts to function in our lives.

As we further exercise our faith in Him, we discover God’s plan and purpose for us. Then we savor prosperity beyond our dreams.

**Biblical Law #2: Prosperity God’s style requires faith in God.**



## Chapter Three

### **If At First You Don't Succeed, Try, Try Again.**

Somebody once said that the dictionary is the only spot where success comes before work. People believe that prosperity comes to those who work...hard.

Many Christians also believe that only those who try gain success. We honor the ones who climb the ladder of success with their own two hands. We act as if prosperity rests solely upon our shoulders.

When we fail to achieve what we want, we chart a plan to get it. If we try hard enough, all good things will come to us.

I have read many books on success and how to achieve it. I have attended seminars to learn the latest systems for success. They recounted step-by-step how to accomplish it.

Further, lest I should not believe it, they told story after story about those who attained it by following their plans.

If I would simply follow their formulas, I thought, I could achieve prosperity, too. So, I did. Every day I read books on positive thinking. I made a chart to help me adopt my new lifestyle. I listed those qualities the "masters" said I needed and labored to achieve them.

As I practiced, I discovered that they worked. I set new sales records for my district. Soon, my employer saw my accomplishments and gave me awards for distinction.

Then, I began to climb in rank. In less than 18 months with the company, I managed its #1 Region. I directed 5 district managers and 40 territory salesmen. Only one level of management stood between the National Sales Manager and me.

But, I will never forget one spring night in 1972. I had worked that day with one of my territory salesmen in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

When I finished supper, I called my wife, Diane, on the phone from my motel room. She recounted to me the latest steps of growth of our two young daughters, Julie and Jeanine.

As we conversed, God recalled to me Mark 8:36:

*"For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"*

Those words rushed through my mind. I did not need salvation that night. I had satisfied that question as a boy. I had traded the quality of life with my wife and daughters for worldly success.

The success gurus I had copied failed to disclose that sad consequence. They spoke only in terms of fame and fortune. Riches and position oiled the wheels of life. Money and well being came to those who tried, they said.

In my haste, I had forgotten that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. I had the world by the tail on a downhill haul. I had neglected my wife and daughters in the process. Our lives together existed only on weekends. My children equated me with the airport. My wife compared it to a circus ride. Weekends became a flurry of activity followed by a week of recovery from its dizziness.

Work filled my time; family fit in when possible. By the world's criteria, I had prosperity and success. Although I had not yet arrived at 30 years of age, I had reached a position many do not gain in a lifetime. I earned more money in annual income than I ever dreamed I would earn.

As a result, I nearly lost that which money cannot buy. That spring night in Ft. Wayne I set in motion the steps that led to my resignation. In faith, I started my own business. I put Christ and His kingdom first as He said, followed by family.

From then on, I expected life to become a bed of roses. It did not. I encountered serious problems that I had not faced previously. My new work was a struggle.

My understanding of Christ and my family flourished. I experienced a well being not dependent on possessions or position.

I discovered that the Bible taught a different slant on success.

#### GOD'S SUCCESS RELIES UPON GOD'S POWER.

The prosperity of God results solely from His power working by the Holy Spirit. Scripture gives us many examples of this truth. You cannot explain the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites on dry sand but by God's power. Exodus 14:21-22 tells us:

*"The Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided, and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground..."*

Nor can you explain the jubilation at Jericho in any other vein. The children of Israel had marched around Jericho once a day for six days. On the seventh day, they marched around it seven times.

When they circled the city the seventh time, Joshua commanded the pilgrims in Joshua 6:16:

*"Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city."*

As they roared, the walls of Jericho fell to the ground. God had given them these orders, and they obeyed them entirely. Victory came to Israel that day through the power of God.

In 4 different situations, Daniel saw the evidence of God's power in his life. Daniel experienced poverty and plenty and experienced the prosperity of God regardless of his circumstances. God's power brought success to Daniel.

### **The Power Of God Gives Us Privilege With Man.**

God gave him privilege with man. He had just arrived in Babylon as a helpless, homeless captive from Jerusalem. He had fallen into the hands of the enemy. They meant it for evil, but God turned it for good.

For, according to Daniel 1:9:

*“God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.”*

Daniel's superior respected him and granted him permission to eat a diet that harmonized with God's law rather than the king's diet. Daniel experienced the truth of Proverbs 16:7:

*“When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”*

As a result, Daniel delighted in the blessing of God's prosperity.

Not everyone gets applauded according to his character. Reputation flees without cause. Without assistance, merit progresses unhurried or perhaps, not at all. Sometimes it only lies in our dreams.

The profit we think we make for ourselves actually comes from God. Favor comes from God. His Spirit prospers us with friend and foe.

### **God's Power Gives Us Proficiency.**

God made Daniel proficient beyond his training and education. In Daniel 1:17-20:

*“God gave (Daniel) knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”*

At the end of his training, Daniel went in to the king for an interview. When the king had completed his interrogation, he pronounced Daniel ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in the whole realm. Daniel had expertise beyond the ordinary, which came from God.

Often, we credit our training and experience for our accomplishments in life. We forget that the Father gives us all that we have. He separates one above another. He makes one to differ from another.

Paul proclaimed in 1 Corinthians 4:7:

*“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”*

God's success depends upon Christ to work the unexplainable in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will, as we make our lives available to Him.

### **God's Power Can Put Us In Prominent Positions.**

God raised Daniel to prominent positions. Chance played no role in it, nor was it produced by opportunity. God elevated him.

King Nebuchadnezzar made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon. He also elevated him to chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel sat in the counsel chambers of the king.

When Nebuchadnezzar died, his son, Belshazzar became ruler. During his reign, Daniel became the third ruler in the kingdom.

Darius succeeded Belshazzar and Cyrus the Persian succeeded Darius. In both kingdoms, Daniel rose in power. They set him over the whole realm.

In every instance, God empowered Daniel to interpret dreams and perform deeds beyond the scope of human abilities. As a result, Daniel ascended in power.

He knew the truth of Psalms 75:6- 7:

*“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”*

Prestige often brings conceit. We come to believe that we have earned it or deserve it. God's success sometimes includes acclaim and acknowledgment. We must remember that if it comes, it comes from God.

### **God's Power Brings Protection.**

God granted protection for Daniel. In Daniel 6, he faced difficulties that only the power of God could overcome. In the palace, God protected him from the pressures of his position.

As second in command to the king, he governed the nation. Daniel daily faced decisions affecting the king and the kingdom. He resolved problems and settled disputes. Yet, God enabled Daniel to govern without cause for blame.

Those in leadership positions encounter unique pressures. Questions arise which need immediate answers. Sometimes, problems bring mystery and personnel management often creates factions. Planning for an unknown future confuses them.

King David knew the pressures of leadership, too. He, too, found in God a refuge in time of need.

In Psalms 32:7, he declared:

*“Thou art my hiding place; Thou dost pre-serve me from trouble; Thou dost surround me with songs of deliverance.”*

If God places you in leadership, you, like Daniel and David, can find security in Him. His Spirit will counsel, comfort, and strengthen you.

In addition, Daniel suffered prejudice from those who worked for him. As native Babylonians, they thought they should have gotten his position.

More than that, Daniel, an alien and a Hebrew, ruled over them. Their jealousy and competitive spirit drove them to find a cause that would get him removed.

When his enemies searched for an accusation against him, they found none. The eyes of envy looked in vain. By God's power, Daniel overcame prejudice with prudent and wise behavior.

He knew the truth of Psalms 18:48:

*“He delivers me from my enemies; surely Thou dost lift me above those who rise up against me; Thou dost rescue me from the violent man.”*

When our enemies assault us, we, too, can enjoy God's protection.

Daniel also met a test on the practice of his faith. His enemies found no fault in Daniel's administration over the kingdom. So, they persuaded the king to cast into a lion's den anyone who prayed to any god or man other than the king.

But, even when tested, Daniel still worshipped the God of Israel, the True and Living God. He had discovered that God had never failed him. God deserved his worship. According to Daniel 6:10:

*“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”*

Daniel never bowed his knee to the gods of Babylon. He remained true to God and openly worshipped Him fearlessly.

When Daniel prayed at his appointed time, his enemies observed him and reported it to the king. As a result, Daniel's enemies got him thrown into the den of lions.

But, he saw God prosper him by closing the mouths of the lions. Daniel believed God, and God closed the mouths of the lions. An entire kingdom trembled before God. And Daniel prospered.

We, too, can trust God to deliver us from the evil lion pursuing us. God declared in 1 Peter 5:8:

*“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*

Satan preys upon the believer through evil thoughts, temptations and acts. As an angler lures the quarry to the bait, so Satan tempts the Christian.

In Matthew 6:13, Christ teaches us to pray to the Father for our protection:

*“Deliver us from the evil one.”*

Furthermore, Christ prayed for our protection. In John 17:15, He said to the Father:

*“I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.”*

We have security in Christ. Remember the promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13:

*“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*

The prosperity of God results from His power in our lives. Those accomplishments gained by self-effort glorify only ourselves. As we allow Christ to function in our lives through the Holy Spirit, He gives us favor with friend and foe. His supernatural power invigorates our gifts and talents beyond their human levels.

Then, He places us in the position where He can best utilize them. His hand keeps us. Peter reminds us in 2 Peter 1:3 that through Christ’s divine power, He has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

The success that God brings into our lives has no other explanation than that “God did it.” It results as we allow Christ through the Holy Spirit to unleash the power of God in us.

**Biblical Law #3: God’s prosperity in our lives comes from the power of God.**

## Chapter Four

### **Pray Like It All Depends Upon You.**

During the time when Victoria ruled as the Queen of England, she received an invitation to Sheffield for the ceremonial opening of the gates to the Town Hall of Sheffield.

As she went, the Queen carried in her hand a golden key. She was told she had only to insert the golden key into its proper keyhole and turn it. Thereon, the gates of the Town Hall of Sheffield would fly open.

Obedient to the one who instructed her on how to open the gates, Queen Victoria inserted the golden key into its keyhole and turned it.

In that moment, by the action of electricity, the Town Hall gates of Sheffield flew open.

In the same way, Jesus Christ knows something. He knows what opens heaven's gates. We can go a step further. He enables us to believe that the golden key of prayer, if we use it, will open the gates of heaven. (5)

We have available to us the golden key of prayer. However, we seldom use it to open the gates of heaven. Sadly, days pass without praise to God or bringing our needs to a faithful Father. We breathe a word of thanks at mealtime. We profess to pray throughout the day by "mentally conversing with God by the attitude of our hearts."

We should meditate upon God and His word throughout the day. But, time for effectual, fervent, private prayer seldom fits into our busy schedules.

Further, we demean prayer by making it a last resort. "If you cannot do anything else, at least you can pray," we say. Or we declare, "All I can do is pray." How sad that we make prayer the refuge of the last resort.

Furthermore, to act like everything depends upon you demeans prayer and the God Who answers prayer. It implies equality between prayer and our actions.

In effect, such an attitude deifies mankind and humanizes God. It robs God of His sovereignty. A more correct statement would say, pray like it all depends upon God, because it does.

### PRAYER HOLDS THE KEY TO GOD'S SUCCESS

Prayer holds the key to God's success in our lives. The Bible abounds with examples of this truth. In Genesis 24, we find prosperity and prayer linked together in the successful journey of Abraham's servant to find a wife for Isaac.

Nehemiah longed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls. In Nehemiah 1:11, he prayed to God:

*“O Lord, I beseech Thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant, and to the prayer of Thy servants, who desire to fear Thy name: and prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”*

God heard and answered Nehemiah’s prayer, and he returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt its walls. Prayer was the key to God’s prosperity in Nehemiah’s life.

Daniel believed in prayer, too. It became an essential part of his life. He prayed, not as a last resort, but as a first priority. And he tasted the full prosperity of God.

Daniel’s example speaks to our need to *“...come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* (6) In Daniel 2, we find the first recorded prayer of Daniel.

### **We Need To Pray For Wisdom.**

Daniel prayed for wisdom concerning his pathway. King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a troubling dream. He woke up, however, before it concluded and he forgot it.

So, the king called all of his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers to come and show him his dream and its meaning. But, they failed.

Frustrated and furious, the king ordered the slaughter of all of Babylon’s wise men. When Daniel learned of the order, he questioned Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, about the king’s decree. When Daniel heard the king’s plan, he pleaded with the king for time to determine the interpretation of the dream.

After meeting with the king, Daniel went home and called a prayer meeting with his companions. He faced a difficult dilemma, but he knew the value of prayer.

In Daniel 2:18, he and his companions prayed:

*“(They) desire(d) mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”*

They asked for wisdom from God for Daniel, and God gave it to him. During the night, God revealed to Daniel the secret of the king’s dream in a vision. Daniel believed God and found wisdom from Him.

A growing uncertainty about the future often troubles us. Confusion and uncertainty dog our footsteps. In spite of this, we can obtain wisdom from God for our pathway through prayer.

We read God’s promise in James 1:5:

*“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”*

God has our welfare in mind. He hears our prayers and gives us wisdom freely. He clears the fog of confusion from our minds, and by His Spirit gives generous wisdom to those who ask in faith.

### **Our Prayers Should Include Praise To God.**

Daniel's prayers included praise to God. God gave to Daniel the dream and its interpretation. Daniel praised and extolled the name of God. In fact, Scripture devoted more explanation to Daniel's praise than to his petition.

Too often, we discount the importance of our praise and worship of the Father. We fill our mouths with arguments advocating our appeals before God. We seldom adore Him.

We repeat the mistake of the Samaritan lepers whom Christ healed. Like those ungrateful lepers, we go on our way without honoring the One Who hears and answers our prayers. (7)

Our prayers should always include praise to God. He deserves glory and honor as the All-Sufficient One. He calls us to enjoy Him. Through praise, we sense His presence in our lives. The pleasure of His presence overflows into spontaneous celebration. Praise completes our enjoyment of God.

### **We Should Pray In a Private Place.**

Daniel found a private place to commune with God. He did not settle for a grab bag prayer life. He went to a specific place to pray and to praise God. In Daniel 6:10, it says:

*“He went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God...”*

Daniel set a certain place and a specific time for prayer and it helped him to establish the habit of prayer.

Jesus often left the crowds and departed alone to a private place to pray. In fact, Christ taught us the value of private prayer. According to Matthew 6:6, He taught:

*“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”*

Most Christians seldom take the time for private prayer. We pray while doing something else. Rarely does our schedule include time alone with God. The clamor and clatter of life drowns out the still, small voice of God.

We can only hear it in the quiet of the closet. Private prayer brings public provision.

### **We Need To Pray Persistently.**

Daniel also prayed persistently. In Daniel 6:10, it says he went to his chamber to pray as he often did. Devotion to the private place became a pattern in his life. He communed with God regularly and faithfully.

When teaching on prayer, Christ says in Matthew 7:7-11:

*“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”*

The Scriptures urge the child of God to ask, seek, knock, and persist in prayer. It reveals in James 4:2:

*“Ye have not because ye ask not.”*

Prayer, alone with God, brings the riches of heaven into our lives.

### **Prayer should accept God’s Pardon For Sin.**

Daniel prayed for pardon. In Daniel 9, we read that he humbled himself and confessed his sin and that of his nation against God. God heard Daniel, responded to his cry, and forgave him.

Unconfessed sin in our lives closes the gates of heaven. In Psalm 66:18 it says:

*“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”*

God promised in 1 John 1:9:

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

A few years ago, a business trip took me through Indianapolis, Indiana. While waiting for my plane, I stopped at a store in the airport. They had on display an electric toy car that ran through an obstacle course.

As it ran its route, it stopped running because its power ceased. Its battery needed recharging. This fine toy had to wait for its propelling power to make it work.

This story remarkably pictures the life of the Christian. As that toy car cannot run without power, neither can we carry through to completion the will of God without the power of God. The power to accomplish the will of God comes as we wait for it in daily prayer.

Truly, as Alfred Lord Tennyson said:

*“More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.”*

Prayer is an indispensable function in God's idea of success. God hears our private pleas and rewards us openly. Praise to God bursts forth from our hearts for His goodness. Persistent, daily prayer is the key to success God's way.

**Biblical Law #4: Persistent daily prayer leads to God's success.**

## Chapter Five

### What's In It For Me?

Christopher Morley said:

*“There is only one success, to be able to spend your life in your own way.”*

Others have paraphrased it with the popular phrase, “Do your own thing.”

When it comes to success, that viewpoint enjoys great popularity. It says, “Look out for number one.” “Build it our way.” We evaluate options and opportunities in life by asking, “What’s in it for me?”

To add to the confusion, it brings apparent advantages. Possessions and prestige become ours. Our net worth increases. The good life brings many pleasures. We soak up the attention of our friends like a sponge.

Though our possessions increase, they do not satisfy our unquenchable thirst for more. It’s like a mirage—what we think we see is not what we get. Emptiness permeates our lives.

This kind of prosperity brings nothing but vanity and void. We can build a measure of success like this without God. Or, we can submit to God’s end and purpose for our lives.

Daniel faced these two choices. He found himself a captive in a foreign land. He could walk the way of the world, and who would have blamed him? Why fight city hall? Why not give in to the pressures of the world? What difference does it make?

Or, he could walk in obedience to God and His word. That path could mean rejection. It could also bring poverty and death.

God says that true prosperity springs from obedience to Him and His word. Then and only then would he experience the success that God gives.

Daniel refused to walk the way of the world. Instead, he chose to obey God and His word. As a young prisoner of war, he faced the temptation of the king’s table.

The king offered Daniel a portion of his meat and drink. But, he gave it to Daniel after he had sacrificed it to his idols. Eating that food, which included many foods forbidden to the Hebrews in the Law, would have caused Daniel to disobey God’s word.

He had to choose between the advice and counsel of the world to follow pagan practice or to obey God’s word. Daniel remembered God’s commands not to eat the forbidden foods or foods offered to idols. We read in Daniel 1:8:

*“Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”*

As a result, Daniel experienced the prosperity of God in his life.

We Christians, too, can know the prosperity of God in our lives. We must first follow the example of Daniel and obey God and His word.

### WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

“What’s in it for me,” you may ask, “if I choose to follow the counsel of God?” Happily, God’s word tells us what we can expect.

In Psalm 1, we find a description of the believer whom God calls successful. It says:

*“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.”*

*“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”*

*“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”*

In God’s eyes, the successful man bends his will to the commands, instruction, and teaching of God as revealed in the Bible. The Psalmist likens a prosperous man to a tree. This example illustrates God’s prosperity.

### **God’s Prosperity Brings Poise.**

Godly prosperity produces poise. Poise is stability under stress. It keeps its balance between opposing forces. It keeps calm under pressure. During the storms of life, a tree stands firm. Daniel’s life demonstrates it.

He resisted at least 5 storms in his life. In Daniel 1:8, he encountered the dilemma of the king’s diet. On two occasions, he faced the distress of Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams. The drawings on the wall in Daniel 5 challenged him. Finally, in Daniel 6, he defied the decree of Darius and landed in the den of lions.

Through each storm, Daniel remained calm. Unperturbed, he rejected the king’s food. Calmly he interpreted the dreams of the king. He firmly and confidently explained the writing on the wall. Finally, when thrown into the lion’s den, he did not bat an eye. He stood peacefully.

Christ provides poise in the midst of the storms of our lives. He stills the rolling sea and replaces our sorrow with joy. Through Christ, faith dispels doubt, and hope for eternity supersedes our fear of death. In Colossians 3:15 Paul reminds us to let the peace of God rule our hearts.

When the storms of life beat against us, we will remain steadfast and settled. Its winds will not sweep us aside like chaff. We will have the stability we need when we obey God's word. God's prosperity brings poise.

### **God's Prosperity Provides The Prerequisites.**

In addition, God supplies the essentials of life. The Psalmist compares us to a tree, planted, not in the desert, but by streams of water. Rivulets of water flow beside it. That tree has an unending source of supply for its needs.

Daniel experienced the provision of God in his life. When he needed physical strength, he received it from God. At the king's demand for interpretations from him, Daniel found wisdom from God. Though danger stalked his life, he stood secure.

Scripture reminds us in 2 Peter 1:3 that Christ provides all that we need for life and Godliness. He satisfies life's daily necessities. We have His promise.

Greater than that, Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to live a Godly life. He prospers us in our physical and spiritual deficiencies.

### **God's Prosperity Enables Production.**

God assures production. The tree bears fruit. The life within the tree manifests itself and produces fruit. Daniel's life demonstrated such spiritual fruit.

His life proclaimed the virtue and nature of God. The Babylonians saw in him a visible expression of God's invisible power at work in his life.

Christ teaches that very truth in the parable of the vine and the branches in John 15. You cannot tie the fruit on the tree. As we allow Christ to express Himself through us by the Holy Spirit, we bear fruit. Our lives show evidence of His Life present within us.

Finally, we have prosperity and success God's style. We accomplish God's end and purpose for us. We flourish when we bend our will to the precepts, instruction and teaching of God's word.

We can know the same success today that Daniel knew so many years ago. God does not limit His prosperity to positions of prominence. He can make us thrive even though we may be nameless exiles. We can triumph in the lion's den or savor success as the counselor to a king. We can prosper in poverty or plenty. It begins with the decision to bend to the word of God.

"What's in it for me?" you ask. Delight yourself in His word Meditate upon it. Obey it as Daniel did. Then you, too, will begin to discover success in your life...God's style.

**Biblical Law #5: The successful man in God's eyes bends his will to the commands, instruction and teaching of God's word.**

## Chapter Six

### Which Road Will You Travel?

Robert Frost wrote one of my favorite poems, “The Road Not Taken.” In it, the poet described a time when he had to make a difficult decision between two options. Both roads attracted him.

But finally, the poet chose the one less traveled. He stated that his choice made all the difference in his life. (8)

You and I face a choice today and everyday. This world tempts us to follow its pattern and adopt its lifestyle. We especially feel this pressure in the matter of success. We can either embrace the example of the world, or obey God’s word.

Daniel faced choices similar to yours and mine. Every time, he chose to follow the living God. When tempted to trust in the training and education of Babylon, he remembered the truth of Proverbs 9:10:

*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”*

Daniel chose to obey God’s word. When cornered to conform to the lifestyle of the sophisticated, Daniel prayed. Then Babylon saw a man adorned with an excellent spirit.

When tested in the ordeal of the lion’s den, he trusted God for the miraculous. He walked out of it untouched, and an entire nation worshipped God.

Daniel worshipped God in prominence and in obscurity, in plenty and in poverty. Neither comfort nor affliction distracted him from daily communion and fellowship with God. As a result, he knew the prosperity of God in his life.

In the example of the life of Daniel, God sets before us a picture of the way of life and the way of death. Proverbs 16:25 warns us:

*“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*

We need to choose Jesus Christ Who declared that He is life so that we may enjoy the prosperity of God. Genuine prosperity depends upon adjustment to the ends and purposes that God has for us. He makes us flourish regardless of our circumstances.

As we make our lives available to the life of Jesus Christ, His Spirit brings to us prosperity beyond anything we could imagine.

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