

WHY GOD WANTS YOU TO SUCCEED IN LIFE

Success in life, finances, marriage, family, ministry and in all areas of your life is God's perfect will for you. You will enter into it when you seek success in the way of the kingdom of God.

“Dear friend, I am praying that everything prosper with you and that you be in good health, as I know you are prospering spiritually.”

3 John 2 CJB

Preface

When we read the bible we see stories of people who experienced successes in their various ventures as they followed the Lord's leading. The bible also records a number of people who failed woefully in the plan of God for their lives because they shifted their focus from the Lord's ways, and gave attention to the natural inclinations of their hearts.

Knowing that the Almighty God has sent Jesus Christ to become the sacrifice for the salvation of the world is one thing to note, and that anyone who puts their faith in his finished works of grace is saved eternally. After this, you have to determine whether you have put your own faith in his finished works and your life is being transformed as a result. If this is not yet ascertained, please do it now. Otherwise you may never truly understand anything written here in this book, kindly turn to the last page and do that now.

When you have accepted the Christ into your heart, you need to keep knowing that God has saved you by His grace through faith in Christ Jesus, and not because you know how to do anything good or that is of moral credit; it is all because in God's love Jesus agreed to die on behalf of human beings, so that you who believe it might have the right to become a child of God, and possessing eternal life in your spirit as you live here on earth. Clearly seeing the purpose of God for saving and transforming your life in order to fit into His perfect will is the next thing to give attention to. Every good thing that God gave Jesus is also accessible to the saints today. Jesus informed his followers that if they believe they would do the things that he did, and they will be able to do much more than he did. This makes success an inevitable expectation from God concerning His children as they get involved in the affairs of the world, though they are not of the world, yet they must bring identifiable taste (like salt does) in all they do. All what they need to become outstanding and become the shining lights in this dark world are already made available. Following Christ Jesus and learning of him daily would bring them into the experience of it.

But the first question to ask is, "*Did Jesus succeed in life, in everything he did?*" The most probable answer will be 'Yes! The next question will be "*Does God want you who follow Jesus Christ to succeed as well?*" if yes, then "**How did he succeed?**" Finding out how is what has led to the writing of this short epistle. Every believer ought to know the truth about God's will for their success in life, and learn the correct way(s) to experience it, just as Jesus Christ and other of his followers have succeeded.

**Akeji ThankGod E.
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PART ONE

What is success?

To the world:

The world's primary definition of success is all about how much an individual, a group of people or a nation has accomplished, whether through legal or illegal means, without caring much about the soul's destiny afterwards. The world's definition is all about what is celebrated by the populace, what meets up with the public opinion. It is all about physical wealth (money and materials) and fame, a prestigious position in the society and one's envious social status. It refers only to how much fans and praise singers one has amassed overtime as a result of roles played in the society or in a particular group, whether religious or irreligious. In the world's context, even a pagan (idol worshipper) can be successful if he has much connection for making money; if he has power, influence, prominence, fame, knowledge etc.

According to God and His Word:

The word used to describe success in the scriptures is *'tsaleach'*. It defines both *'success'*, *'prosperity'* and sometimes, to be *'victorious'*. The word generally expresses the idea of any successful venture, as contrasted with failure. Its first use was in Genesis 24:21, where it means *'to succeed'* or *'to prosper'*, Abraham's servant, after praying unto the God of heaven watched her (Rebecca) *...closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful*. The source of this kind of success is God. It has been beautifully established in scriptures that success in God's sight is viewed as *'divine helping hand'* in the affairs of a man, a group of people or a nation. Failure on the other hand means the absence of God's helping hand in one's affair. As a result of the hand of God actively at work, several blessings and positive effects of divine ability can be seen physically. In many cases, God's help in an affair produces physical wealth (both material and finances). It produces fame and increases relationships with several people of great prominence on earth. When God gives one His success, the individual, group or nation experiences all manner of favour from different places, both of familiar and quite unfamiliar sources. But the common sign of such God-ordained success will be that it is void of any selfish condition(s) as aftermath.

Biblical success could also be interpreted as *'victory'*. In Psalm 45:4, David, most probably referring like in a prophecy about the coming Jesus Christ in the New Testament, wrote, *"In your majesty, ride out to victory..."*. God's definition of success

and prosperity is connected to eternal 'victory' in life. Victory comes to one who has engaged in a war or struggle and emerges winner. In a previous verse of the same chapter, he describes the recipient of his psalm as one whom God himself has blessed forever (v2). This means, God's success often results as eternal blessing to anyone. The central focus of God's purpose for helping anyone succeed is for such to experience eternal life afterward. Every work that God chose to do in order for His people to succeed in life has always been connected, with how to introduce eternal life to them. Eternal victory is the reason God helps anyone to succeed. He cannot help one to have a kind of success that takes the person away from His safe hands; His divine supports are to the end that one's soul is saved eternally. God gives only a success that keeps an individual within the reach of eternal life. What will separate you from Him in eternity is not success to Him. The kind of divine help that will make one become victorious at the end of his journey in life is what He gives.

So you may be planning to venture through a course, and you are seriously prayer and probably fasting about it right now, but remember that God is the end of it all. Before you ever present your plans to Him in prayers, He knew it. He knows the end will be for you. And He is going to say a big Yes to your plans, if it is His will. But if that particular course will steal your soul away eventually, then you will not be found a victorious person in His sight; He will debunk your ideas. Sometimes He will even introduce something else that would have preferred for you, so that your soul might be saved in the end. Success is found in whatever will save your soul eternally.

As a Christian, God's definition of success should be the same to us. Jesus Christ was greatly successful, both as a one-time carpenter and also as a preacher in his days. He was both a healing evangelist as much as he was preacher of the kingdom life; he proclaimed the full concept of the kingdom of God. He did not have all the money that a young carpenter in his days could have, and he did not gather all the money and material goods that preachers could amass, unlike in our days, but he lived and died a fulfilled success.

If you and I must serve God correctly in life, we need to give a careful attention to how Jesus Christ lived his life, and how he succeeded. Whatever you will become in life ought to be that which the Father has ordained you for, that is the first thing to establish in your heart. You can choose to commit your heart to pursuing a selfish dream, passion, ambition, or aspiration and eventually make it in your own sight and in the sight of others. But a wise Christian youth will first of all determine what God's will really is and seek knowledge on how to get right into it.

So many individuals (fathers, mothers, preachers etc.) have already made the mistake of following the words of confused motivational speakers, and followed the wrong paths. Most of them are wishing they could become young again, so as to repair the various cracks that have occurred in the walls of their lives, but it is too late. They will remain with the scars of their early life's mistakes till death. God will forgive them, but the scars and pains associated with such mistakes will remain on them until the grave opens up to receive them.

A lot of them choose to follow their friends while in secondary schools, and got it wrong, some eventually studied the wrong course in tertiary institution and later got to realize how far they have one with their mistakes. Several who married eventually hooked with an individual that should never have crossed their paths in life and they are wishing they never even had feelings of affection in life, for that person. Some people's lives were cut short because, what they thought about success in life was only a mirage compared the plans heaven really planned for them.

If you do not choose the correct definition of success for your life now, you might tread the same path without ever knowing it. Because, several young men and ladies are also already making similar mistakes relating to this reality, and it is already working against them. Jump out of their wagon now, and commit your heart to following the Lord Jesus, how he lived and how he made it.

So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. John 5:19-20

Paul admonishes the church that the same mind which was in Christ should be the same mind which should be in the heart of the Christians (Philip. 2:5), in every matter of life. If you will choose to follow the Lord's way today, you will rejoice at the choice you make to succeed in Christ, by the way he leads you.

PART TWO

God really wants you to Succeed

Living below the standard of life God set when he called you is an aberration of his faithful plan for you. Today, arise and refuse to accept or settle for anything that is less than God has in mind for you and your loved ones and all that concerns your life here on earth. Your new life in Christ should enjoy God's provisions for your success, both in your finances, your marriage, your immediate family, your ministry and in all things that pertains to life and godliness. In full wisdom of the Spirit's power, Jesus lived such a beautiful life displaying the excellencies of the Father and of the kingdom life. He showed forth the praises of God (1 Pet. 2:9). Peter makes Christians know themselves and their positions in Christ better when he said, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. When a Christian performs excellently in all he does, God is praised. When a Christian lives above mediocrity God is glorified in the midst of the earth; it shows the world that He is at work in the lives of His children on earth.

The Almighty rules the heavens, but he has given the earth to the children of men to bring under control (Psalm 115:16). The church is given the power of positive dominion, in every sphere of human endeavor. That is why Jesus commands his disciples to go into the midst of human beings wherever they are found and disciple them, using his teachings to transform them by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God really wants you to succeed in all that you do. But your success should be in that which He makes you willing and able to do (Philip. 2:13). That is, you are successful if he is the one who through His Spirit stirs you up into do a thing, and who does it through you, so that none will ever glorify in the flesh. He is so jealous for His glory. Therefore, if there is ever a thing you have acquired by the arms of flesh, such must be denied so that He might bring you into the kind of success he plans for you, in order for all glory to be accrued unto Him. He is not ashamed to bear the glory in all things, because He is the beginning of all things and to Him must all flesh come (Psalm 65:2).

You need know God to personally to Succeed

Are you a student of the bible? When God commissioned Joshua to take off from Moses, He told him, "And don't for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind. Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written

in it. Then you'll get where you're going; then you'll succeed. Josh. 1:8 (MESSAGE). That is the heart with which you should relate with the scriptures. You are to take your steps only when you are sure you have seen it confirmed in the scriptures. It is faster and more accurate to hear the Lord's voice over any issue, however confusing it may be, when you approach it with all humility using the word of God. Praying becomes more correct and mature when prayer issues are drawn out of divine revelations received from the scriptures. A man like Ezra devoted his whole times to learning God's will for Israel from the scriptures (Ezra 7:10). King Solomon in Proverbs 3:6 teaches that a youth who desires to live a satisfying life for many years must chose to seek God's will in all he does, because He will always show them which path to take. This is why success in life is first and foremost the perfect will of God for all who follow Him.

As for Joshua, the book that contains the laws of God must remain his closest acquaintance, to be reckoned with both in the day and also at night. Doing this was to make him to become familiar with God's kingdom principles for having a good success on earth. Unless you devote your attention to carefully searching out the will of God daily, by meditating on the scriptures you read or listen to, succeeding God's way will be difficult. What the world calls success is not what God calls success. You need to do engage God through the Holy Scriptures day and night to be sure you are still in His will.

Any youth who journeys in life using the word of God, just as the Urim and Thummim was used by the priests of Israel to carefully find out what exactly the will of God for them could be for a particular situation, such a Christian youth can be sure of succeeding all the way, in everything he/she does. Your success will be regarded as God's own success, because the kingdom of God will be glorified upon the earth, following your achievements in God's divine ability. *(The Hebrew text "urim and thummim, were two small objects" which may have been made of wood, stone, or metal, and were used in some way to receive answers from God Ex. 28:30; 28:30)*

Deliberately and consciously creating an atmosphere for God to help you is possible when you engage His word daily. God will not say no to your prayers when you pray His word back to Him, try it. The word of God contains the will of God. It is the sword of the Spirit for the battles of life that lies against your success. When you lay hold of a particular word of revelation, faith can then be built in your spirit man, through that word (Rom. 10:17) which will strengthen your chances of receiving the success you seek. Every creation in the universe exists because God's word was used to command them into existence, and even now, they hear the word of the Lord (Gen. 1:3; John 1:1-

5). Many times Jesus had to speak in order to alter a natural occurrence for the good of man, according to the will of God.

The Word of God is the Weapon for your Success

As you pursue success in life, running with the scriptures in your spirit is running with the sword of the Spirit to enable you combat and cut off all the doubts and the fears (wiles of the Devil) that are shot at you. This is because the word of God produces faith, which Paul helps us to know that, it is our shield in the Christian race. "...we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, *put on every piece of God's armor* so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, *hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil*. Put on salvation as your helmet, and *take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Eph. 6:12-18. The word of God is the basis and the foundation of all truths.

It is the power house of all armors. Every other thing depends on truth to operate accurately. Grace and truth came when Jesus Christ also came; he is the word of God made flesh (John 1:14). If you have no good knowledge of the word of God then you might find yourself using a particular spiritual weapon for the wrong purpose or in the wrong place. This is because the word of God is the manual to keep studying before ever trying to apply the various weapons in our faith walk with God. Poor understanding of its content is why several believers are misusing and misapplying God's provisions for their successes. Insufficient availability of divine revelation, divine understanding and divine wisdom in a one's spirit is why many believers today feel so complacent and at ease, living below the poverty line; settling for a condition that is far less than God has planned for their lives, families, finances, academics, jobs, businesses and ministries. Today, rise up against the mountain of failure that stands against your life. Begin to engage the word of God, and patiently search out what His perfect will for your life has always been. You must rise up today from mediocrity and stand upon your watchtower like Habakkuk, to hear from the Lord, what He has to say concerning the current situation and position of your life, family, marriage job, business, academics and ministry etc.

Meditation – A major tool for your Success

To meditate means to ponder. It has to do with one's ability to imagine, to think upon something of importance. It is one of the major elements of a fruitful study lifestyle. Those who meditate what they read or hear eventually become more intelligent in that course. Naturally, meditation is necessary to get one to the root of any matter that is taken to heart.

Meditation of the word of God creates a route for one's spirit man to access the very depth and essence of the true spiritual idea, purpose, power and meaning behind a particular scriptural verse. Most Christians today remain unfruitful in the word of God because they do not know the importance of spending all the time possible before God and His word.

Researchers and Students who think upon some facts more usually become outstanding and produce more accurate solutions to problems that are set before them. These days, the Devil has devised many complicated devices and sponsored them into the eyes and minds of the youths. They find it a really disturbing idea to sit still [in absolute surrender and quietness] before the Lord and the Bible verse(s) for even an hour, that's really bad. A lot of Christian youths have become noisy in their spirits just as the world is so noisy. The matters of life has so filled their minds and made their hearts so blunt and dull to the ways of the Spirit, they do not even feel His hand at work in their lives. Hustling and working so hard to make some money has turned many of them into the dumping sights of the world's crazy ideologies and concepts. The way of succeeding in the world negates the ways of the kingdom completely. The one-time youths on fire, whom the world knew as youths for Christ have joined the wagon of worldliness and lukewarm spirituality in the world.

Youths for Christ must retrace their paths to the cross. The world is being designed to make you not to have time for the things of the Spirit, but never you forget that you are not of the world, and you shall not live according to the standards laid out be the people of the world. Do not be conformed to the world and its ways. We are in constant war against these standards which the prince of this world keeps laying out for those who sign up to love the world and the things in it (Romans 12:1-2).

A believer of Christ, who will not see the necessity of humbly sitting before him and his word daily, to think about some verse, cannot think of being fruitful spiritually. Such will never go far in knowing God and His mind; in fact, God's ways will be hidden and sometimes appear like a parable or an encoded stuff before such a Christian. Through

patience, imaginations help to build more patience in a man. Meditatively creating some possible pictorial concepts on a meaning brought to heart by the Holy Spirit, over some scriptural portions create depth in one's ability to understand, uncover and capture spiritual truths easily. It strengthens one's ability to capture the exact meaning, or a near accurate meaning, the purpose and the essence of God for inspiring such a scriptural portion.

Studying and meditating on the word of God, day and night is a major factor that determines why God will bless a man, and cause him to succeed in all he does. It is in God's design that you study and meditate upon His revelations to you. That is one major reason why God will be so pleased to grant you good success in *everything you do*. Meditating on scriptures helps to keep certain portions of it warm in your heart. The performance of scriptural promises in a believer's life is enhanced by it.

Meditation - The Power behind Good Success

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but **you shall meditate in it day and night**, 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 will have good success.** Josh 1:8-9 NKJV*

Meditation enhances understanding of the truth to be obeyed. The power of obedience is released during meditation. A larger percentage of Christians who do not obey the word of God that they receive are those who do not meditate it. Hearts that meditate are like rich and fertile soil to a crop; every spiritual seed that drops on them are most likely to germinate. The ability to obey comes when one meditates. The grace to believe God is released during meditation. The wisdom to act on a revealed word comes during meditations. The exact meanings in the mind of the Lord, who inspired the bible portions, are more easily known to the reader. The receivers and writers of divine revelations might have had some limitations in human language and the grammar to accurately express the revelations that the Holy Spirit was spelling out to them. But creating quality quiet moments to study the text, to ponder upon, mourn over, think about and imagine what the Spirit really sought to say to readers will open up the very heart of God unto anyone. Please meditate, its blessings are numerous. For some people, they meditate by writing down their thoughts, some just mutter it out and some walk about just to take their time to glean the meanings behind the scriptures.

As a mother hen sits on her already laid eggs for a couple of weeks before hatching, so is it necessary that you learn to meditate on the word of God, deeply and daily each

time you are with him, otherwise the word will never settle in your heart, and you will not bear the fruit that the word is meant to produce. The ripening of a revealed word of God in you is catalyzed by your quality of meditation. How concentrated, how long and how frequent you ponder on scriptural verses revealed unto you by the Holy Spirit is a great requirement to becoming successful in life, as a child of God.

Prompt obedience to God's word

Do you obey the word of God?

Obedying the word of God revealed to one's spirit is a major reason why God will bless one's work and grant success in life. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will *be sure to obey* everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. Josh. 1:8. Obedience in this text simply means to obey; to observe and attend to what has been made known. As for Joshua and as it is God's word unto us today as well, it is only when one meditates on the word of God that is being revealed day and night, and *obeys* everything written in it that the person will prosper and succeed in all that is done (See Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

"If you **fully obey** the Lord your God and carefully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the world. **You will experience all these blessings if you obey the Lord your God:** Your towns and your fields will be blessed.

Your children and your crops will be blessed. The offspring of your herds and flocks will be blessed. Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be blessed. **Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be blessed.**

"The Lord will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven!

"The Lord will guarantee a blessing on everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

"If you obey the commands of the Lord your God and walk in his ways, the Lord will establish you as his holy people as he swore he would do. Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the Lord, and they will stand in awe of you.

"The Lord will give you prosperity in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you,

blessing you with many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops. The Lord will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens and will bless all the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them. **If you listen to these commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today, and if you carefully obey them, the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always be on top and never at the bottom.** You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today, nor follow after other gods and worship them. *(The emphases were only added to point out key notes).*

The Lord truly is indeed committed to seeing you succeed in everything you do, so that His fame will expand, and that the knowledge of His glory might spread over the earth like the waters of the sea.

Have you kissed Compromise Goodbye?

Do you please God?

This is what God said about David: 'David, the son of Jesse, is the kind of person who does what pleases me. He will do everything I want him to do.' Acts 13:22

Is your pursuit all about how to please God in a world of sin and compromise? Have you fully determined, like Daniel not to get yourself defiled by partaking in the food of the prince of this world? Until you are done with the heart that compromises God's standard, God will not begin with you in your journey to success as a young believer. It is not only being in the right location (as man judges) that determines a person's success in life. Good success depends on one's personality in Christ. When a man's life pleases the Lord, God makes the person succeed. Pleasing God with your life issues an automatic access into the realm of success in all that you do.

But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. Dan. 1:8

This resolution must be present in your heart as a young man and young woman. The world is a like a war zone. Every day the devil continues to introduce all manner of schemes for his children – the perishing and worldly at heart. He makes his ways appear flashy and expressive, because he wants to win over the heart of the saints to his kingdom. But like Paul said, we are familiar with his schemes (2 Cor. 2:11). You must not go the way of Balaam, the worldly path no matter how much you are enticed by what you see and hear. You must not embrace the various shortcuts to success scattered in every corner of the society just to make it in life, it is only the shortcut to destruction

that puts on the garment of light, be wise. Psalm 1 is a psalm for every serious Christian who wants to remain victorious in life.

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

Every offer of success from the world system and from worldly connections is a big trap and a snare to your journey of faith, be wise. Daniel knew that the food of the Babylonians would bring defilement to him so he determined not to eat it. He preferred to go hungry in order to stay clean spiritually. He preferred something that is of lower quality in the sight of men because he must preserve his sanctity and his relationship with God. We live in a world and in a generation where several so-called Christians perform like the worldly people do, when they feel nobody who knows about their religious identity is around. But they fail to remember that God is watching from heaven. Please do not become such. Joseph, Daniel and even his three friends maintained their Christian identity in their lands of captivity, where their faith in God's word should have been most questioned, had they failed to stand for their God. They kept their faith in God intact. They preferred to die – Shedrach, Meshach and Abednego preferred to be burnt alive (Daniel 3), and Daniel choose to be eaten by the hungry lions (Daniel 6), just because they loved and feared God, and would not choose to disgrace Him because of pressures from human beings.

Do nothing out of pressure

Today, following all manner of excuses, several youths have preferred to disgrace the Lord's name, because of the same worldly pressures which came upon Daniel and his friends. A lot of parents regret their youthful actions of compromising because of the pressures mounted on them by the society and even the church. Many believing young girls were forced to get married to unbelievers because they were often mocked at their increasing age in singlehood. Some were pushed into it because their parents felt they could no longer cater for their needs and needed to hand them over to any man that can do so. What the *irresponsibility* of some parents have caused their children is terrible. But as a young person in Christ, who has been born of God do not allow ordinary mortals who do not know your tomorrow to push you out of the will of God simply because

they feel they are tired of your status or condition. Do not become an object of pity, to be offered gifts of sympathy. It makes it look like God is not faithful to someone He created in His love. But God is faithful even to the unfaithful (2 Tim 2:13).

The great decline in the moral standard of the academic world must not influence your decision as a believer. That your school or place of learning does not prepare you well for the necessary school-leaving certificate examination(s), such as WAEC, NECO, NABTEB, GCE etc. is no reason to cut corners by paying some bribes to be assisted. No matter what name they are called, sin is sin before God. All needed helps should come in a legally defined and morally accepted manner unto God and the government policy, either before any examination or as morally accepted by the government overseeing the examination. Warnings and instructions such as 'Shun/Avoid all manner of Examination Malpractices' are often associated with national examinations. It is not a void truth in others alike. Do not use your own hand to destroy the foundation of your life, especially in your academics. The devil prowls around to see the young ones that he can shut their mouth forever through sins done at one's foundation, please do not be a prey or a victim. Daniel had to plead with their caretaker to be allowed to please God by doing His will in the midst of what God considered sin, and God granted him such favour with the man. And if you also remember to often ask the Lord for a way through the valley of [spiritual] death, I am sure He will also do it for you, he has done it for me and many others as well.

Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. Whether you like it or not, the prince of this world will certainly offer you his kind of food in this time of your youth, in order to defile you and to make you unfit for the use of the king of heaven, but you must reject it. You can choose not eat unacceptable food also. Whatever satisfies your desire here on earth, be it edible or inedible, but is condemned by God's word and standard, such must also be condemned by you. You must be holy just as God your Father is holy. You need to succeed in your academic pursuit, but be ready to do it through God's way only.

Satan is always attacking the foundation of things. He attacks the foundation of one's academics at youthful age; he also attacks the foundations of one's marriage, especially during the stage of courtship. A lot of youths, [brothers and sisters alike] who are in courtship are forced to engage in all manner of attitudes that are condemned by the word of God in this period of their relationship. The world system is not to set the standard for you on how you must begin a journey in search of a spouse. The

information about marriage, courtship, dating etc. that are being broadcasted and watched on the internet, in the television, read in books and magazines, but are not rooted in the scriptures must be completely discarded, and your mind must be set upon the word and the will of God only. Your thoughts must be constantly renewed and your hearts completely transformed so that you will always easily identify what is God's good, acceptable and perfect will for you, in your choice for marriage and also in your attitude during courtship (Rom. 12:2). God's name must be honored and His word often remembered and reckoned with in all things. Always remember His glory and praise so as to do what will glorify and bring Him praises in the assembly of the saints. You need to succeed in marriage, but be ready to do it in God's way only.

Satan attacks youths in the area of money a lot. Although there exists a million ways to make money here on earth, but there are no million ways with God, only one. It is Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The path that will glorify Him is the acceptable way. You need to succeed in your finances as well, but be ready to do it in God's way only.

See the warnings below:

For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. 1 Tim. 6:10

Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?" Heb. 13:5-6

'Making Money anyway possible' is a dangerous concept for the heart of a believer. Paul has made it clear that to be godly and be satisfied with what you have is a great gain.

Craving for the good things of this world is an endless pursuit. King Solomon regards it as 'vanity upon vanity' (Eccl. 1:2). Money in itself is not a bad thing just as food is not, but the selfish and ambitious attachment of one's heart to it must be censored, otherwise one may have fallen into the pit of idolatry and covetousness before every knowing it. God really does want you to succeed in your finances and experience financial freedom in life, but you need to stay close to His heart daily for you to really come into knowledge of what He has empowered you to do, in order for you to enjoy the kind of financial freedom He has already created for you in Christ Jesus. The psalmist said, 'the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack anything.' (Psalm 23:1), and this

is just it. It is Him whom leads you to the still waters and makes you lie down in a place where green pastures are. He does so, that you may have your needs met in peace and while your heart is completely at rest. What you will need is not always very far away from the place He has located you or asked you to stay. He may only have to open your eyes, like He did for Hagar, to see the well of provisions dwelling beside you. God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the [empty] bottle with water and caused the youth to drink. Gen 21:19 AMP.

Providing for you is His choice pleasure. Let your appetite agree with His daily provisions and be thankful. The Lord loves youths whose appetites have been disciplined like that of Daniel and his friends; that even when they were provided with rich meal, they could say no. At another time, Daniel, as a high government official could even still fast. Try and discipline your appetite.

A successful youth is one who has taken full charge of his desires and is completely in controls his appetite, keeping it disciplined under God's mighty hand, to be satisfied with the provisions of heaven per time, with a thankful heart. You don't just want clothing and go for them; God guides you into getting them when you have need of them.

Love not the world

God on a daily basis is working out the paths for your success; and you must trust Him to finish it. Hear what the Holy Spirit said through one of Jesus' closest disciples - John, the beloved: "Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever." 1 John 2:15-17. *If you can, read it again and again.*

It is a command, "Do not love this world nor the things in the world which it offers you." Check your heart very well. Many young people love the world and yet ask the Lord to grant them success in the world. It is not possible to love this world and still love the God. It will be difficult to love the world and ask God to bless you with the things of the world or to grant you worldly success, when you have exchanged love for Him with your love for the world and its substances. But if you must be in the world and succeed in everything you do in the world without ever loving it, then you must be dead to the world. Are you now dead to the world?

You cannot serve two masters; you have to be dead to the world and become unfaithful to what he desires from you, so that you can be fully committed to God, the other master. The world is a master to many people. For such, they would do all that their unchanged heart tells them to do. They could use all manner of compromises, and styles, and connections, and relationships (with saints and sinners alike) to break even in this world. Such people would do all things possible in their power to have a name and to make a mark in their own days. But when they are gone, nothing spiritually and eternally valuable can be ever traced to their works. That is not God's plan for your success. But the others loved God and waits for Him to lead them daily, taking one step at a time, according to His leading because these are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14). God Himself is committed to leading them until their path shines into dawn. These people have lost interest in the world and have fixed their attention and heart towards heaven in all that they do. All the competition that are in the world have become dead to them, and they live only to fulfill the will of God for keeping them alive. Their success in this world is simply, how they might accomplish the purpose of the Father for saving them and for keeping them alive.

And Paul said, "As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died." Gal 6:14-15

God is always watching the heart of men. A man with proud heart wants to prove a point about everything. He wants to show the world that he did something, but God does not work with such a heart. If He must lead that kind of a person into success, He must finish the man. God would first break the proud heart out of such a man before proceeding with him, otherwise he would rob God of His due glory. Paul said he would boast only about what Christ has done in his life as a result of his death at the cross, which equals Paul's death too. He said, because of that cross (that he died with Christ), his interest in the world has been crucified (died) and the world's interest in him too has been crucified (died). The man whom God grants success by divine hand is not interested in the world anymore, no matter how colourful the worldly things are prepared and displayed before his eyes, except for the salvation of the lost souls in it.

By the way he lives his life (as one whose natural inclinations) have been deadened through faith in Christ Jesus, he shows his lack of interest in being worldly and materialistic, and the world too will appear so to him. The worldly people would not want to have anything considered worldly to do with such a man, he would be cut away from it, but that is what pleases God. Therefore, if the Lord must succeed in you,

then you must be completely dead to the world, your interest dead, and your cravings for worldly methods must be crucified, then you can be considered by heaven for an uplifting that brings God the glory, right where you are.

There are divinely designated seasons for each child of God to bear their own fruits - success in life, success in your finances, success in your marriage, success in your business, success in your job, and success in the ministry God has put in your hands etc. Waiting on God by abiding patiently in the path of the righteous will surely bring you to your own season of success.

PART THREE

Is the Lord with you?

All the men whom the Lord worked with in the scriptures succeeded in the task He laid before them because the Lord was actively involved in the things He asked them to do. Do not try to seek God's success in a particular course which you know that God is not pleased with you about. Like David, God Himself testified that David was the kind of man He loved and was pleased with (Acts 13:22). He said that David was a man who did everything God wanted him to do. Therefore, your daily pursuit should be how to walk in God's acceptable path for you over a matter. One can be zealous and yet doing the wrong things when the knowledge of the will of God is not available. See your success only in that which God's word has revealed unto you to be the good, acceptable and perfect will of God for your life, marriage, business, finances, job and ministry. Under the New Testament, Jesus Christ has assured his followers that he is with them till the world ends. And as they engage in the things he is leading them into, they will see his presence at work (Matthew 28:20).

The Lord was with Moses, the Lord was with Joshua and they both succeeded through the path which God laid before them. The Lord was with David. He was with Jesus Christ and his disciples too. The Lord was also with Joseph. Let us take a deeper look at what God's being with a man like Joseph could result into.

Joseph, the son of Jacob

Joseph was carried off into Egypt by Ishmaelites (a Gentile nation) and sold out to Potiphar, an Egyptian and a senior officer to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. More than twice did Joseph passed through the valley of spiritual death, yet remained faithful to the God of his father; he remained with the faith of his father and stayed on it till his star brightened. Even in the hands of pagans his heart remained with the Lord his God, and pleasing God in all his ways was his daily concern regardless of the things he went through. Compromise was never an option for Joseph however wickedly they might have treated him, as he was being moved here and there as a slave (like an ordinary property). What makes a man valuable unto God is not his environment, but the firmness of the person's heart, to keep faith with the Lord's ways no matter the pressure that comes his ways.

"The Lord was with Joseph" was the sentence that opened verse two. Let's consider it briefly, to identify how God's presence made him to succeed.

When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. “The Lord was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master's household and property, the Lord began to bless Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!” Gen. 39:1-6

I do not know which task God might have told Joseph to do, or which one his master told him to do, or that he himself saw the need to do, but in all that he did [which was right in God's eyes] *he obviously succeeded*. He dwelt in a hub of success all through that time in Egypt. And it can also happen to you today. Joseph represented God well; he showed clearly that a Christian in the world can succeed without compromising the standard of the Lord of heaven. He proved to the Egyptians that there was really a God greater in might and greatly to be feared among other gods; he is the God of the gods (if any actually existed).

The Lord was with Joseph...

It is God's presence with a man that makes the difference in a competitive world like ours. Power controls and influences every environment, what should or should not happen. Joseph succeeded only because the Lord was with him. Is the Lord with you, even now? Do you hear from the Lord, and does he speak to you on every matter of your life? Does he talk with you every day? The young man - Joseph must have been informed by the Lord through his close relationship with him that he would be sent to a pagan nation as '*missionary*'. God must have assured his heart through dream or vision that he would suffer as slave to some pagan masters; his heart must have been prepared ahead through his depth of intimacy with the Lord. But it is not only the Lord was not just with Joseph, but that Joseph's heart was truly and sincerely with the Lord his God. God dwells with a man who has cleaned his vessel (heart) and prepared it for His indwelling glory (see 2 Tim. 2:20-22): In a large house there are things made of gold and silver. But there are also things made of wood and clay. Some of these are used for special purposes, others for ordinary jobs. The Lord wants to use you for special

purposes, so make yourself clean from all evil thoughts and actions, then you will be holy, and the Master can use you. You will be ready for any good work. Stay away from the evil things a young person like you typically wants to do. Do your best to live right and to have faith, love, and peace, together with others who trust in the Lord with pure hearts. ESV

The Living Bible puts it this way,

In a wealthy home there are dishes made of gold and silver as well as some made from wood and clay. The expensive dishes are used for guests, and the cheap ones are used in the kitchen or to put garbage in. If you stay away from sin you will be like one of these dishes made of purest gold—the very best in the house—so that Christ himself can use you for his highest purposes. Run from anything that gives you the evil thoughts that young men often have, but stay close to anything that makes you want to do right. Have faith and love, and enjoy the companionship of those who love the Lord and have pure hearts.

If you clean your heart then the Lord's presence can stay with you natively through all that you do, and you can also go up to him at every moment of the day (see Psalm 15:1-5). Lord, who can live in your Holy Tent? Who can live on your holy mountain? *Only those who live pure lives, do what is right, and speak the truth from their hearts.* Such people don't say bad things about others. They don't do things to hurt their neighbors. They don't tell shameful things about those close to them. They hate those who fail to please God and honor those who respect the Lord. If they make a promise to their neighbor, they do what they promised. If they loan money to someone, they do not charge them interest. ESV

When the Lord is pleased to be with any man, then it must be because the man practically lives a life considered as pure before God. It must be because the things he thinks about are not anything besides Paul's admonition to the Christians in Philippians. Hear what he said, "And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. Phil 4:8-9. When a young believer and all Christians alike decides to close his heart against any other thought that negates the principles of the word of God and the expectations of the kingdom of God, where we all belong, God indeed has promised that He will really dwell with such a brother or sister.

God was with Joseph and proved his presence there. Joseph did not need to build a temple there to bring God, because bringing him (Joseph) was bringing into Egypt the God that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob served.

In fact, He did not need to write to be given a special space to build or hold meetings, the hosts of heaven met within him and the life he lived on the outside (in Potiphar's villa) was God's ways revealed to Egypt through him. Joseph did really fix his heart on the ways of the kingdom of God, which was the lifestyle he had learned from Jacob, and heard about of his fathers (Abraham and Isaac) concerning God Jehovah. He fixed his thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. He thought about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Joseph kept putting into practice all he learned and received from God through his fathers—everything he heard from them and saw them doing. He must have concentrated on filling his mind and meditating on things that are right and excellent enough to be publicized. His life on the outside was obviously the expression of his thought life, as a man thinks in his heart so is he (Proverbs 23:7); he was obviously the product of his thought life. That was the reason God dwelt with Joseph in Egypt and proved to a pagan officer that He (God) was in Egypt and at work in Egypt because a man like Joseph was there. The young teenager was the carrier of God everywhere he went in Egypt, and remained so until his death there.

Now as a Christian youth, if there is one major aspect of your life God really wants you to handle perfectly, so as to create an enabling environment for Him to also dwell with you every day, it is your heart. A father advised his son saying, "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." Prov. 4:23

But to do so we must determine what enters the heart. Because it is what you feed your mind with that influences your thought and you're the actions that follow. You need to guard all the gateways to your heart carefully using faith [as the shield] and the word of God [as sword of the Spirit]. Do so to continually overcome all the evil thoughts which Satan sponsors into your heart subtly. Like Paul told Timothy, he warned him thus, "Run from anything that gives you the evil thoughts that young men often have, but stay close to anything that makes you want to do right. Have faith and love, and enjoy the companionship of those who love the Lord and have pure hearts." 2 Tim 2:22 TLB

The admonition is balanced, in that he said, run away from whatever encourages evil thoughts (lusts) of all kinds and stay close (in conscious pursuit) to whatever can help you think about the right things. Bring around yourself people and things that will help to build up your faith in God. Relate closely with people and activities that will keep

you in the right path every day in all things. Learn about true love and do things that help you grow in it. And get involved only in acts that live you with peace in your mind. You deserve peace! This is what Jesus told his disciples, he said, "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. John 14:27. That means the world does not have anything that bears the fruit of peace in the mind of a child of God, peace (of mind) is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. And if you must have it produced in your heart always then all you do must be all the Spirit of God directs you to do [which is always within the context of God's word, correctly understood]. We are not of the world, but of Christ's kingdom above. Christians do not have to look for real peace anywhere else in the world; real peace, the kind Jesus lived with is found in God. Deliberately pursue it by resolving to stay within the word and will of God, without compromises every day, in all things, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Determine to do all these along with other Christians who think like yourself. Enjoy their company, and prefer to be with them than with any other group that is anti-Christ in their ways.

Now flee from youthful lusts; stay away from the evil things a young person like you typically wants to do; run from temptations that capture young people. Always do the right thing; run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

...so he succeeded in everything he did...

To be precise and straightforward, Joseph succeeded in everything he did. Read that heading again, the young boy succeeded in everything he did. He most probably was not found a destroyer of his master's stuffs. He supervised excellently. To be a bit theological, what was meant by success, which the writer means to express, can be said this way. In Egypt, because God was working in and through Joseph, he broke out positively (against the limit of the other Egyptians working there before and after he came); Joseph become mighty in presenting his excellent results; he was good; he was a help meet for Potiphar; he was defined a profitable personality; and his life and activities in Potiphar's house produced the effect called *prosperity* in all that belonged to Potiphar both at home and on the farm. All what Potiphar, the great captain of Pharaoh's guards and his family called prosperity was far exceeded and overcome by the productivity of one of the children of the God of heaven, Joseph; they were probably mesmerized by his excellent ways of doing things plus the increase that the family of Potiphar became to enjoy. This situation could be likened to what increase the man Obed-Edom began to enjoy because he agreed to become the host of the ark that carried the presence and the glory of the Almighty God (2 Sam. 6:10-12).

What could 'he succeeded in all he did' also mean?

The Lord was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master's household and property, the Lord began to bless Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing – except what kind of food to eat! Gen 39:2-6

Since Potiphar saw the effect of Joseph's presence, he made the boy his personal assistant, he put Joseph in charge of his entire household (as administrator of both finance-related and non-finance-related stuffs, manager of other family entertainment stuffs aside food, director of other slaves and their activities, who comes in and who goes out etc.). Joseph probably had access to every room in Potiphar's apartment. He determined the lifestyle of Potiphar's children and had power to curb any excesses found among the other servants and other extended family members that may be in his master's care. It means Joseph was also the manager of Potiphar's farm, and in control of the crops and livestock.

Potiphar gave Joseph the right hand of leadership over people and property in his house because he judged all Joseph did to be the correct and the most excellent way. In fact, no matter what any other Egyptian did to impress him, he took Joseph's report as the authentic (blueprint).

Joseph was in charge of all repairs that needed to be done and when he delegated roles he watched them being carried out to perfection before giving any reports to his master. He could discipline Potiphar's children and servants alike for gross misbehaviors. God really placed Joseph high, because he carried God's active presence into his assignment as a servant of an unbelieving master. He did not mistreat.

In all he did, he remembered that God brought him there. He was in high favour with his master and could recommend things that were not; he could even introduce the ways of the Lord Almighty right there and establish it as the correct way to do anything, he was that powerful.

Joseph was in dominion for God. This is the way God wants to showcase His sons and

daughters in every sphere of human endeavors. This is why God still locates his children wherever he wants.

Once he sees your obedient lifestyle the next to be expected is that He might move you into an environment, work or business that is full of darkness, and the ways of the Devil is prevalent. He does so in order for you to dominate right there.

Wherever you are right now, dominating in that environment (however unique it may be) is God's purpose for posting you right there, do not seek to be taken away until, like Joseph, you have brought His respect and glory there.

As a Christian, one who believes in Jesus Christ, the resurrection life has its power actively at work deep within you, it should be directed towards soul winning. Because God is in just one business daily (which is bringing back people to Himself), believers whom he has helped and filled with His Spirit are the arrows He would send into the midst of His enemies. When salt enters food or anything, it changes the taste and preserves the fresh stuff. If it is put in a good amount, it expected effect is more quickly and better experienced, it never changes its form, no matter the condition of the substance for which it is applied. In the same way, every true child of God is the salt of the earth. The Lord places us among people who needs the service of God's power and the resurrection at work in us to come back to life, unto God spiritually, and to be permanently reconnected to the Almighty one. Believers are the connecting rods.

...as he served in the home of his Egyptian master...

God's major concern is not where you work, even though one must be sure it is by His divine leading that a step or decision is taken. The thing on his mind is 'knowing who you are in Christ and living yourself according to your divine identity.'

Although working in the house of a pagan, as slave, he had little or no say in that house at first because they could brutalize or even kill him. But he humbled himself. He was sure of his innocence before God, and so entrusted himself unto God's saving might, he endured and enjoyed the fellowship of sufferings he went through, for God sake in Egypt. Believers should not shy away from fellowshiping with God's chosen sufferings for them, because in that would his glory shine forth through them. After the fellowship of sufferings and Joseph was found by heaven to have maintained his love and trust in God, he was blessed.

Your success is tied to your faithfulness to God in the things you suffer for following the path God choses for you, and the course God is leading you through. God leads his

children to lie down in green pastures to graze in the midst of abundance, and he leads to the still waters, all so they can enjoy his rest and peace while he is still providing for them. He renews their strength, and leads them in the paths that are right in His sight for the honour of His name. The Lord also leads his flock through the valley of the shadow of death. When he leads them through what He considers as the right paths, it may bring the flock some sufferings, which they should gladly bear, and it also brings great pleasure. God wants his children to maintain the state of peace and rest when passing through the valleys of the shadow of death just as when they lie down in green pastures and drink from the still waters. Paul testified that he learnt to abound with abundance and to be abased with little supplies (Philip. 4:12-14).

Success for a true child of God is not in how much one accumulates per time with hope to lack nothing physical anymore, but that the ability to see God's grace and love, even when one is in the midst of the valley of death. Like Joseph, he kept seeing his dreams of God's good will coming to pass in his life while in Egypt. The situation of slavery did not make him to put his eyes away from the things that God had shown him through revelation. Today our revelation comes from the word of God (which embodies his will for us in all things), and through dreams, visions, word of knowledge, prophetic utterances etc.

Therefore, wherever you are, you can succeed if you have the presence of God at work in you. God's plan is for every believer to succeed in this and in every way. You should succeed in the will of God, fulfilling His call upon your, in your marriage, in your finances, in the business or job you do. Whether you work in the church or in a secular organization, you must succeed to prove the God you truly follow/

Joseph went into Egypt with absolutely nothing to ever boast about, that could have made him succeed, and he only went with God. If you remember the previous chapters, he had been really hated by his brothers and was sold out to the Ishmaelite traders heading for Egypt. But before he was sold out, they had stripped him of the last cloth (that of many colours) he had on him, and had no chance to enter Egypt with any raiment other than the covering on his waist down, to at least keep his nakedness away.

Joseph was denied any chance to carry along anything with him, with which he would at least do business or some money-generating scheme. The young teenager had no opportunity to leave Dothan with any certificate of education or of a skill acquired while home. He entered the land of Egypt without money, clothing, bag or shoes. He went down to Egypt without any letter or word of recommendation from his father or the king of the land they dwelt. There was nothing like a referral statement to link him

to somebody in Egypt who would welcome him into a home; he had no idea what kind of a family he would stay with, or what kind of master he would have over him as his boss, he was just going as a bond slave, ready to be exploited, misused and probably to face whatever life challenge awaited him. He needed just one thing.

He was no thinking of how to get there and start a great new life, that kind of opportunity appeared in his heart to be so bleak. It was as if his life was ending, and it indeed ended; the former kind of life he had lived in Canaan with his family. The young boy who would become the governor of Egypt in about decade later entered into Egypt without any family member, extra food, extra money (at hand or in the bank). It appeared that his dreams were about being shattered. All he had thought would work together, while in his father's house to help bring about his dream was no longer reachable or seeming attainable. But in God's design for his life, unless he left Canaan God's word meant for the success of his life would never come to pass. Whatsoever thing he thought he could at least lean upon in order to become somebody great amidst his brothers, all faded away in a moment, and it seemed he was approaching the end of his life and dreams for life, but God was just beginning. He needed just one thing to become the product of his dreams.

It is good to establish here that, the things he never went into Egypt with were probably not the most essential factors of success in life for him. He would not need them. Although he would have them later, but they were not included in the things God would use to bring him up to the limelight where God's glory over his life would shine forth. He needed just one thing.

Before the purpose of God for his life would come to pass in the next years, he had to be completely separated from all he had been familiar with for about seventeen years since he was born a boy. He lost his father, mother, and his only brother - Benjamin. He lost his step brothers and his only step sister, Dinah. He lost the company of the servants in the house and his peer group. He was almost like the apple of Jacob's eye, because of Jacob's love for Rachel, his late wife who bore Joseph and Benjamin. He lost the special attention of a prince of the house, as far as Jacob was concerned. He lost legal opportunities to eat daily as much as he wanted whatever he wanted to it; God allowed all to be taken away from him.

He was denied legal right to ever have a beautiful life, and was soon rendered dead and forgotten to both his father and all other family member.

Joseph was dead and forgotten to his family. Nobody ever thought about him for good

anymore. All about him had ended on earth as far as his immediate family, friends in Canaan and all who knew him were concerned about, Joseph was no more. And to him, he had lost everything, but just one thing remained with him which was never lost to him.

PART FOUR

God was not lost

In all his lost and disfavours experienced, there was one thing left with Joseph, apart from his breath which was the reason he lived and succeeded in a Egypt there was one major factor that remained the spark of his fires while in Egypt the Lord was with Joseph and caused everything he did to succeed (Gen. 39:23). There was just one thing which Joseph needed to become a successful man in life in a foreign land; there was just one thing which the young man did not lose as he was forcefully sent out of his comfortable abode, even though he lost all others. Joseph lost all but kept God closer. The farther he was from his father's house, the closer he drew to the Lord's house. He knew he would become a complete mess if laid God aside because of the tragic events that launched out against him. He knew he would become a complete shattered dream himself, if he forgot God back in Canaan, where he met Him. He knew that all he ever had and all the things he ever did back home, in Canaan which made him to be so loved by his father were given him unto him by God. He remembered that it was God who gave him the power to have a prosperous heart, so enriched with the spirit of leadership for the future (as his dreams prophesied). Having lost all that eyes could see, he kept his intimate personal relationship with God alive. All is not lost until God is lost in the heart of any man. As long as the Lord could still talk with him and he could hear God and also talk back to God he would succeed. In fact, this was the only reason for his success in Egypt; it was the proof that God was still with him.

Is God with you? Is God still with you? Are you planning to lay the God-factor away from your life now, or later in life? It was because Joseph lost all but kept God that he succeeded in all that he did in a foreign land. God stayed with him through the valley of death's shadow and kept him close. He wants to do the same with all young people. Joseph had made God his closest confidant and for that reason, even when he was no more with the many bogus and physical factors that so many people hold on to so tightly today, he still succeeded.

Loss of self-life: Where God begins!

As for Joseph, he had committed his life to seeking God and his kingdom and doing what is right. And as a result God added unto him all and more than he lost. You can lose the world and never lose God, but if you lose God, that will be the end for you, no matter how much of the worldly things you may gather in life. It was at zero level that Joseph made to the top, and it can happen to you, I mean you reading this now. God

wants you to succeed in life in every good course that glorifies him. But God will begin with you when you have lost yourself. It was clear to God that Joseph's life and heart was not attached to the things he owned which eyes could see. That was why losing them did not end his life. He was heart-broken and humbled by the loss of those things, yet not for losing God; he never lost touch with God. Joseph was made to submit to God's conditions. Even though it looked like a forceful event, yet it was the Lord whom he so loved and followed that was at work, making him deny himself and everything in life he ever owned. If God must lift any man by himself, he will first of all remove every foundational factor that has no trace to his works. God must remove the things and the victories attained by the self-life before building up any man he would bring into success, into a height where his glory would be seen upon him.

As he was teaching his disciples, Jesus taught them several times about denying themselves and all that relates to their human nature before they could follow him (Luke 9:23). Before Abraham could receive the fulfillment of the things God began to say unto him, he had to leave his father's house and all that concerned his ancestral descent. God would never want any power or attribute of man to compete with the works he does. Every victory in life that one may not attach to be because of the finished works of Christ on the cross is a potential timed-bomb waiting to explode and destroy the believer, the work of God and the church on earth. So before the Lord will begin any work of building a person's life so that success will be reckoned with the individual, he will patiently concentrate on the person's foundations, how he might destroy every founding stone or material that has no trace with the works Christ finished for humanity. This may not happen in a day, but as one yields unto him, God will succeed. Because God has to succeed with dealing with his children's foundation, and be known to gain full control before lifting begins. "Therefore humble yourselves [demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation] under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you." 1 Peter 5:6 AMP.

Every man wants to do their own things naturally as their heart desires, but God seeks to take full charge of his children, and to be the only one whose work and glory would be seen. God was constantly dwelling with Joseph because Joseph was constantly denying himself. If you will also allow the Lord to rule over your mindset, desires and all you ever want to pursue in life, which might be different from his design for your life, then he will. He will break off those things away from you which will potentially stand against his glory in your life, and then introduce the works that have all their links directed to him alone.

Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow. Others you must build up and plant." Jer. 1:10. This is his way. When you appoint him the chance to help you succeed in life, he will begin to uproot and tear down things he did not plant in your life, he will destroy and overthrow whatsoever he has not built in you. This he will begin the moment you say yes. And when he is done clearing away every faulty foundation, then he will begin to build a new one and to plant the new seeds that will enable the new creation life to be seen, still at work in you when you succeed.

Your success must be founded upon Christ and his finished works. It begins from you denying yourself, and embracing the temporal pains and sufferings attached to self-denial [which is required for all pilgrims] who are actively following the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives' journeys. And as a young person, if you will indeed testify to the great congregation of the glories of the Lord upon your life and of how much success you have recorded in life in everything you will ever do, then I present to you the ultimate conditions for God's kind of success upon your life. At the end, it will really be God who has succeeded in you. So the success is not yours but God's. A dead man can no longer succeed. God wants to take glory for whatever good will happen to you in life, like he was fully represented and highly glorified in Joseph's life and success, which was through the excellent performance of the Spirit of God working in a man that had to deny everything to be in God's perfect plan for his life.

PART FIVE

The Hope of Glory in Suffering

Joseph's success was tied to sufferings; he partook in the fellowship of sufferings just as Christ has offered to those who follow him today. Whoever must follow Jesus Christ in the way he leads should prepare for some measures of sufferings. These sufferings are the troubles associated with the carrying of one's cross daily, while denying one's self and following after the master. God has mandated that you will surely succeed in the path he has chosen out for you in life, but you have to quit your natural plans and aspirations if they do not align with the chosen path, and embrace God's path. By the time you are embracing God's path you will also embracing both the blessings of the glory and also of the sufferings which produces the glorious effects in your success, as a true Christian wherever you are.

Do not consider it strange when after committing your ways unto the Lord to guide you into success in life, family and ministry, you also begin to experience some forms of troubles. He said, I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. *Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.* But take heart, because I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Unless a ripe orange fruit is squeezed, the juice cannot be made from it. In the same way, young believers are like ripe oranges. It is the Lord's awesome will to get glory from every event that occurs in their lives. If you must become a carrier of the glory of God in a great dimension, then you must also resolve to become a faithful carrier of your own cross which you must carry due to your faith in Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23).

A lot of young people don't want to get mocked or laughed at by their contemporaries and so they reject they cross. They don't want the pains associated with following the Lord Jesus in his way but they cry to him to let them carry his power and grace to the ends of the earth. Many of them do not like to embrace the conditions of the 'narrow path' but want to get into heaven. A lot were journeying through the narrow way, but at some points became discouraged, not seeing many of their peers journeying the strange and peculiar route. You don't have to be discouraged. Jesus lost over 5,000 followers immediately he announced the conditions of the narrow path for them too. He was left with twelve men but was not despaired, in fact he asked whether the remaining few would also like to go away because of the hardships in following, but thanks to God they remained. In a few more years, the ones who remained were powerfully anointed and became the major pioneers of the gospel in the New

Testament. Through them the knowledge of the glory of God has become known throughout the world. It is our own turn to do our own part in this same course.

Suffering as heirs

And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Rom. 8:17

If it is established in your heart that success [for a true believer] is tied to the path which God has chosen for him, then understanding becomes better. It is interesting to know that being a child of God is a great privilege. You are God's son living among ordinary mortals. But your rights and privileges as God's son remain intact, only if you know how to maximize them for His glory on earth. Like Jesus Christ, regardless of your gender, you have an inheritance in God because you are a child of God. But the condition is that as you follow the Lord Jesus here on earth, you will suffer for righteousness' sake. These sufferings which are associated with self-denial and the carrying of your cross daily will qualify you for receiving your earthly and heavenly inheritances. Paul discloses that "...if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. And that is it. We should ask God for the grace and ability to identify His own kind of sufferings whenever it comes, and joyfully fellowship with it. So that when the enemy brings his own we can resist it.

Again, Paul, the apostle have this to say, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, Philippians 3:10 NIV. It is God's will for every Christian who must testify to have succeeded in life, to be able to say he/she has also fellowshiped with Christ 's kind of sufferings, and become like him in it. Otherwise whatever is called a success will be reckoned worldly. God elevates any Christian to the place of public honour and glory during a life of complete obedience to him. Self-denial, carrying of one's cross and following in the Lord's way at the same time are to be considered in this also. It is not possible to do one and not the rest; they all go along as prices for sharing in the glory of God.

Rejoice when you suffer

Dear friends, don't be surprised or shocked that you are going through testing that is like walking through fire. Be glad for the chance to suffer as Christ suffered. It will prepare you for even greater happiness when he makes his glorious return.

Count it a blessing when you suffer for being a Christian. This shows that God's

glorious Spirit is with you. But you deserve to suffer if you are a murderer, a thief, a crook, or a busybody. Don't be ashamed to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God that you belong to him. 1 Peter 4:12-17 CEV

It was not an easy time for Abram, now Abraham, when he had to pack his family to a destination he no prior knowledge of, but only to follow by faith in a God whom his fathers never knew about. He must have been mocked, laughed at or looked upon with scorn as he made his plans known to his acquaintances at Haran [that is if he actually told them] (Gen. 12:1-9). God promised the seventy-five year old man a successful and prosperous life in the evenings of his life. For us today, he should have begun to prepare for the end of his life here on earth, but God was just beginning with him. Until God's word has come to you to change the course of your life, you have not begun the journey of life in earnest. When you end your natural struggles, God will begin and where you end yours is where God will begin with you. You only need to let him now. It is until you are acting based on the word of God for your life that you should testify to be journeying into success. And unless you are journeying through the path that God's word declared to you, you are journeying nowhere; get back to him and receive a word for your life. As a Christian, your life is a faith walk. If you have defined the exact end of your journey because of someone's counsels which you are following, instead of the Lord's word of faith to you, then you may be journeying on your own, watch out!

See the scriptures below (all emphasis added),

For in this is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith.* Rom. 1:17 Webster

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. 5:7-8NKJV

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and *the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God*, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Gal. 2:20-21 NKJV

Look, any success outside of God's divine instruction is dangerous for you; it may appear bogus and looking like something great to be reckoned with. But if it is not anchored on God's leadership responsibility over your life, watch out, because you might be missing heaven's seal upon it. Success in life is not true just because the society or the church celebrates it, but because as a Christian, you can testify that God through His word on that matter directed you until you got to where you are. Any success that is built upon human strength and worldly wisdom alone has no praise for

God in it; it is a pathway to pride in the arms of flesh. But the one which is anchored on the word and leadership of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14) brings about God's praise and the display of His glorious Excellency. 1 Samuel 2:9 says, God will guard the feet of His saints, But the wicked shall be silent in darkness. "For by strength no man shall prevail. In attempt to encourage the Israelites to stand against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, King Hezekiah said, *"With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.* 2 Chron. 32:8

As we looked at the bible meaning of the word 'success' in part one, we established that godly success is associated with victory in life, both on earth and in eternity. Here we are seeing that no man is designed to succeed or prevail in life by human strength at all. That means, whatever appears to the eyes like victory to someone, but which is not rooted in the divine strength supplied by God into His will, such is not what we are looking for. Heaven has no hand in such flamboyant displays of worldly beauties which will only exist and expire here on earth because it has no connection with eternity – it has not iota of eternal value. God does not reckon or identify with such definition of success.

My friend, you cannot succeed with your natural abilities. All such successes must end at the cross if you seek to have true success in the sight of the Lord.

Joseph made it in every way. It was because God was with the young boy, leading him as He desired. And Joseph also released himself unto the Lord's leading. Although it brought him some troubles, pains, sorrows, tears, and sufferings at different levels, yet denying himself all the way made him qualify in the sight of God to become the governor of the whole Egypt eventually. Only God's leading could have done this. Had he tried to fulfill his own dreams and work it out, he could have perished, or even become one local champion. How could he have thought of such a leadership role and success in life in a foreign land like Egypt! It could have only been by the Lord's help.

End you faithless attempts today and release your heart unto Jesus Christ, so that he may lead you in the way he had prepared for you, long before you were born (Eph. 2:10). It is better He leads you. God owns the world; He is the king of the world. He could decide to order your step into some other foreign nations, where you would bring Him the glory he deserves. Let Him lead you by the hand from today. Allow Him to train you and carry you through the path He has chosen for you to succeed so that you will be bold to praise Him for the works he does in your life. He alone deserves to take the pride in all things, because all things consist in Him. And the bible says that, all

knees must bow to Him and every tongue must confess to Him (Rom. 14:11) that He is Lord.