

How to Succeed Joshua 1:8

I. INTRODUCTION • RR 1:6-9

A. *The Success Industry*

1. The *Success Industry* is a large & lucrative field.
2. It covers everything from self-help books & audio courses to self-improvement seminars & conferences.
3. Some success & motivational speakers have become multi-millionaires thru the fees they charge.
4. They claim if you put their ideas into practice, “You too can succeed!!”
5. Dress for Success – Think & Grow Rich – Success Is A Choice.
6. The slogans are many & clever.
7. But it seems the only ones who are attaining the promised success are the ones pulling down the huge speaking fees & writing the books.

B. *True Success*

1. In our study today, we discover the *true way* to *real* success.
2. This isn't success as the world defines it but as the Creator does.
3. The One Who made us, did so for a reason. And success is finding & fulfilling that reason.
4. Anything else is a distraction from the real calling & purpose of our lives.
5. So, because we're going to be holding *the definitive Success Seminar* here today – we have to ask you to get out your checkbooks & credit cards and ante up the \$750 seminar fee. 😊

II. TEXT

A. *Set the Scene*

1. Moses is gone & Joshua is now the leader of Israel.
2. In just a short time, he'll send out the call for Israel to pack up & move into the Promised Land.
3. The *reality* of the *scope* of lies ahead presses in on him like a crushing weight.

B. *Vs. 1-6*

¹After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun,

Moses' assistant, saying: ²“Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. ³Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. ⁵No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

1. These words give us an insight into what Joshua was thinking about & feeling at this moment;
 - a. he overwhelmed, weak, & timid.
 - b. God would not have told Joshua to be strong & of good courage if he already was.
2. It's not hard to understand why Joshua would have been feeling a tad fearful.
 - a. He was one of the original 12 spies who'd scouted out the Promised Land 40 years before.
 - b. So when God described these boundaries in vs. 3 & 4 he knew this was a vast territory he was being called to conquer.
 - c. And in it were fierce enemies who lived in well equipped fortress-cities.
 - d. But it wasn't the *Canaanites* that posed the biggest challenge to Joshua; it was the people Joshua was supposed to lead **INTO** Canaan that were the problem.
 - e. 40 years before Joshua & his fellows spy & friend, Caleb, had tried to convince Israel God would give them the land *then*.
 - f. But they had *balked & refused* to go up and take possession of that which God was giving them.
 - g. As judgment, they had to wander in the wilderness for the next 38 years until the entire generation of adults died off – all except Joshua & Caleb.

h. Here they are, 40 years later & it's "**Take 2.**" As the crucial moment comes & once again it's time for Israel to enter the Promise,

Joshua wonders; will they obey or balk?

3. In the midst of Joshua's uncertainty, God comes to him with a word of *encouragement*.

a. And I mean that *literally*; God wants to put courage **IN** Joshua when He says in v. 6 . . .

Be strong and of good courage, for to this people YOU shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

b. The Lord promised Joshua his leadership of the nation would succeed; the people would follow.

C. Vs. 7-9

⁷Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

1. God repeated the command to be strong and filled with courage.

2. But notice *where* God wanted Joshua to direct his strength and courage.

a. It wasn't in warfare or battle with the Canaanites as we might expect.

b. It was in holding forth the priority that he & those he lead be a People of the Word of God.

c. Friends, we need to understand that Israel's *real battle* in conquering Canaan was never about defeating the Canaanites, Hittites, & Amorites.

d. It was about conquering *their own unbelief & stubbornness* of heart that resisted God & refused to obey His Word.

e. This is why God directed Joshua's strength & courage *toward* his leadership of the Nation in the things of God,

f. Because Israel's success in conquering Canaan was directly proportional to her obedience to the Lord!

g. It was never about swinging a *metal sword* against Canaanites

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h. It was about using the Sword of the Spirit against the *inner*

- enemy of doubt.
3. God showed them in their *very first* victory in Canaan, at Jericho, that their conquest of the land was not going to come primarily through conventional warfare.
 4. No – it was directly linked to one thing – *obedience* to Him, even when that obedience had no seeming connection to victory over their enemies.
 - a. That’s what the whole marching around Jericho for 7 days was meant to teach the people of God.
 - b. That to defeat the enemy ‘*out there,*’ we must first defeat the unbelief *within* & come to the place of *total dependence* on God.
 5. So He told Joshua that the key to Israel’s conquest of the land was through whole-hearted obedience to the Word of God.
 6. He must be strong & courageous in His leadership of the nation in the things of God – calling them to obedience.

⁸This 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. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

D. The Promise

1. It’s important as we look at this *incredible promise* in v. 8 that we keep it in its context.
2. God is speaking to Joshua in his role as leader of Israel in their conquest of Canaan.
3. And really, what God is doing here is simply *restating* the terms of the covenant He’d made with Israel.
 - a. as we have repeatedly seen, Israel’s side of the covenant was to *obey* the Law of God,
 - b. God’s side was to *bless* them.
4. That is being *repeated* here: If Joshua will abide in the Word & Law of God, using its guidance in all his decisions, then blessing will follow.

5. While that is the primary context & meaning of the promise God makes in v. 8, it's a *principle* that applies to *all* of God's people in *every* age.
6. If we would know *true success*,
 - a. If we want to come to the end of our lives with the *satisfaction* we've *succeeded* in the *purpose* for which we were created,
 - b. Then we must look to the Word of God & make it the basis for our living.

E. The Word

1. David said it well -- when in Psalm 119:105 he wrote –
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
 - a. It's in God's Word we find the wisdom to live because as the Creator He's revealed the truths that *govern the universe*.
 - b. Those who reject God's Word have to live by their own wit, and that is a dim bulb indeed.
 2. Actually, every verse of Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, is David's exaltation of the Word of God.
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3. In v. 9 he says
How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.
 - a. What he means by a 'clean way' is a straight, smooth, safe path through life.
 - b. David pictures a young person who's moving out from under his/her parents' authority into their own life as an adult.
 - c. He's deciding what star he's going to steer his life by, what frame of reference she'll use in making her daily choices.
 - d. The right path, the life that works, is the one whose boundary markers are the Words of God.
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4. In Proverbs 3:5-6, the Teacher of Wisdom shows where wisdom lies.
⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
 5. Where do we find the Lord's counsel? In His Word.
 6. Would you agree that the *Name* of God is holy & exalted?
 - a. So sacred, so special is the Name of God the Jews did not utter it out loud.

- b. Only once a year on the Day of Atonement when the high priest entered into the Holy of holies was God's name spoken.
 - c. When reading the Scripture, whenever they came to the Name of God, they would reverently bow their heads & simply say, "Ha shem; the Name."
 - d. To this day, Orthodox Jews refer to God as 'Ha Shem' & when writing the word 'G-o-d' they replace the 'o' with an underscore [G_d] so that someone reading what they've written won't forget and utter even the generic word for "God."
 - e. Check it out for yourself. Visit any Orthodox Jewish website and you'll see it spelled "G_d".
 - f. that's how sacred & special the Name of God is to the Jews.
7. Bearing this in mind, listen to Psalm 138:2
- You have magnified Your word above ALL Your name.**
- a. I do not possess any words that can do justice to explaining this, so I won't try.
 - b. Let me just repeat it and pray it sinks in as the Spirit presses it home for you.
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F. Faith & Fear

1. My message today is a simple one. Just as Joshua's success was found in abiding in God's Word, so is ours.
2. Notice that in v. 9, for a 3rd time God exhorts Joshua to be strong & courageous.
3. His courage & strength were to be found by abiding in God's Word as vs. 7 & 8 make clear.
4. In himself, Joshua was prone to fear & discouragement. But in the Word was his strength & courage.
5. There is only one way to conquer fear – through faith.
6. And as Romans 10:17 says, faith comes by abiding in God's Word.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

7. Look again at v. 8.

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night,

- a. Note the words 'mouth' & 'meditate.'
- b. Romans 10:17 says faith comes by hearing.
- c. God told Joshua to keep the word in his mouth.

- d. The word meditate here means to “mutter.”
- 8. When you’re reading or praying, does your mind ever wander?
- 9. We find here a great way to stay focused & draw the maximum benefit from our time in the Word –
 - a. read it out loud!
 - b. mutter it as you go through your day.
 - c. now, someone might see you muttering and say, “Hey, what’s a mutter with you?” Just smile and say everything’s fine.
- 10. One of the areas many Christians struggle with is in the realm of their imagination.
 - a. their minds wander during the day or night. They day-dream or fantasize.
 - b. And these imaginations aren’t always the best place for their minds to be dwelling.
 - c. Proverbs 23:7 says that as we think in our hearts, so we are.
 - d. One of the best ways to take our thoughts captive to Christ is to quietly talk to ourselves about the Lord – mulling over the counsel we’ve read out loud in our morning devotions.
- 11. That’s what God told Joshua to do here – to speak to his fears, slaying them with the Word of God.

III. CONCLUSION

A. **Victory!**

- 1. The key to Israel’s victory in Canaan lay not in overcoming the Canaanites.
- 2. Israel’s real battle was *internal*; she had to conquer her own fears which were driven by her doubts about God.
- 3. The key to winning *that battle* was to abide in His Word.

- 4. In the same way, as we stand now in a new year, with new challenges before us & new spiritual territory the Lord wants us to lay claim to,
- 5. The key to victory is not in overcoming the problems, obstacles, & foes *out there*,
- 6. But conquering our own inner doubt & unbelief.
- 7. Faith defeats fear.

B. **Simple**

- 1. My message this morning is a simple one; in fact, it’s one we give often here at CC.

2. Be a man or woman of the Word.
3. Read it. Study it. Live it. Do it.
4. Many people make New Year's resolutions.
 - a. If you haven't settled on one, may I suggest one?
 - b. Read through the Bible this year.
 - c. And every time you pick it up, begin with a prayer that says, "Lord Jesus, use Your Word now to defeat my fears, to answer my doubts, & to make me strong & courageous to press in to all You have for me."