

SUCCEEDING IN LIFE SERIES

RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

If there is success I would call these fourteen verses the key to having a successful life and lies in obeying the will of God. Lets look at Deut.28: 1-14. *Now it shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of your God, to observe carefully all his commandments which I have commands you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you because you obeyed the voice of the Lord your God. Blessed shall you be in the city. And blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herd, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed when you go out. The Lord will cause your enemies to rise against you and to be defeated before your face. They shall come against you one way and flee before you seven ways. The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land He is giving you. The Lord will establish you as His holy people, as He promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity in the fruit of your womb; the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground in the land He swore to our forefathers to give you. The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of His bounty to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head and not the tail. If you pay attention to the command of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. Do not turn away from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following the other gods and serving them.*

We see here in these fourteen verses that God stipulates very clearly the blessedness of being part of His people. *Say it is the will of God for me to prosper, to be in health, to have success in life. It is not God's will that I be in want, that I be in sickness, that I be a failure. But it is the will of God that I be the head and not the tail.* Now here is a passage that talks about success. And the key verses involved are in verse one and in verse fourteen. All the blessings are sandwiched between these two verses. Verse one speaks very clearly and tells us that all these shall come to pass if you were to obey the voice of the Lord your God and to observe carefully all His commandments. In other words you have to follow His commandments and His voice. Following the voice of God speaks about being led by the Spirit. Following His commandments speaks about being conformed and obedient to His words. And verse fourteen reminds us again to observe these commandments which He has commanded us to do.

Now in the Old Testament following the commandments means keeping the moral law, keeping the ordinances, keeping the ceremonial laws and keeping all the various laws of sacrifices. The laws of sacrifices have been done away in Christ. And the moral laws still stand today. And the law of ordinances have been revised and renewed in our days. No matter how many laws are involved, all these laws can be summarized into two commandments. And they are very clearly stated by the Lord Jesus Christ that thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy soul and all thy strength. The second commandment is thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. So when we keep these two commandments, we literally keep all the commandments of God. So if the bible tells us here that keeping the commandments of God brings all the blessings in Deut.28:1-14. Then if the bible tells us that keeping love is keeping the commandment of God. Then when I seek to love God with all my heart, soul and strength and I seek to love my neighbor as myself, it will bring forth the blessings of God. If "A" = "B" and "B" = "C" then "A" = "C" if keeping the commandments of the Lord "A" equals to "B" the blessings of God. And if the commandments of God equal to love, then love equals to the blessings of God. You may not realize it but the blessings of Deut.28: 1-14 depends on the love of God in your life. How much you love God and how much you love your neighbor as yourself.

And this morning I want to emphasize on the third law of success that is right relationship. Rom.13 summarize that all law can be summed up in one word, love.

Love thy neighbor. And loving thy neighbor means loving those around you and loving everyone who comes into the circle of your life. In other words your husband, your wife, your family, your brother, your sisters, your father, your mother, our children and all those who are around you in your circle of life, whom ever you know and whom ever you meet. When you love them you keep the commandments of God. We have to form right relationships. Right relationships are essential to the law of success in our life. You cannot succeed without forming relationship with your fellow human beings. And I speak of both the Christians and the non-Christians. We have to have a right relationship. It is important for us to see where our relationship is.

For example my wife use to pray for this nation and she is always praying and concerned about persecution. And she prays for the government and she prays for all the people in this land. And so one day she was talking with me and I said the government is not your enemy it is your friend. The people that you are praying for are your friends. But what happens is that many Christians visualize them as enemies. Every one who is called a human being is your friend. Your only enemy is the devil. So many times Christians have bad relationship with unbelievers. Those non-believers are not our enemies. They are our friends. When you see them as friends, you will visualize them as friends. Jesus saw the sinners as friends. He hates sins. But He saw the sinners as people to love. See every one you know as people to love including the nasty boss who always scolds you. Your image you always see them as enemies. So when you see them every time you react against them thinking that they are the devil. But they are not. They are human beings. They may have yielded to the devil but they are not the devil. You are supposed to love them.

The commandment you shall love your neighbor as yourself includes the non-believers and the non-Christians. We are to love them. We are to show the love of God unto them. Jesus showed His love to us before we were believers. He did not show His love to us after we know Him. The key to soul winning and witnessing is to be a friend. Even in the natural world if there are two salesmen going to sell you the same product. If one salesman is your friend whom you know and the other is a stranger. I will say if all things being equal, you would probably buy it from the one who is your friend. There is a difference if someone who is your friend shares a message with you, a truth with you. Now besides that the Holy Spirit can lead you to a stranger. In that category you can be led by the Spirit. But other wise all the

time you let the love of God and the character of the love of Jesus flow from you. You become friends with people. You don't come to a stranger unnecessarily unless the Holy Spirit leads you and said are you going to hell or heaven. You don't necessarily do that unless the Holy Spirit leads you.

It is just like the laws of healing. The Holy Spirit can give you the gift of healing. And under the gift of healing you can bring the healing gift to people without them asking. But besides the law of healing there is what we call the claiming of healing by faith, by the atonement of Jesus Christ. Then you have to get into the word and have the knowledge of what the Lord says to claim your healing. Healing can come by the gift or it can come by the preaching of the word. So soul winning is the same. You can be led by the Spirit of God to some people to tell them the Good News. But besides that the normal way is for you to show yourself friendly to every one who is called a human being. And one of the important laws of success is to reach out and form as relationship. Because no one can succeed by himself. I am not talking about forming relationship for the sake of pulling strings. That is not a real relationship. You don't want someone to befriend you just because of what they can get out of you. And if you don't want that to happen to you, don't do it onto others. But if you really show forth friendliness and seek to reach out your right hand to have as friendly relationship, to form right relationship with other, I can guarantee you that at certain point in your life, you will begin to experience success in all that you do.

The reason some people never get their promotion and always get demotion is because they show themselves unfriendly. But when you show yourself friendly, you will begin to see people not as devil but as friend. And you began to reach out and form a relationship with them, all things being equal if you know the boss and you have a proper relationship with boss not just for promotion sake, but just because you enjoy other human beings. You enjoy being friends with other human beings whether they are up in the social ladder or down in the social ladder. It makes no difference to you. You are no respecter of person. And if there is a position where the boss has to choose between you and another person, but all things being equal probably the boss will promote the one whom they know as friendly. On the sale side, it is the same. The customer who buys things from you will probably buy from you because you are friendly. In fact today those people in the world the sale managers are discovering all these principles that are actually in

the bible. One of the principles they teach salesman is that the customer wants you more to be friendly than for you to promote an aggressive sale. It is different from the old sales tactic that when salesmanship first started in the 20th century. But the modern ones are beginning to learn all these principles that the old ones have not learned.

So we are talking about forming right relationship to be a success. You have to have in your heart a genuine love for humanity. You just love humans as they are. Whether the human being is your boss or your employee you just have a love for human kind. You just want to form relationship with them. And unless your relationship is right, no matter where you go the success will evade you. If you have an improper relationship with one individual, it will affect your relationship with all other individuals you meet. For example if brother James here is my blood and flesh brother. We live in the same home. We grow up together. But somehow along the way we have plenty of quarrels and plenty of fights. And I grew up to be bitter against him. That bitterness seeps in my life. When that is in my heart I may leave the house and go somewhere else to stay and to work. Then I may meet other people in my life. That bitterness is still seeping inside me. Then when I try to reach out my hand to another individual, something seems to hold me back. Because I did not relate to one individual I cannot relate to all the others properly. I am fearful, I am withdrawn, I am cautious and I react easily. Sometime I do it unknowingly or sub-consciously, all because my relationship was not built in the right way. And we have found that when people cannot relate to their parents well, when they go out they also have problem succeeding in life because they cannot relate to other who are older than them. Can you see that if you do not form right relationship in any area whether in the home or outside, it will affect every area of your life?

There has been a survey done by psychologists to find out why some people turn out the way they are, like criminals and cheats etc. They found out that 99% of these people all have a broken home. Isn't it strange? These people have not learned to relate to their parents who are symbols of authority in their homes. They have not related well with their parents. When they come out they find it difficult to relate to authority. Whether the authority is represented by the police or by their employer, they are rebellious wherever they go. They go against things that society deems to be right. Because of their inability to develop a right relationship, there is a scar that hinders their relationship with all of mankind. Don't despair, God can

heal that. God will deal with your life until you build a relationship properly. Sometimes you may have to go all the way back.

I may even have for example have a bad relationship with my parents. Then what happens is that when I relate to authority I react in the same way I react to my parents. As a result I never get promotion. I never get favor. I never find grace and favor with people. One day I seek the Lord and ask the Lord, "Why am I a failure?" God begin to deal with my unforgiveness. And God sends me back to my good old long lost brother. Then I said I am sorry all those years I have been bashing you up. And we prayed. Something is released in my life. Then I go to the parents and say forgive me. When I go back to the town about a hundred miles away, something is different. As I relate to my employer, he said something had happened to my employee. Suddenly the employee becomes more obedient. And they could form a relationship where they could not do so before. And then they find favor with the boss. And the boss promotes them.

Success comes when right relationships are formed. You don't form right relationship for the purpose of promotion. But it must be in your heart all the time. Anyway people can sense whether you are a fake, whether you are just using them as a stepping-stone or you are genuinely have a relationship with them. In other words you are a friend not in prosperity but you are a true friend indeed. You are not a friend because of what you can get. You are a friend because you just want to form a relationship with people. As long as we are individual human beings and if we refuse to form a relationship we will always confront failure wherever we turn.

Remember Jesus emphasize how important forgiveness is our life. He says that *whatsoever things your desire when you pray, you believe that you receive and you shall have them* (Mk.11:24). But it says in verse 25 *when you pray forgive*. Unforgiveness is bad relationship basically. Unforgiveness develops because you have no relationship or bad relationship with people. Bad relationship will hinder the power of faith that moves mountain. And you are wondering why you cannot move that mountain. Because you have not build your relationship with people. You have nurtured unforgiveness. We have classified differently. Instead of classifying it as forgiveness, it is more than that. To forgive is one but to forgive and than build a relationship brings it deeper. Which is why we have chosen a title building relationship.

There are a few bible examples like Jacob. Jacob grew up exactly in the same situation. He and his brother never got along. He was a cheat. Even when they started coming out from the womb, when Esau came out Jacob was holding Esau by the leg. That was how aggressive he was. After that they kept on having a series of bad relationship. You remember how Jacob cheated his brother over that bowl of red bean soup and exchanged it for the birthright. Later on when Isaac his father was old, he cheated his father to get the blessings of Esau. So he was a cheat all the time. Later he went to another different country. Remember he ran away from Esau because Esau threatened to kill him. When he worked for Laban he fell in love the first thing he got was he got cheated. He worked for seven years for Rachel. And you remember the story it says behold it was Leah. Can you imagine waking up after the wedding night and say this is the wrong sister. He went back to Laban and say how can you cheat me. And Laban said you work another seven years and I will give you Rachel. And then after that he worked another six years. He worked twenty years under Laban. And in those twenty years ten times Laban tried to cheat him. You shall reap what you sow. He could never relate well in his home. He thought that he has moved out of that situation. Let me tell you the law of reaping what you sow still works no matter where you run. If you are a cheat and a con man and you try to abscond from this country, you will go to another country, you will reap what you sow that side too. You cannot get away from what you sow. The laws will fall upon you.

Look at Gen.31:38 *These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewe and your female goats have not miscarried their young. I have not eaten the rams of your flock. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you. I bore the loss of it. You require it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Verse 40 there I was in the day the drought consume me. And the frost by night and my sleep departed from my eye. Thus I have been in your house twenty years. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock. And you have changed my wages ten times.* He was a cheat and he got cheated. Now Jacob seems to be more prosperous now. He has two wives and that was not the perfect will of God. That is why constantly he has problems. It seems to be a success. But look at what he says in verse 40 *in the day the drought consume me. And the frost by night and my sleep depart form my eye.* Doesn't that sound like as modern businessman. A lot of assets and they go into their twenty rooms bungalow house and every night they lay on their bed they toss and turn like a

bird. They could not sleep. All their success could not buy them of one good night sleep.

One guy I know has seven cars and drives one car a day. Why must he do that? Because every night he travels back the thieves are looking for him. So he changes cars every now and then. He is not free. He is in prison. Jacob seems to have prosperity and success but he did not have total success. He had no good night rest and no sleep. Things seem to go against him. Could you imagine those who work so hard and has plenty of money; as they sit on the table to enjoy all the luxurious food, they could not because they have stomach ulcer. Then half of their body is dying of cancer. And all their money went to pay the hospital bill. They could not enjoy the food. Could not enjoy the sleep. Could not enjoy their daily life. I wouldn't call that success. True success comes when you build relationship. And all these things are added onto you. You will enjoy your food better and at the same time you have everything you need. God supplies all your needs. And you have a good relationship with your wife. You have formed good relationship everywhere you go.

Jacob only started having the true success and blessings when he decided to make it right with his brother Esau. The very next chapter tells us. He wrestled all night and the angel said your name is Israel. The very next day Jacob met his brother and in chapter 33:3 when he crosses over before them. He bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother. Esau ran to meet him and embraced him. And they wept. Do you know what happened? Jacob sought to build a right relationship with Esau. Before he came he sent the cattle. Remember he sent his servants ahead all with the presents as gifts ahead of him. He sought to build a relationship. He gives of his assets. That is his cattle, his goats. Jacob was reaching with the right hand of fellowship. And when Jacob forms a right relationship with Esau could he begin to enjoy success. His name became Israel and God spoke to him about building an altar after in Bethel. Success comes through right relationship. It is a misery if you have a poor relationship.

Many of those who are rich, who are wealthy, end up unfaithful to families. And they end up with many houses but they could not enjoy them because every one of them haunts them. Their conscience troubles them. And they know that what they

do to their children is wrong. They missed their children but they cannot come back. They are with their mistress. They need to repent and form a right relationship again. Start now forming right relationship with people. Don't hide in a hole by yourself. Don't form only with those who are your peers. Form with those who are younger than you. Form with those who are older than you. God will deal with your life until you get over that area.

I remember when I was in my seminary in the first year I was seeking to get a closer walk with God. I wanted the power of God to work in my life. I didn't know much about the baptism of the Spirit but I was sincere. I wanted revival. I wanted more power. I didn't understand that was the anointing I was asking for. But I was seeking more from God. And one day as I was praying God said what about those books you took while you were in the school library. I took those books when I was Form Three. See you have to form right relationship. I don't know where the books are right now. And I wrote a letter to the school headmaster and said I took these books. I don't know how much they cost. And I worked out that this is how much it will cost. And I ask that I be forgiven for that and I am sending the money to pay for those books. One thing I didn't know until I got home for my holidays was that I learned from some of my old friends still in that school that the headmaster read my letter in front of the assembly. And he pinned up my letter in the school library. Then they said because of that letter we were interested in Christianity. Only Christianity can make a person that way. Who else but the Holy Ghost can get you to return three library books? I found right relationship and I found greater release in my life.

And in my second year of my seminary, God dealt with my life and said I had never had a proper relationship with my father. We were typical oriental. Children should be seen and not heard. He never said he love me. He did a lot of nice things for me. And I know he loves me. But he never said it with his mouth. Neither did I ever said that to him. We were related physically but we never form a real relationship. And the Holy Spirit dealt with my life. Before that every time I was in the church I found it difficult to relate to those board members because they were much more elderly than me. And during one of those quiet times when I was at home, I went back to my father and stood next to his chair and said I want to tell you something. He said, "hum". I said I want you to know that I appreciate you and love you. He said, "hum". That was all I got but when I did it, something

began to form in my life. I had a right relationship with my parents. Then when I went back into my ministry, I found I could easier form relationship with others. And it was a source of help in the ministry. Form right relationship and God will promote you. Success comes to you.

Joseph in the bible was promoted because of a character in his life where he reached out to form relationship with people. He had no intention for his own promotion. He just loves people, a genuine love for people. You read about Joseph in one day from prisoner he became a Prime Minister. But there was one key factor involved. That was the interpretation of the butler's dream. But before he had the opportunity to exercise the interpretation of dream, he had a care for people. Genesis chapter 39 and 40. In chapter 39 we see how Joseph was in Potiphar's house and constantly Potiphar's wife came after him. What did Joseph do? Joseph chose not to form the wrong relationship. The book of Proverbs tells us that if a man goes into morality he will be brought to poverty. In choosing to form the right relationship and not wrong relationship he got imprisoned. But there is some one whose eyes saw him, God. It says God was with Joseph even in the prison. In chapter 40:5 something happened to the butler and the baker was thrown in the prison and they both dreamt dreams. Verse six Joseph was already head of the prison came in the morning and he looked at them and saw they were sad. He could have just walked away. But he was someone who cares for another human being, who is concerned when somebody else is sad. He reached out his hands and makes a relationship and he says why do you look so sad? It was a question of a man who is concerned for others. He doesn't have to concern himself. It was none of his business. When he reached out and began to ask people why are you sad, it tells us the character of his being. He was a man who forms right relationship. Probably because of this quality in his life he was promoted in Potiphar's house and in the prison. When he was thrown into prison he must have been someone who cared for other prisoners. And the chief jailer must have seen him and slowly use him because he was helpful. It has to come from inside you. It cannot be faked when you have a genuine love for others to reach out and form relationship to what I called care. Joseph cared for them. He cared why they were sad. Because of that one incident he had the opportunity to exercise the gift of the Spirit interpretation of dreams. And it was because of the interpretation of dreams that the butler remembered him when Pharaoh had dreams. Imagine what would have happened if he ignored the butler and the baker. Joseph may never get out of prison.

You never know those you form relationship with. Everyone of them you meet in your life, you impart something to them and they impart something to you. Everyone you meet in life could be people who lift you up. And you need everyone. You cannot live alone. You cannot promote yourself alone. Hiding yourself in a room and confessing all the prosperity principles will not work unless you come out and form relationship with people. Joseph formed relationship and he got promoted.

Do you remember Paul and Barnabas. In Acts chapter nine no one recognized Paul and Barnabas. Acts 9:26 *When Saul had come to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples. But they were all afraid of him. They did not believe that he was a disciple. Barnabas took him brought him to the apostles and declared to them how he had seen the Lord.* From that day onwards Paul and Barnabas had a good relationship. Many years later, actually it was precisely about nine years later. Act 11 Paul had gone to his hometown, Barnabas was continuing in his ministry. And in Acts 11 he was sent to Antioch. In Antioch he saw a great need. And of all people he remembered Paul. So in Acts 11 Barnabas went to take Paul to Antioch to start a ministry. That was the beginning of Paul's ministry. Imagine Paul's ministry came out because he built right relationship. If you were in the ministry and you want to come up, build right relationship with other ministers. Don't condemn them. Don't criticize them. If you were in the secular world ridiculing people and running down others wouldn't promote you. Keep a positive attitude. Build relationship with people. When you do so wherever you are in the secular world or in the ministry. You will always go up. People love to promote you and people love to help you and lift you up.

Paul formed the right relationship and many years later he needed Barnabas. There was one time when Paul and Barnabas quarrel in Acts 15. And their quarrel was over Mark. And the quarrel was so strong that Paul and Barnabas separated different ways. And Barnabas took Mark and Paul took Silas in Acts 15:40. The question is did Paul later form a right relationship back? He did. I believe they prayed and forgave each other before they were parted. But many years later when Paul was at his end of his ministry, in his last years in second Timothy 4: 11 Paul said *only Luke is with me get Mark and bring him with me for he is useful to me for ministry.* That tells me that Mark must have formed a relationship with Paul and Paul must have formed relationship with Mark even though there was a

misunderstanding earlier in their ministry. Don't ever let a misunderstanding breed, tackle it, solve it and remove it. If there is anybody in the church whom you cannot relate to properly, you must relate to properly. It will be a hindrance to your own life. God will not promote you unless you relate properly. If there is anybody in your working life that you are not relating properly, you have to start relating properly. I don't know how you are going to do it. But God will show you how to start relating properly. Maybe the one who is always scolding you and upsetting you, try remembering his or her birthday. He or she may be an unbeliever and you purposely buy a birthday present and say I still like you. The Holy Spirit will help you how to build a relationship. When you do it even your working place will be transformed. And get ready because promotion comes up. Success comes to those who build a right relationship.

Maybe it is in your home between you and your wife. You have to solve it. You have to build right relationship. Don't go through life having a hurt relationship behind you. It is your responsibility to forgive and go to them and ask for forgiveness. When you released it there is something released in you. All these things are like tying you down. You may have the power to keep moving at twenty miles an hour but if you are carrying tons of bad relationship, you are going to move maybe one mile an hour. The moment you release that, your life begins to excel. That is the reason why some people wonder why success seems to fail. Because they have too many bad relationships behind them. Cast off those bad relationships. You have to go to them and establish them properly. Don't wait for them to come. Whether they forgive you is between God and them. You got to forgive them and you got to release them in your life. And God will bring success to you.

So I conclude by reading Matt.7:12 *Therefore whatever you would others do to you, do also to them, for this is law and the prophets.* Whatever you want man to do to you do to them first. That is Jesus' positive way. I remember the Chinese Confucius saying. Don't do to others what you don't want others do to you. He got it backwards. That can make you so passive that I don't do anything. But Jesus wants you to be active. He wants you to do something to others what you want them to do onto you because you reap what you sow. Proverbs 18:24 tells us that *he who has friends must show himself friendly.* And there is a friend that is stickier than a brother. Now that is a prophecy about Jesus but it is also telling us about life situation.

When you form friends in a real relationship, do you know not only you help them but also they help you? Now let's turn to Lk.6: 38 *Give, and it will be given to you, a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, shall men give onto your bosom.* God uses men. Now tell me if you are having bad relationship with every human being you meet, you make enemies everywhere you go, tell me how are you going to have success. No matter how skillful you are. No matter how educated you are. You can have a string of PhDs. You can have tremendous potential but you have a bad relationship everywhere you go, I can assure you, you will still be a failure. You have broken that law of success, which is having right relationship. It is right relationship that brings success in your life. Here in Lk.6: 38 said *men will give it to you.* When you have right relationships, God can touch more avenues of blessings into your life. But the marvelous thing is verse 37 *judge not and you shall not be judged.* In Matt.7: 1-2 he says *judge not for with the same measure you judge, it will be measured to you.* Not only does it apply to the law of offering where give and it is given to you, but here it says judge not that you may not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Then only He says give and it shall be given to you. The law of offering will not work for you if you have a bad relationship with people. You can be a fantastic person who gives offering but you don't keep the law of love, how can it work for you? You may have a tremendous potential to confess what you possess, to have faith to move mountains. Let me tell you if you do not forgive how can the faith that moves mountains work in your life? No wonder some people say, "I give my tithe, I give my offering but I never receive blessings." Why because you make every body your enemy. You have bad relationship. You sow bad relationship. Everywhere you go you find fault with people and then on the other hand you say God bless me please. How can God bless you? You try to keep one law by breaking another law. Remember God's blessings are involved in a total law. For this law to work for you is also dependent on the other law.