

SUCCEEDING IN LIFE SERIES

HARVESTING FROM LIFE

We are going to consider another factor about the life that we are in. In this present life that we are all going up-stream. The world is flowing down-stream. In order to fail all you have to do is to do nothing and failure will come. But in order to succeed, we need to paddle up-stream. We need to do something about it. So we are going to focus on that point. In this life that we live, if you want anything out of this life, you have to get it. It will not come to you. It will not just drop on you. What happens is very often Christians have what I called a infant mentality. See when a baby comes into this planet earth, the baby receives the parental care, receive milk and receive food. So the baby is on the receiving end. But babies do not know that somebody has to do the getting. Somebody has to reach out and get something for them. So sometimes when the child grows up, that infant mentality is still inside.

And so we expect life to give us something. We expect this life to give us some return without us reaching out to take it. As we grow up in life we realize that this life is not going to give you anything. If you want anything out of this life you have to reach out to take it. Even when God created the Garden of Eden and placed all the lovely trees and fruits and plants and animals in the garden for Adam, God did not spoon fed Adam. He just creates Adam as he was. And Adam has to reach out and take what ever he wants. He made a man to till this earth and to reach out and take what ever he wants God has placed there. This life will not give it to you. You have to reach out to take what ever you want from this life. And we have only one life. We have to know exactly what we want out of this life. You have to ask yourself what do you want to get out of this life. It is a decision that you have to make. We have to grow up from infant stage.

Sometimes our bodies grow up but our souls did not grow up. We have to grow up to realize that a time will come when we cannot depend on our parents. We cannot depend on somebody else. We ourselves have to reach out and take from life what we want. What do you want on this life depends on you. I do not believe in fatalism. I do not believe that every one is fated and there is nothing you can do about it. Fatalism is not scriptural. The bible shows that you are in control of your life. The destiny of your life rests upon your hands. If fatalism is true then there should not be a judgment. Because I have what is fated of me, there should not have been a judgment. But because it is false and we are responsible for what we do, therefore there is a judgment. We are judged and accountable for what we do with this life. So this life is not going to give it to you. This life is not just a bed of roses. The roses had thorns too.

This life is not just a simple river. On the river there are whirlpools. There is quicksand near the river base. So this life is full of that. We need to know what we want to get out of this life and be determined. *Say I am determined to take from this life what I want. I am determined to make my life and not just wait for it to come.* We have to reach out to do something about this life. I remember when I was young; I had a talk with my elder brother. And we were just discussing about life. Then I told him a statement that I myself have never forgotten. I said that there was some people who are satisfied to just live this life. They just go to work and come back. Have a natural job; their lives needs, food, clothing and shelter are met. And they are satisfied. But there are some other people who like to make an impact on this life. They want to contribute to this life. They want to do something in this life that will affect the way their fellow human beings lived. And I said I am determined to be in the second category. I am not going to just live a life, just eat, work, and sleep and lived a biological life. Even an animal can do that. If you keep a pet dog, you watch that dog. All it does is eat, bark, sleep. No planning for the future, nothing. All he did is live a dog's life. You are not a dog. You are a human being. You are created in the image of God. And it is God's plan that He wants every one of us to contribute something into this life that will change the way your fellow human beings lived, even if you do it in your own small special way. *Say I am special to God.*

We will discuss three principles that are involved in harvesting from this life. There

is nothing you can do about the past. You either forget it or remember it. What can you do about the past? You have a choice to either forget the past or forget the present. So remember those things that are good and forget those that are bad. We have to have our forgettable working. Do you know that God is very good at that? When God forgives, He forgets. But when we forgive, we don't forget. It haunts us the rest of our lives like a barking dog. And it makes our life miserable. We have to learn to forgive. We have to learn to forget. Some people are still living in the past. That is nothing you can do about the past. You may as well to forget it. And the future is tomorrow, and there are years ahead. What you do today determines your future.

So there are three principles to take out of life: Vision, Discipline and Balance. We need to know where we are going in order to take out from this life what we want. You receive in proportion to what you are looking for. For example, if you travel, if all you are looking for are places that are scenic, then you travel to places that are nice to visit. But if your purpose is to travel for business venture, then you have a different itinerary. The way you arrange your tour is based on the prospect that you can research into. And the places you visit will be different. So your goal sets your direction. Every one of us has goals whether you write them down or not. When we are talking about vision, we are talking about goals. We are talking about objectives that we have to set in our lives. You have to have objectives in your life, visions in your life as to what you want to do.

In talking about goals and objectives, we have to screen through what we call the will of God. Generally you can apply goals that you know your conscience allows you to. The desires that come out in you that are in line with the word of God. If you are not sure it is the will of God, there is one tiny principle that you can always do. When you do your best to love God with all your heart, mind and soul, and your goal is centered on love and helping human beings, you will find that, that goal is not far away from the perfect will of God. In other words how do I know I am doing God's will in my life? All you have to do is set to do the most loving thing in that situation. And when you do it you will find that it is not far from the perfect will of God, probably is may be the perfect will of God. Do the most loving thing in that situation is the will of God.

There are two types of goals that a person has to set. One is the ultimate goal and one is the proximate goal. The ultimate is long range planning. The other is short range planning. Some people when they hear teaching about goals, they go to success seminars and they learn about goals setting. And they come out with a lot of resolutions. Sometimes they set goals that are so far reaching that they don't know how to go about it in the present. For example if somebody aged 23 sets a goal to be a millionaire, he may reach the goal by the age of 30. I read a story of one guy who did it. That was his ultimate goal. And this was his proximate goal. He found that everybody work about six to eight hours a day. So he asked whether if they work six to eight hours, they could reach there. And he saw around him that everybody were in their late thirties or forties and they were just so, so. So he said if he worked twice as hard, he will reap twice of what they had. So he worked twice as hard. And he reached his goal by the age of thirty. But he overworked himself and by the time he reached to be a millionaire he could not enjoy his wealth. His body was as wrecked. He was like a car that has not been serviced for ten years. This is why we have to have the last key: balance.

Goals

-

We have vision, which are your goals; discipline and balance. Lets talk about goals. We have to have long-range goals: what do we want to have out of this life. Then we have proximate goals. In other words the man had a goal quite far out and then his near goals: what he wants to do immediately. So a long-range goal had to be broken up into smaller sections in order to reach it. If you set a goal to be a doctor, then you have to sit down and pray. Now there is something characteristic about the Holy Spirit. If you don't ask Him, He won't tell you. And you are maybe 19 or 20 and you set your goal to be a medical doctor. The first thing after you set a goal it helps you because you begin to look for information in that area. If you don't have goal you don't look for information. And where ever the person goes that person looks for information in that area. They have information. And the information helps them to direct their life. Unless we have proper goals, we will not have the ability or the concentration to look for information.

So here is a guy who sets a goal to be a doctor. So the person lists out and find out

information. And the person looks at information. The person looks at hurdles to clear. For this person it could be that the parents are poor. They could not afford the education. Do you know that is a simple problem? That is not the end of life. Some people when they could not make it through their exam results. They said this is the end because they are not mature. They think that failing it would be the end. There is no other alternative to clear the hurdle. Let me tell you that there is always a million ways to clear one hurdle. There are always many ways to clear over a mountain. You can either climb up on the mountain and then ski down on the other side. Or you can walk round the mountain on the right side or left side. Or you can tunnel through the mountain. There are many ways to cross over a mountain. Not just one way. That is the problem for those who are young. They are limited in their thinking. There is more than one way to get what you want out of life. And so that person looks for information in that area. And that person will find that they can get accredited degrees by correspondence. And you would be fully qualified as those who go to school. You got to have a goal and then you have to have an approximate short-term goal to achieve that major ultimate goal. I could work and take a correspondence course at the same time. Or I could look around for scholarship. Or I could look around for an education loan. There are hundred of ways across those hurdles. Once you have set your proximate goal, work at it with all your heart. Keep the ultimate goal in mind.

What happen is sometimes people keep looking at the ultimate goal. There is a hurdle in front of them. There are a lot of bums along the path. They are looking at the ultimate goal suddenly you don't see them around. You turn around and they are in the manhole. We need ultimate goals and proximate goals.

Joshua 1:8 *This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth and you shall meditate it day and night that you observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you would have good success.* Notice that God is speaking to Joshua. And God told Joshua you must meditate on the word and you shall have good success. Let me tell you he did not just meditate on the word of God generally. Joshua was supposed to enter the Promised Land. That was the will of God for his life. That was his vision. That was his objective. That was his purpose. That was his goal to enter the Promised Land successfully. Do you know that there are a lot of promises in Genesis to Deuteronomy about the Promised Land? As he read through Genesis he came across where God spoke to Abraham

about the Promised Land that after 400 years I will bring you out. And he may have jumped up and said that is for me. And then every time he read those parts where God said to Moses and say that I have given you the land. He said yes Lord I claim it you have given it. I could imagine Joshua meditating on the word. As he meditated on the word, he claimed what was his in the word. And it became real to him. The objective was clearer. What is the will of God in your life?

When God chose David to be king, David had to meditate on the word. He knew what his goal was even when nobody accept him. Nobody believed he had an anointing to be king. He was being pursued as an outlaw by king Saul. Everybody rejected him. But the anointing was on his life. While he was hiding in the cave, you know what he was doing. He was building his army. Only people with goals are able to overcome the immediate hurdles in front of them because they know where they are going. David started with his army not after he became king, but before he became king. By the time he became king, those people with him became his main generals. He had a proximate goal. He started training there.

Goals are seeds in your life. They are seeds that you plant today. They are buried inside you. Nobody sees it. Do you know I have a goal? You can't see it now because it is not fulfilled yet. You will see the whole plant maybe many years later. Because of the seed inside me, ten years from you will see the plant. But right know when you look at it you don't see. You only see me as I am. But you can't see inside me. When you plant a seed, you can't see it for some time. But inside the seed is taking roots.

Joseph was given a dream. And I believe the reason why God gave him the dream is because of the many hurdles he had to face. Gen.37 God gave Joseph a dream when he was 17 years old. And he dreamt about his brother and how they came to him and bowed before him. He never forgot that dream. When 13 years had passed by, the dream began to be fulfilled. He was the right hand man of Pharaoh. His brothers came to him in Gen.42 Joseph said to them in verse 9 you are spies. But before that Joseph remembered the dream. He was 17 when he was sold as a slave. He was 30 when Pharaoh promoted him to Prime Minister. And there was seven years of plenty. Twenty over years later the dream was never forgotten. He never forgot what God told him when he was 17 years old. People can take away you

house, take away your car but if they cannot take away your vision, you will still come up.

During the great Chicago fire many businessmen started committing suicide. There were so many suicides that the newspaper people felt that they have a responsibility. So they put in bold letters in the headline "Any fool can quit but it takes a man to pull through." The suicide started dropping. Some of them were bankrupts who lost everything in the fire. But there was a man who stood there at the Chicago fire and said, "I will build it again." And that man today owns a chain of supermarkets and became a millionaire. The most precious thing in your life is not your money, your house or your car but it is your vision.

Proverbs 29:18 says without a vision the people perish. Do you know that the house that you are living in is because of an objective you lived for your life. You saved up for it. You have a goal to buy it. You took a loan for it. You had a goal that is why you are living in your own house. You have what you have what you have today is because you set some goals. We can take everything away but as long as you have your vision, you can restore every thing back. All it takes is the will to live and take from life again. Life is full of whatever you want. Whatever you want of life, you can take it. It is there. The only people who will reap from life and harvest from life are those with goals. That is why you need objectives and goals. Goals and vision are something that need to be revised constantly. When you set your ultimate goal and your proximate goal you need to revise them.

Discipline

How often did God told Joshua to meditate? Day and night. What was God doing? God wanted him to build that vision in his life. And there is something about this. That is why we go to the number two discipline. Every one of us has to fight laziness. It is easy to be lazy. But it takes effort not to be lazy. After sin nature came our bodies tend to laze about. And so we need to be disciplined. There are too many people who set goals but they are too lazy to do something about it. A dream is only a dream until you start acting on it and it becomes a part of your life. There

are those who dream and do nothing about it.

I believe Joseph did something about it. Between 17 years old and 30 years old is a period of 13 years. For 13 years he served in two places. He served in Potiphar's house and he served in the prison. What did he learned in the 13 years. He learned administration, to have employees under him. He learned all these things. Later when he was the right hand man of Pharaoh he had thousands of people under him. What you are leaning now is important. You have to have goals and objectives and start preparing. I am sure that all through his 13 years he remembered that God is going to promote him and he was prepared for it. Discipline is something that all of us need to do something about. And discipline can only come if we revise our goals every day. It is because we human beings tend to forget. Even Jesus knew that the body of Christ forgets easily. That is why He said as often as you meet you must have the Holy Communion so that you remember what I have done for you. God knew that human beings forget easily. So God told the Israelites and said you must remember my word. And goals and objectives are something we have to revise everyday to keep in that direction.

Life is like driving a car into a new area. All you have is like a road map and generally a few places that you know. So you are going to drive your car through that new area you haven't been. Life is that way. You haven't been to some of these things that are there in life. Some of the things you face, you feel that you are all alone there. Nobody else is with you but you have a road map. Then you have an objective. You want to go to such and such a house. You have an objective there. You have an appointment there. So you wanted to go there. You must locate where you are before you can start driving. You can do it if you do it bit by bit. There are those who are over confident in a new place. They missed about three turns and ended up somewhere else. Do you know that by looking at the map actually it is easy to go if you are slower? What we are saying is the map is the goal and objectives in this life. As we go through this life, we tend to be side tracked by many things. That is why we need to constantly revise our goal everyday. You have to sit down and write it down. And every day perhaps in the morning, in the noon and in the evening, look at your goals and objectives. At least you have some direction.

A life without direction is a life that will be bullied. Do you know that in life you get bullied? You have to know what to harvest out of this life. And so even if you say you don't seem to have any goal, check properly and you will find that you have goals. Nobody exist in this life without any goals. The only people who find it hard to exist are those who are very depressed and suicidal. Do you know why people commit suicide? They have no more purpose in life. As long as you are not there, then you have a purpose whether you have written it down or not. Whether it is a short-range goal or long-range goal, you have to go the Lord to develop long range goals and short range goals or ultimate and proximate goals as I called them. You have to write them down. And after you have written them down, everyday in the morning and everyday in the night, take them out look at them and read through them.

I have my own objectives in goals in life. So I write them down and every morning I look at them and every evening I look at them. Whenever I am free I look at the list. Why because when you have a goal you prevent unnecessary detours. And you need to keep looking at it to be disciplined. Discipline is to prevent the detours. Somebody invites you to see a football game or a three hours video show. You review your goals and say I cannot be spending my time there. If I spend my time there I don't have time to fulfill this goal. So you have a goal and objective and you start choosing not to have certain things. And you became more disciplined because your goals are more real. When your goals are more real and you look at them every day, you tend to be more disciplined.

Discipline is not something very hard to get. Discipline comes by training and habit. It doesn't come instantly. It is by force of training and habit. Every man and woman in this world has a tendency to be lazy. It is because we have an objective to do. And if we don't do it failure is going to come. That compels us sometimes, pushes us. We should actually be pushed not by the thought of failure but by our goals and objectives. What do you want out of life? Write them down. Write your own ticket with God. What is your goal? What are your objectives? To be an evangelist? Write it down. That is your objective. As you write it down and every day you look at it, you will begin to have more ways to fulfill it. You begin to program your whole soul to fulfill the goal. Paul says I pressed towards the mark of Christ. So discipline comes by meditation on your goal and objective. Then discipline comes second nature.

Most of us do not like to be disciplined as a habit. We don't push ourselves into it. We don't enjoy it. But we want something to motivate us. Which is why I said goals and objectives are important for discipline. The most important discipline is self-discipline. Don't wait for your father or mother to push you. You are depending on the discipline of another person. You have to be self-motivated and self disciplined.

Look at David: why did he succeed in life? It is because he was self-motivated. Self-motivation is the best. 1 Samuel 30 is one of the lowest points in David's life. He had to flee from king Saul. He lost his wife and was an outcast; was chased and rejected. This is the lowest point in David's life. They were with the Philistines and the Philistines did not allow them to go with them against Israel. And they came back and found their wives gone. They found their houses gone. They found their goods gone. They found the whole city that was given to them by the Philistines ransacked. All the big mighty men were discouraged. In chapter 30:4 David and the people who were with him wept. Do you know how long they cried? They cried until they have no more strength to cry. But we have to develop our lives. Most people commit suicide out of that. In verse 6 David was greatly distressed for the people spoke of stoning him. Here is David rejected by Israel, rejected by Saul, rejected by his own people. If anybody should commit suicide, he should. But he had a goal and objective. If your vision does not perish, you will not perish. But if your vision dies, your whole being starts dying. People commit suicide when something inside them dies. And in the midst of all these discouragement look at David. Verse 6 David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. When all forsake you God will not forsake you. You have to have that quality in your life. And your encouragement must not depend on another person. This is why I want to those who get depressed easily and discouraged when somebody say bad things about you, you are depending on encouragement from others. You have to be prepared to face the tunnels of life alone. Even though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, His rod shall lead you. He shall be with you.

Before self-discipline is self-motivation. And before self-motivation is vision and goal. You have a purpose in life. I can guarantee you if you have a purpose in life, nobody can destroy you. They can destroy all you have but as long as you have a purpose in life, they cannot kill your will to live. You will somehow come up again.

When you set ultimate and proximate goals, and here it has to do with discipline again, don't set them beyond your ability until they become a discouragement. You can set goals based on God's revelation in your life. God can tell you things that are beyond your ability. But sometimes people have never tasted success in their life. And their goals are so far ranged that everything they do seems to be failure along the way. Do you know that there is nothing that tastes better than success and victory? Defeat and failure taste bitter. But success and victory taste sweet. Here is an important thing in your life. If you have never succeeded in your life, you must set goals in certain areas where you know you can succeed. So that you can taste success and then it can encourage you to press on. And you will have more discipline the next time.

For example, a person sets a goal of earning ten thousand dollars in one month. But their faith level is very small and their capability at work is also small. And their educational level and qualification and academic level are not up to the mark. At the end of the month they only managed to get about two thousand dollars. So they say they will never make it. It would have been better for that guy to set a goal of three thousand dollars instead of ten thousand. It is better to go progressively than to put a big step. So set goals that you can taste success in. Don't over reach yourself. Your goals must be realistic and flexible. If you do not set realistic goals you will be frustrated. And there is something about failures. Failures tend to produce more failures. And if in your life you have never tasted success in some areas, you probably don't have much motivation either. There is nothing that motivates you more than success. If you have succeeded once, you are motivated for more. There is nothing that can make you to go for it than you have reached it before. Set goals that are reachable. Don't set goals if they are beyond you to achieve. You will get discouraged, frustrated and just give up everything. All these things I am sharing from my life.

One day in school I started getting recognition. That started changing my personality. I was virtually unknown until I discovered I could play chess. At sports I was lousy. At running I was last. What kind of motivation will that be? You can be sure I was never motivated in the sports. Why, because I was a failure there. One day as I was playing chess and I started winning, something started happening. My personality started being molded. Then when I tasted success in front of the whole school, I was given recognition because I won the state championship. Something

happened to me when the sweetness of success soaked in. And I began to be more self-motivated than before. Then without anybody telling me, I started spending more time on chess. I meditate over the chessboard. There is nothing sweeter that can motivate you to be more disciplined than success. So if you want to be self-motivated. Set goals that you can reach and taste the success. As you set goals where you can taste the success, your motivation becomes stronger. And then discipline becomes second nature. So that is how you deal with discipline. You don't have to force yourself. Your goals should never be a burden. It should be an inspiration. There is nothing that taste sweeter for discipline than self-motivation. Self-motivation comes from your goal. And self-motivation needs discipline. And discipline comes from tasting success.