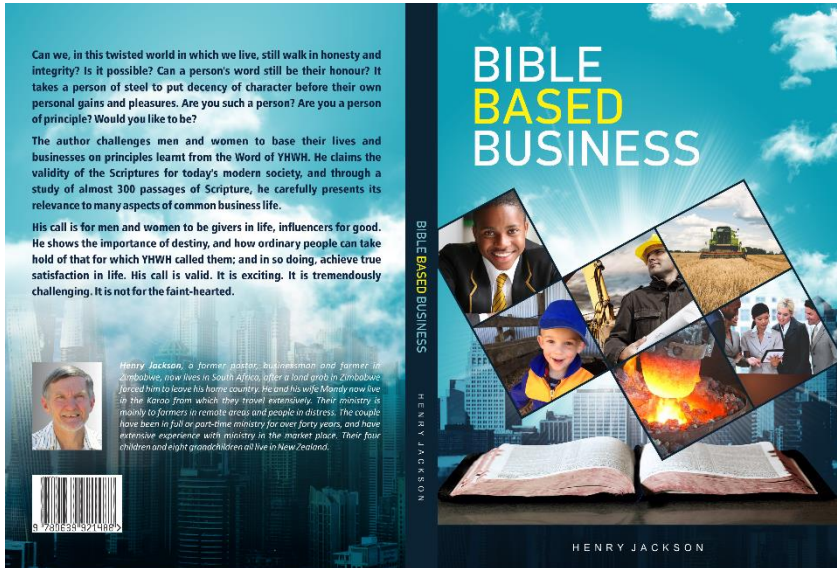


# Herewith the foreword and the first chapter of my book Bible based business



This article (chapter 1) is sent out free of charge, with the prayer that it will be a blessing and encouragement to all who read it. It may be freely copied in its entirety and sent to family and friends as far as it will go.

Should you, however, wish to acquire the book itself, it may be ordered from Magda Du Plessis. She can be contacted at the following address:

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# FOREWORD

It would be true to say that most people would like their lives to be successful, and yet, the vast majority of people never achieve this. Dreams remain only dreams. I looked carefully and wondered. What makes the difference between success and mediocrity/failure? I have seen many learned men achieve success while others fail. The rich and noble follow the same pattern. Then amongst the poorest and most ignorant and seemingly insignificant, I saw some who never rise out of their condition, and yet others who rise up and achieve great and mighty things. So, just as Solomon of old, I said to myself, *“Success does not depend on one’s background, nationality or advantage at birth – though these can go a long way to help”*. Neither does success depend on luck! So what makes for success and how can we achieve it? Why, when all men strive for it, can some hit on the secret, and others fail miserably? What is success?!

I humbly present my findings to you and sincerely pray that this book will open up some of the secrets of the Scriptures to you. If these spiritual truths should not only be revealed, but also obeyed, I know some lives will never be the same again, businesses will flourish, and whole communities will be changed and blessed.

In a sea of mediocrity, where men and women merely survive from day to day, there are jewels, hidden within the mass of humanity, covered with mud and grime. There are giants, still fast asleep; lions, who think they are sheep; kings who are paupers; cedars - reduced to miserable bramble bushes.

In this dark world in which we live, we need those beautiful jewels to rise up out of the mud and live lives untouched by the filth of this world. We need those giants to wake up and be the powerful people they were meant to be, doing great things for YHWH. We need those kings who will rule with justice, and we need those cedars to stand tall and righteous and pure, for all to see and admire from afar - to set an uncompromising example for all to follow. We need men to be men indeed. We need women who live their lives in beauty and holiness before YHWH.

My friend, believe it or not, **YOU** are such a man, such a woman. The world needs **YOU** to rise up and say, *"This is enough. My life is going to turn around and be that which YHWH intended it to be!"* We all need **YOU!!**

This book was generally written for men, though its principles can be universally applied. The author writes from the viewpoint of the tradesman, the manufacturer, the farmer, the miner – the ordinary folk who are regarded by him as precious. I am sure that the reader will therefore excuse the bias at times expressed in their favour.

## Chapter 1

# WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Ask different people what success is and you will receive a multitude of answers. The poverty-stricken man will say success spells money - lots of it! *"Oh how I would love to roll in money,"* he would say; he would elaborate on all the things he would buy with it, where he would travel to. Of course, he **would** help all the poor people and end their suffering!

The sick man says money is not worth anything. "If only I could have good health," he wails. "Be young again! I would never ask for anything more. Oh, if only I had good health!"

The lonely man says, "If only I had a close friend. Someone I could trust." The hungry man says, "If only I could have food. Food, glorious food!" The breathless man says, "Just give me air. If only I could breathe normally. Fill my lungs with cool fresh air!" The prisoner says, "Just give me my freedom. That is all I ask!" The plain girl says, "If only I could be beautiful!"

The barren woman cries desperately for a baby. The school dropout says, *"If only I could be clever!"* And so the list of dissatisfied people goes on and on. *"If only I had a different colour skin!" "If only I had a different upbringing!" "If only I was born in America!" "If only I had a home of my own!" "If only I had a happy marriage!"* If only, if only, if only!

Those who manage to achieve these goals which they have gone all out to achieve, often find that they are totally dissatisfied, and end up being miserable as their balloons of delusions bursts all around them.

Do you know that all of them have entirely missed the essence of success? So, if their cries and desperate scrambling did not have anything to do with true success, then what is success?

## Scriptures on success

Let me start by giving a number of Bible verses which all give hints as to what Bible-based success is. And then I will endeavour to give a simple definition of this elusive aspiration. I have inserted in bold the key issues which I believe give a hint of the true meaning of success in each of these passages.

*Luke 9:46      “And an argument arose among them as to which of them might be the greatest.*

*47                “But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side,*

*48                “And said to them, ‘Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for **he who is least among you this is the one who is great.**’”*

*Mat 18:4        “Whoever then **humbles himself** as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*

*Mark 8:35      “For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s shall save it.*

- 36                    *“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?”*
- 37                    *“For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
- John 3:36            *“He who **believes in the Son** has **eternal life**; but he who does not **obey the Son** shall not **see life**, but the wrath of YHWH abides on him.”*
- John 10:10          *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they might **have life**, and might **have it abundantly**.”*
- Phil 4:11            *“...I have learned **to be content** in whatever circumstances I am.*
- 12                    *“I know how to get along with humble means, and I know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.*
- 13                    *“**I can do all things** through Him who strengthens me.”*
- Acts 20:35          *“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must **help the weak** and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is **more blessed to give** than to receive.’”*
- Josh 1:5             *“No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.*

- 6            ***“Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.***
- 7            *“Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may **have success** wherever you go.*
- 8            *“This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be **careful to do according to all that is written in it**; for then you will **make your way prosperous**, and then you will have success.*
- 9            *“Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous!** Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord YHWH is with you wherever you go.”*

So having read this cross section of Scriptures, what is **SUCCESS**? Success is, I believe, a combination of the following five things:

## **Peace with YHWH**

Knowing that our sins are forgiven and that our names are written in the Book of Life. How can we claim success if we end up in hell, having ignored the only way of salvation?

*Heb 2:3            “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”*

## **Contentment in every area of life**

Having our treasure not in earthly things but in eternal things, so that we are able to see things in proper perspective.

## **A humble approach to life**

Being strong enough to be the least and not pushing ourselves forward to be recognised or receive praise from others – YHWH sees and He is well able to reward us in His good time. Thinking of others as more important than ourselves. Having the attitude of Christ, who did not strive to be equal to YHWH, but rather humbled Himself and gave His very life for our benefit (Phil 2:5-8).

## **Achieving our God-given purpose**

Reaching forward with courage and without fear, to accomplish that which YHWH has called us for, just like Joshua. When one comes to the end of one's life, to be fully satisfied that our life has had meaning, that we have made the right decisions, and that we have *accomplished something which has eternal value.*

## **Being a giver**

This is, I believe, the core of success – not what we have managed to achieve for ourselves, but rather what difference we have made in the lives of others. A key Scripture in this regard would be:

*Mat 5:13      "You are the salt of the earth..."*



14                    *“You are the light of the world ...”*

Jesus wanted us to be givers, providers, influencers – those who make a difference wherever they go and whatever they do – not being trampled by the negative circumstances in life, but rather walking tall, but in humility.

## **Testimonies**

In Hebrews 11 we read of successful men:

*Heb 11:33        “...who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,*

*34                    “Quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.”*

*36                    “... others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.*

*37                    “They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheep skins, in goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated*

*38                    “men of whom the world is not worthy...”*

These were men who believed in something, they had something to live for. Some of these men saw the fulfilment of their aspirations during their lifetime. However, some paid the ultimate price, giving their lives in the service of others. They had put aside all else in order to reach the goal

which YHWH had for them, and their testimonies have been an encouragement and a lesson to many generations. Their unselfish conduct has changed the lives of multitudes of people, and we ourselves are the beneficiaries of the rewards of their faith.

Without neglecting the first four important aspects of success (which will be adequately covered in the studies), I wish to concentrate somewhat on the fifth - ***being a giver*** - having a fruitful life; being an influencer for good.

For a number of years, I have had the privilege of working closely with an elderly couple who have, in a quiet, gentle way, influenced the lives of multitudes of people. They have loved the unlovable unconditionally. In their early years of ministry, they had gone without food and clothing as they gave of their lives to fulfil a need. They gave their time; they gave their money; they gave their home; they constantly gave almost all they had in order to help the weak and the helpless - be they black or white, rich or poor, clever or dull. They just gave!

And what a richness of life they have enjoyed. What blessings bestowed. What glorious testimonies to tell! In their simple ministry the eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf were unstopped. The lame walked again. Devils have been cast out and many people were set free from bondage. Twice in their ministry the dead have risen. And the poor have had the gospel preached to them.

Yet if you had to meet this couple, you would find simple folk with hearts of love for people. I think they have achieved success! I am fully convinced that they will hear the words from Jesus which every truly successful person will hear:

*Mat 25:21 "...Well done good and faithful slave; You were faithful in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your Master."*

We get caught up in the world's measure of success too easily (money, fame and more), and miss the true blessings that success can bring. Is the wealthy businessman who owns millions of dollars' worth of fancy cars and houses and all manner of material goods, yet suffers a broken marriage, really successful? Does the famous film star, whose personal life is in a mess, really experience success? Is the brilliant scientist who invented the most amazing electronic gadgetry, yet spends his time at home in the deepest of suicidal depressions, really successful?

Conversely, does the street sweeper who has a happy home, but is always struggling financially, really have success? To all of these I say NO! There is nothing wrong with financial prosperity or fame or intellect. These are all given by YHWH, but, in themselves they are not the ultimate in success. There is more to success than this. Success is the ability to give to others - whatever that giving might entail.

YHWH taught me a great, yet simple lesson early in my ministry. I was pastoring a small church in Masvingo, Zimbabwe (previously Fort Victoria, Rhodesia), for which I received a small salary - at times little or no salary at all. Our eldest daughter was a baby then and financially we were completely down and out.

It was two weeks to the end of the month when I would '*hopefully*' get my next salary. I had two dollars left for the month and this would only have been sufficient for milk for

the next two or three days, let alone any other needs which might arise. A blind beggar came to our back door and asked me if I had any money. I could not say no, because I knew about this two dollar note in my back pocket. I immediately perceived that YHWH was testing my faith. So I gave my last two dollars to this man, and off he went.

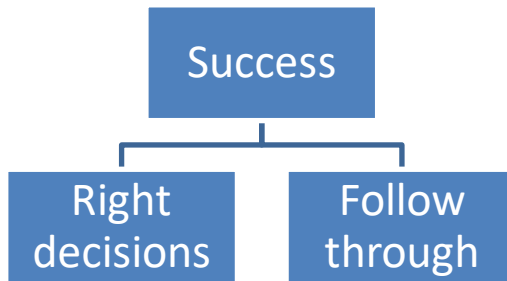
My wife and I knelt down in prayer before Him. What peace I felt when we prayed. What confidence! He was my Father, and I His son. I had been obedient, now I needed His provision. That afternoon as my wife opened the front door, she saw an envelope stuck underneath the door. It was one of those big envelopes. It could hardly fit underneath the door, and it was full of money. It was more than I was used to receiving for a whole month!

I do not know who put it there, but to me it was a gift from my heavenly Father. I was feeling ecstatic, and I knew that my Father was smiling down upon me.

Is that not success - knowing that your life is pleasing to your Heavenly Father? I had learnt the lesson that we should be givers of what we have (however small the gift might be), whenever our Father asks us to give. We should trust Him for all our provisions, for He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10, 11). We should not hold on to our meagre possessions with a tightly closed fist, but rather with an open hand - from which He can easily take at any time, and into which He can just as easily give.

# How do I achieve success?

I have pondered much over this; how could I put down the answer to this question in a simple, yet clear format, which would truly and fully cover the 'How to' aspect to this all important question. In my meditation on the Scriptures, I have come to an understanding which I wish to present in the following simple illustration. I believe that success is entirely dependent upon two things. Without these two things, success is absolutely unachievable.



It might seem too simple, but nevertheless it is the truth. Success depends on these two things only. If we make the right decisions all the time, and follow those decisions through to the end, never wavering, we WILL achieve success!

Moses told the people of Israel, "... I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity... I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So CHOOSE LIFE in order that you might live, you and your descendants." (Deut 30:15, 19) Note that in order to live they had to make that all important choice. They had to **choose life** – and then they would live.

Joshua told the people of Israel to choose whom they would serve. Their choice, followed through or put into action, would result in their future blessing and prosperity.

*Josh 24:23* “Now therefore **put away** the foreign gods which are in your midst, and **incline your hearts** to YHWH, the God of Israel.”

In the Book of Proverbs, the Book of Wisdom, Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, warned,

*Prov 3:31* “Do not envy a man of violence, and **do not choose any of his ways.**”

Earlier he says of the fool,

*Prov 1:29* “Because they hated knowledge and **did not choose** the fear of the Lord ...

31 “They shall eat of the fruit of their own way ...

32 “The waywardness of the naive shall kill them, and the complacency of fools shall destroy them.”

The Scriptures are full of examples of choices that people made. Some made the right choices and found life and blessing. Others made the wrong choices to their own detriment. Elijah called on the people of Israel to make a choice on Mt Carmel.

*1Kin 18:21* “... How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If YHWH be God, then serve Him. If Baal be God then serve him.”

In Daniel Chapter three we read that the Hebrew youths had to make a choice as to whether they would bow down to the

golden idol which Nebuchadnezzar had set up, or continue to stand by that which they had always believed in. In spite of the danger of losing their own lives, they decided that they would not compromise that which they knew to be right. They were greatly blessed in the end, and their brave conduct has been recorded as an example for us to follow.

Choice is something which we cannot avoid. If we try to ignore it, then circumstances will make a choice for us, and we will no longer be in control of our life's direction. There is no guarantee that circumstances will make the right choice. If we wish to reach a particular goal, then we have to aim in the direction of the goal, and **keep our aim** in that direction until we have reached the goal.

If I were to drive from Johannesburg to Cape Town, I would not get into the car and start driving without holding the steering wheel, would I? I will soon have an accident. Neither would I travel half way, and then say,

*“My car is now well and truly pointed in the right direction; I can now let go off the steering wheel because I will surely get there!”*

No! I would cause a terrible accident. I have to keep a firm hold of that steering wheel all the way, and only then can I be assured of reaching my goal. So we have established that our choices (decisions) are important, and we should keep going in the direction of those decisions until we reach our goals. But we have a dilemma!

Our big dilemma is just this.

*How can I always be sure of making the **right** decisions? How can I really know for sure?*

I know that if I am absolutely sure that I have made the right decision, I find it easier to follow that decision through to the end in spite of obstacles. So often the difficulties come after we have made our decision, and because of the difficulties we are tempted to reverse our decision.

If we are unsure about the correctness of our decisions in the first place, then we have no reason to make a stand for what we believe to be right, and we are like the reeds bending over this way and that way, depending on the pressure of changing circumstances which come upon our lives. People who cannot make clear and definite decisions, and stick by them, never achieve success!

So how can we be sure that we are making the right decisions every time?

Chapter 2 will follow next week – “How can I make the right decisions every time?” ....