

HOW TO BE PROSPEROUS



by
Evangelist Norman R. Stevens

HOW TO BE PROSPEROUS

Please open your Bibles to Joshua chapter one. I would like to preach a message entitled "How To Be Prosperous."

We are going to notice two things. Number one: God made promises for Joshua to claim, and then number two: God made precepts for Joshua to obey.

In Joshua chapter one and verses one through nine, the Bible says, "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon *even* unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest."

After the death of Moses, God appointed Joshua leader and commander of the people of Israel. God gave Joshua promises to claim and precepts to follow in order to be prosperous. What is a promise? A promise is a spoken or written agreement to do or not to do something. What is a precept? A precept is a commandment meant as a rule of action or conduct. What does the word "prosperous" mean? It simply means to be successful. And with that in mind, the LORD intended Joshua to be successful in that which He commanded him to do. God commanded Joshua to cross over the Jordan River with more than two and a half million people; and in the Land of Promise, he was to divide for an inheritance the land which God sware unto their fathers to give them.

That was not an easy task for Joshua to accomplish. The Jordan River overflowed all his banks. In Joshua 3:15, the Bible says, "And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest)...."

There was no way humanly possible for Joshua to cross over the Jordan River with all those people. He did not have a boat or bridge to use. Yet God commanded Joshua to cross over the Jordan River into the Land of Promise and expected him to obey.

Listen, anything God demands of His people He gives them the ability to do. In Philippians 4:13, the Bible says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Literally, who keeps on giving me strength.

The LORD gave Joshua promises to claim by faith, precepts to follow through obedience in order to be prosperous. Therefore, Joshua claimed God's promises by faith and followed God's precepts through obedience; and because he did not separate the two, God made Joshua to be prosperous, to be successful. Joshua was able to accomplish that which the LORD intended him to do.

Like Joshua, you must claim God's promises by faith; you must follow God's precepts through obedience; and by not separating the two, you can be successful. You can be prosperous in that which the Lord intends you to do.

In other words, you cannot claim God's promises by faith on one hand and not obey God's Word on the other hand and expect to be prosperous, expect to be successful. You are not going to accomplish anything, anything at all, for God by doing that. You will only be prosperous when you claim God's promises by faith and obey His Word through obedience.

Please notice, number one, that God made promises for Joshua to claim. Look at Joshua chapter one verses three and four, which says, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." This simply makes reference to God's sovereignty. God is the supreme ruler of everything. In Lamentations 3:37, the Bible says, "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?" In Proverbs 21:1, the Bible says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Joshua saw God's sovereignty demonstrated. It was God's sovereign will that the children of Israel leave Egypt. In Exodus 12:41, the Bible says, "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."

Please look at Joshua chapter one and verse five, God said, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee."

This simply makes reference to God's omnipotence, which means that God is all-powerful. God can bring to pass everything He wills, and His power admits no bounds or limitations. In Jeremiah 32:27, the Bible says, "Behold, I am the LORD,

the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?"

So let me ask you something. Is there anything too hard for God? There is absolutely nothing in all the universe too hard for God; all things are possible with God.

Joshua saw the omnipotence of God demonstrated through the ten plagues upon Egypt, through the opening of the Red Sea, and through the provision of food and water in the wilderness.

Please look at Joshua chapter one and verse five again, God said, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, I will not forsake thee."

Did you notice that? God said, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not forsake thee." This makes reference to God's omnipresence, which simply means He is present everywhere. God is everywhere present in all places at all times.

Joshua saw the presence of God demonstrated. God led His people by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Therefore, He claimed God's promise by faith that demonstrated God's being completely sovereign. He claimed God's promise by faith that demonstrated God's being all-powerful. He claimed God's promise by faith that demonstrated God's being everywhere present in all places at all times.

My dear Christian friends, you need to see God completely sovereign. You need to see God all-powerful. You need to see God everywhere present in all places at all times. You need to claim God's promises by faith like Joshua did if you are going to accomplish anything at all for God.

We have noticed, number one, that God made promises for Joshua to claim; but notice, number two, that God made precepts for Joshua to obey.

Look at Joshua chapter one and verse eight please, the Bible says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Joshua was commanded to meditate on the Word of God day and night. What does it mean to meditate on God's Word? It simply means you are to reflect upon God's Word. You are to think deeply on it. You are to think continuously on the Word of God. You are to study and ponder that which you read in the Bible. In II Timothy 2:15, the Bible says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." In II Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

It is profitable for doctrine. The Bible tells you what to believe. It is profitable for reproof. The Bible tells you when you are wrong. It is profitable of correction. The Bible tells you how to get right. It is profitable for instruction in righteousness. The Bible tells you how to stay right, so that the man of God may be perfect, or mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Brethren, Joshua was also commanded, in Joshua chapter one and verse eight, to obey the Word of God. This verse says, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.”

What does it mean to obey God’s Word? It simply means that you are to do what the Bible says to do. You are to do it willingly and submissively, as unto the Lord; and your attitude should be “Lord, I am willing to do whatever you show me from the Bible.”

Please look at Joshua chapter one and verse nine with me now, which says, “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

What is God saying? God is saying this. Joshua don’t lose your courage. Don’t lose your confidence at the prospect of danger. Why, Lord? For the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

What does it mean when God says, “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage.” What does that mean? The Hebrew word “strong” here means to bind, to cleave, and to fortify.

So let me ask you something. What are you to bind? To what are you to cleave? What are you to fortify? I am going to use these sticks to illustrate this beautiful truth set forth in the Word of God. This stick represents the weak Christian. He does not take the time to reflect upon God’s being completely sovereign. He does not take the time to reflect upon God’s being all-powerful. He does not take the time to reflect upon God’s being everywhere present in all places at all times. He takes no time to read the Bible. He takes no time to mediate on the Word of God. He takes no time to memorize the Scriptures. He takes no time to obey the Word of God. He takes no time to apply the Word of God to his life through obedience. Don’t you see? When trials and temptations come his way, he breaks under the pressure of those trials and temptations. He will not stand in the day of adversity. He will not be prosperous. He will not be successful. The weak Christian will not accomplish that which the Lord intended for him to do in this life. The disobedient child of God will not accomplish anything, anything at all, for God.

However, the strong Christian claims God’s promises by faith. In Hebrews 11:6, the Bible says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that

diligently seek him.”

The strong Christian takes the time to reflect upon God’s being completely sovereign. In I Corinthians 10:13, the Bible says, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

He takes the time to reflect upon God’s being all-powerful. There is absolutely nothing in the universe too hard for God. All things are possible with God Almighty. In Matthew 19:26, Jesus said, “But with God all things are possible.”

The strong Christian takes the time to reflect upon God’s being everywhere present in all places at all times. In Hebrews 13:5-6, Jesus said, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

He takes the time to read the Bible every day. In Psalm 119:9, the Bible says, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

He takes the time to meditate on the Word of God every day. In Psalm 1:1-6, the Bible says, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

He takes the time to memorize the Word of God. In Psalm 119:11, the Bible says, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

He takes the time to apply the Word of God to his life through obedience. In James 1:22, the Bible says, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

He claims God’s promises set forth in the Bible. In Jeremiah 33:3, the Bible says, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” In Psalm 50:15, the Bible says, “And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” In Psalm 37:4-5, the Bible says, “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.” In Romans 8:28, the Bible says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to

his purpose." In Proverbs 28:13, the Bible says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

He obeys God's Word through obedience. In II Corinthians 6:14-18, the Bible says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

In I Thessalonians 5:17, the Bible says, "Pray without ceasing." In I Thessalonians 5:18, the Bible says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." In I Peter 1:16, the Bible says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

What is it then to be strong? I am going to tell you. You are to take those truths you have learned and reflected upon, and bind them together. You are to cleave to those truths with your heart by faith and through obedience. You are to fortify your life with those truths; and when trials and temptations come your way, you will not give in to those trials and temptations. You will be prosperous in this life. You will be successful in fulfilling your Christian responsibilities. You will be able to accomplish that which the Lord intended you to do.

Joshua claimed God's promises by faith, followed God's commandments through obedience; and because he did not separate the two, God made Joshua to be prosperous. He crossed the Jordan River with more than two and a half million people and divided the land for an inheritance.

Brethren, you must not separate God's promises from His precepts if you are going to be prosperous in this life, if you are going to accomplish anything at all for God.

With that in mind, are you claiming God's promises by faith and following His precepts through obedience; or are you separating God's promises from His precepts and thinking you will be prosperous in life?

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

Evangelist Norman R. Stevens
602 Canterbury Road
Kings Mountain, NC 28086-9601
Phone: (813) 760-4028

E-mail: nrsevangelist@earthlink.net
<http://www.evangelistnormanstevens.com>