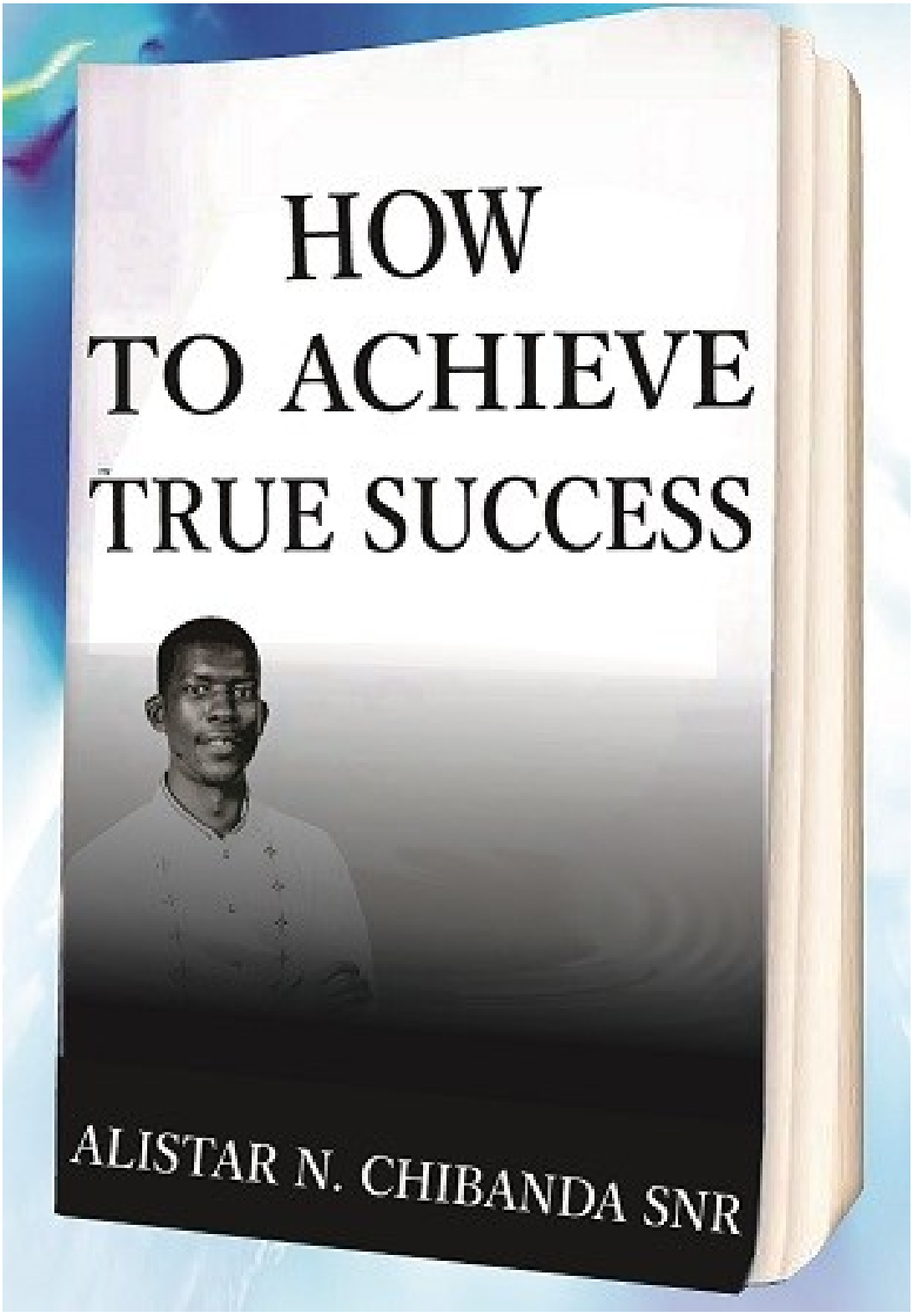

HOW
TO ACHIEVE
TRUE SUCCESS
ALISTAR N. CHIBANDA SNR

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REPENTANCE PUBLISHING HOUSE

10559 Devure Road Budiriro 5, Harare

Tel: +263 773 393 958

Email: *alistarchibandaministries@gmail.com*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to anyone out there who believes in true success and who is determined to achieve it at all costs!

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SUCCESS

I think it is good to start this book by defining success. This is because many people do not know what success really is. We have too many assumptions about success. It's time we get to know what success really is and what it is not.

My lexicon defines Success as the achievement of one's aim or goal.

Of course this is a very simple definition on success but powerful. I will expand on it so that we get a clear picture of what we call Biblical success.

I believe every person in his right mind wants to be successful but the great problem is many do not know how to be successful. This means we have so many people who are looking for what they don't know.

True Success must be rooted in God. If God is not in it then it's not true success. Acquiring many

possessions and wealth is not true success (Luke12:15) but doing God's service, and achieving goals and aims that promote mankind's welfare is true success.

I am not opposed to having possessions, or wealth but having money is not true success otherwise thieves and robbers will be deemed a success.

You can have all the money and all the things of this earth yet a failure. That tells you that true success is not what many people think it is.

True success is the accomplishment of God's purpose or aim for your life on earth. Being successful means the achievement of desired visions and planned goals that are all rooted in God.

The other dictionary describes success as the following: “attaining wealth, prosperity and or fame”. This is half truth. As I said above, success has to have it's roots in God. All the achievements you can have without God is not true success.

You also have to understand that real success is measured in levels. You go from one feat of success to the other. Thus your yesterday's success must not

exceed your today's success. Never have a better yesterday. Your today must be greater than your yesterday. Keep it that way. That's true success.

The reason why many people do not succeed in life is because they do not know who they are and what they can do. They do not know God's plans for their lives and destinies so they roam around in their communities and cities aimlessly. They are actually going nowhere and achieving nothing.

This is a mediocre life, a life full of misery and no rewards.

DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE

Discover who you are and the gifts, talents, and skills you have. This will help you to find out what God has purposed for your life.

Your desires and passions may not be what God desires for your life. Then it means you have to search in God what His purpose for your life is.

The Bible says, "...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath

before ordained that we should walk in them". (Ephesians 2:10)

God has created us for a purpose. Each and everyone of us is serving his or her purpose on earth. Have you discovered yours ?

It's time to search in God and in His Word for who you are. I have told you that the gifts, talents and skills that God has equipped you with are an indicator too of what God intends you to do and accomplish on earth.

Knowing your purpose on earth is the first step to be a great success for the Lord. God wants you to be a success. He wants you to live a fulfilled life, a successful life. The discoveries you make about "You" will help you to be a true success.

Fulfilment in life is in pursuing God's purpose for your life. If all you do is to pursue what God didn't create you for, you'll end up totally disappointed and frustrated in life. You'll not be a shining star in what God has not called you to do.

Go on your knees and pray. Ask God for your calling, gifts, skills and talents he has put in you.

Ask Him to show you what He wants you to do. That's the beginning of success!

Once you know who you are and what you can do and pursue it, you become a resounding success. In this world there are many fields where one can choose and be a success in life. It is only in the church ministry that you don't choose to be a Pastor, Prophet, Apostle, Evangelist or Teacher but are called by God.

Your choices must be directly linked to God's purpose for your life. Don't choose to do something that God did not equip you to do.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE

Dreams & Visions

Dreams are an indicator of one's purpose. God speaks through dreams too. But every dream must be checked with God's Word to see if it tallies with the teachings of scriptures. Every dream that is

contrary to the teachings of the Word of God must be discarded and ignored.

"For God does speak--now one way, now another--though man may not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds" (Job 33:14-15NIV)

In the scriptures we have replete of stories of men of God who accessed God's voice and direction in their dreams.

Joseph was such a man who heard God in His dreams and he became a success in Politics. He was made the Prime Minister of Egypt by Pharaoh and his appointment was not an accident. God had showed Joseph years before in his dreams that he shall become a great leader.

"Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." (Genesis 37:5-7 NIV)

The life of Joseph was set on a divine course because God had showed him in his dreams. This can happen to you too.

I remember my early years in the Lord, I had many dreams of my ministry. In my dreams I saw myself preaching to multitudes at crusade grounds and in different church Halls.

At the other time I had a dream that was epic. I dreamt sitting at the back of the car with God's Servant, Apostle E. H Guti founder of ZAOGA FIF (a great ministry that is in over 143 nations).

In that dream we were coming from Mutare to Harare. The Apostle was telling me a lot of things and some I can't even remember. We branched off to a certain church that was along the way. When we entered that church I saw multitudes if impotent folks, and the sick lying down on the floor and most of them were in pain.

The man of God and I were moving amongst them and he said to me, "Do you see all these people who

are suffering ? Help them, pray for them and heal them in the name of the Lord!" Then we left.

From that dream I knew that God was calling me into a healing and deliverance ministry. I also knew that He wanted me to have a compassionate heart towards His people. I still remember the dream today as if I had it yesterday.

Joseph knew his calling through divine dreams. No wonder why he became a great success and we read him today with awe.

Paul is another man who got to know his calling through a vision. He was on his way Damascus to persecute the Christians when the Lord appeared to him.

"At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom

thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:13-19).

Paul was told what to do by God in his vision. He received a call by meeting the Lord on the way to persecute the church.

We all know that from the day he saw the vision of Christ, Saul became Paul and went to Arabia where he spent some years preparing to launch out into fulltime ministry. This same Paul became a great Apostle who wrote about three thirds of the New Testament. He answered to the call of God and God used him greatly.

There are some people who don't see visions like Paul and who didn't receive divine dreams like Joseph yet God placed a ministry or an assignment in their hearts. An example of such a man is Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was in captivity in Shushan castle in the land of the Persians when news about the state of Jerusalem came to him from his brother Hanani.

"That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven" (Nehemiah 1:2-4)

This bad news made Nehemiah to weep and to go before the Lord in prayers for his people and for Jerusalem the city of God. As he prayed God put an assignment in his heart.

"So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon". (Nehemiah 2:11-12)

So it clear that Nehemiah knew exactly what to do for God has put it in his heart. He had a knowing of exactly what to do. That made Nehemiah to act on it with set goals and deadlines and he rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and the Bible shows us that though he faced resistance from his adversaries (Tobias and Sanballat) he didn't fail.

Another way of knowing your God given assignment is through your Prophet. However, this is an area that was greatly abused by too many who claims to be prophets.

They tell people one thing to the other and thereby confuse a lot of people and or send them into assignments that God never intended for them to do.

Anyone can look at you and claim to speak for the Lord into your life. Anyone can say thus saith the Lord, "Go into ministry, and you will be successful" or "Leave this country and go to this or that country". Anyone can say that. But the most important thing is: did the Lord actually say that ?

Lamentations 3:37 declares, "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?"

If the Lord didn't say it, then it won't do you good to follow it. This is an area you need to discern and test every prophecy given to you by men.

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge". (1 Corinthians 14:29)

If all you do is to receive prophecies without judging them you may end up plunging yourself into the wrong areas and places God didn't send you to.

For example, in the year 2016 a certain man prophesied to me that I should pack my bags and leave my country to go and settle in South Africa. He claimed my ministry is in South Africa and not Zimbabwe. He wanted me to relocate my family and ministry to South Africa for good.

I knew what God had told me so quickly I told him that God didn't tell him that. You see, that young prophet was misdirecting my life, family and ministry at once. I may have church branches in South Africa but it's not true that God wants me to relocate and live there.

Many have been misdirected in life and ended up in regions that God didn't intend them to be and they were killed in cold blood and some are struggling and suffering there unnecessarily.

Don't mistaken me, am not saying all those who were murdered in foreign lands died because they were in wrong places but some.

That is why I always say you must have your own tried and tested prophet from the Lord who when he

speaks to you, you witness with your heart that this thing being said is from the Lord.

King Jehoshaphat of Judah listened to his prophet and got victory in battle. In fact he needed not to fight as the Prophet had prophesied. He was just to sing and praise the Lord and victory was guaranteed. (2 Chronicles 20).

There is also another way to know your God given assignment. It is through being led by the small still voice of the Holy Spirit.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God". (Romans 8:14)

There's no one who knows you more than the Holy Spirit. Remember He said, " I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for".(Jeremiah 29:11 GNB)

The Holy Spirit is God. He is the third person of the Trinity and He is equal with the Father and the Son. He knows you from A to Z. There is nothing hidden in His sight concerning your life; past, present and future He knows everything!

So fellowship with Him more often and He will tell you the things you don't even know on yourself. He will lead you into God's assignment for your life.

I rely on Him one hundred percent and He has been leading me ever since I knew Him. I am in my right assignment because I am led by the Spirit of God.

Quit leading yourself. Let Him lead you. There are some people who are like Lot. They look up and see all the green pastures on the other side and without giving it a thought they jump into it.

The end of Lot was hardship, sufferings and committing incest with his daughters in a cave! What a shame. Lot didn't take time to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit from the onset. He relied solely on his five senses and he failed dismally.

"And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my

herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom". (Genesis 13:7-12)

Lot was led by his carnal sight. He was not led by God. And he later suffered for it. Abraham was different because he was led by God.

"And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and

sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters". (Genesis 19:29-30)

Lot lost everything he had because he didn't listen to the Holy Spirit. He didn't even ask Him for the way to go. He just went to Sodom because he saw the greener pastures.

We have so many ministers who have done what Lot did. They saw money in other countries and rushed to establish their ministries there. God didn't send them. They followed their natural sight and that is why they are struggling and suffering there. Some will seem to make it at first but sooner or later they will end up in a cave like Lot with nothing to show for all their years in foreign lands.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing". (John 15:4-5)

I am aware that there is success out there which is not part of the Kingdom of God. It is worldly success that is based on worldly principles.

But true success is based on God's Word - Jesus Christ. If you don't have Jesus as your Lord then true success is not in view.

It is important that one receives Jesus Christ as his/her personal Lord and Savior and abide in Him.

In the book of John 15, Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the

same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing".

He is telling you that no matter what you do without Him you have no long lasting fruits.

Success without Jesus is not success at all. It is cow dung. It is vanity!

You have to be born again and become a child of God. If you are not saved just say this prayer from your heart,

"Lord Jesus, I believe you died for me and rose from the dead. I receive you into my heart as my Lord and Savior. I am born again now. Amen".

If you have said that begin to celebrate, you are now a child of God and a candidate of Kingdom Success. The Lord wants you to live for Him. He is ready to make you a great success if you continue to abide in Him. You may make some faults or errors but confess your sins and keep moving. Success doesn't mean you will not fail sometimes.

Failure is not the enemy of success, but rather the teacher of success. Edison tried the light bulb 3,960

times before he succeeded. He could have given up at any point but with each failure he eliminated one more thing that didn't work. Eventually he found the right one.

The Bible says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths". (Proverbs 3:5-6).

In other words rely on the Lord and not on your own mind and he will direct you to the realms of success.

"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep". (Psalm 127:1-2)

Without the help of the LORD it is useless to build a home or to guard a city and without God's help it is useless to get up early and stay up late in order to earn a living.

I cannot over emphasise how important it is to stay connected to the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 1:30 Jesus is called the wisdom of God. What I want you to understand here is that you cannot have true success if you lack this wisdom from above.

It's one thing to receive wisdom and it's another thing to walk it. It takes a deliberate willingness to choose to walk in the path of wisdom and to operate in it. Without the wisdom of God you cannot be a great success in the Kingdom. I want you to read my book called *"The Force of Wisdom"* for more on this topic. I promise you it will transform your life forever.

You need to operate in the God-kind of wisdom for you to be a true success!

CHAPTER TWO

VISION

It is of noteworthy that without a vision no one can be a success. I would want you to also read my book called *"VISION"* to understand fully this subject.

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish..."(Proverbs 29:18). You are pitiable if you are a visionless man. It means you are existing for nothing and you'll perish.

God wants you to know your vision and run with it. We are in a world where only visionaries make a difference. You can never shine without a vision.

"And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry". (Habakkuk 2:2-3)
Write It Down

The Lord told Habakkuk to write down the vision that He gave him.

Why does the Lord want you to write down the vision ? Various reasons. One of them is that ideas are captured when written down.

If you don't write down what the Lord gives you, you'll soon forget and remain where you are. It is the pursuit of vision that changes your position.

Success is a slave of ideas and visions. God has made it to be so.

Without a vision there is no success but perishing. Imagine being a leader without a vision, your people will perish. They will end up nowhere.

Make It Plain

The Lord said make the vision clear upon the tablets. Don't make it complicated. Write it in simple language that everyone understands and if it need be, explain it to your people.

People with a vision are powerful people. They cannot be defeated by devils or other human beings. It takes only the Lord to stop them.

Do you remember King Nimrod ? He had a vision to build a city that reaches to Heaven. His people understood it and they began to work on it.

"And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do". (Genesis 11:6).

God knew that these people were unstoppable because they had a vision. The only problem is that their vision was not from God and it was based on evil ambitions of their wicked King, Mr Nimrod and God had to stop it.

Run With It

No matter how nice your vision sounds and no matter how good and sensible it is, if you cannot run with it nothing will happen.

God showed Noah a vision of saving the world through building an Ark. Noah had a global vision from the Almighty God and he explained it to the people but unfortunately they didn't believe it and as we all know the flood came and they all perished except Noah and his family - eight souls!

What I want you to see is this, Noah got the vision and ran with it. He didn't sit down. It appears God had prepared him for such a time to run with it.

When I received a vision to start a church on the first of January 2004 around 2am during an all night prayer I didn't take off at once. I studied the vision and prepared to take off at the appointed time of the Lord.

Four years later the Lord appeared to me again and told me to run with the vision. By that time I was already pursuing an Engineering profession at college. But still the Lord wanted me to be in the ministry. I obeyed and ran with the vision. I believe that's the reason the Lord has kept me alive.

I have never regretted following the Lord and running with the vision of my ministry. It's worth it. I am shining together with God's people because we are serving God in this vision.

The question is what is your vision ? There are different kinds of visions from the Lord and all of them they make you a success and a star.

There is a vision to be a medical doctor, an accountant, a teacher, a nurse, a preacher, a businessman, an investor, a footballer, etc

Have you identified yours? If your answer is yes then wait on your vision and as the Lord said to Habakkuk, "the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come!"

I believe the Lord is not saying sit back and fold hands until the vision happens on itself.

The Good News Bible puts Habakkuk 2:3 in this way,

"Put it in writing, because it is not yet time for it to come true. But the time is coming quickly, and what I show you will come true. It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it; it will certainly take place, and it will not be delayed".

He is talking of fulfilment. He is saying the vision may delay to be fully fulfilled but it will certainly take place therefore wait for it to be fulfilled.

So you are busy running with your vision whilist you are waiting for it's fulfilment. You are not waiting to do it, you are not waiting to run with it but you are simply waiting for it's full blown days!

Maybe an example will do to explain this. Let's say God has given you a vision of a very large ministry. You have to prepare for it and once you feel the Lord is pushing you to start go ahead and start it.

Run with it even though in the beginning you may not see large crowds that you saw in your vision. This is where the Lord said the vision will not lie but at the end it will speak, in other words it will be fulfilled.

It won't be fulfilled if you don't run with it. You have to put your hands on the plough and run with it. The church may be small but keep with it, the Lord will be preparing you for greatness tomorrow.

So you be waiting like a waiter in a Hotel. In other words you are not sitting down but serving and later in the near future you will have the large crowds in your church just as you saw in your vision.

This is the same principle in business and every other areas of pursuit. God shows you the end from the beginning and He tells you to wait for that end - vision. You wait here while working torwads that end.

In the year 2001 I had a vision of my wife and kids. I took my Diary and wrote their names. My wife is from Midlands and I am from Harare the Capital city of Zimbabwe. These are two worlds apart.

By the time I wrote the vision of the woman I was to marry and the kids we are to have, I didn't know her and I had no clue how I was going to meet her but I knew the vision will speak (happen).

I prayed for my vision and committed it to the hands of the Lord. I ran with it, and in the year 2006 I met my wife at school, she was so small that I didn't think she was the one.

At that time I was busy with my high school work and my ministrations in the Scripture Union group that had church services every Sunday morning and Monday afternoon.

Then one day in 2007, Two years after I had completed my upper six secondary education the Lord told me that I was to marry that girl I met at school.

I had left her at high school doing her form three whilist I was going for my degree programme at the University of Zimbabwe.

To cut the story short, we married and had our wedding on the 15th of January 2012 and according to my vision we now have three kids, the first born a boy, the second a girl and the third a boy, exactly according to my 2001 vision which I wrote plainly in my diary. That is, eleven years later my vision began to speak!

Listen, success is not an accident. It is not a citizen of any country and success is not a racist. It does not discriminate between the black and white skins!

The Bible says, "...Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him". (Acts 10:34-35)

So it doesn't matter your skin color, race or ethnicity, if you embrace the principles of success and do them you'll become a resounding success!

Have a vision. Write it down. Make it Plain upon tablets and Run with it.

CHAPTER THREE

PRAYER

I believe prayer is important in the school of success. Since Jesus already has told us that without Him we can do nothing (John 15) then it means prayer is needed for one to be a true success.

If prayer is so important in the school of success then it is also important to know what it is and how to use it.

Prayer is a two way communication with the Lord. This is where you converse with Divinity. You talk to Him and He talks back to you.

There are different kinds of prayer but we are not going to look into all of them because that is not the reason of this book. But we are going to talk about prayer in general.

Jesus used to pray a lot. We spotted Him many times in scriptures going to prayer and He prayed to His Father in Heaven.

In Mark 1:35 the Bible says, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed".

Jesus was the Son of God who dwelt among His people in the land of Israel some two thousand years ago. He was hundred percent God and hundred percent man when He walked on earth in those days. He was a man and He was God but still He needed to connect with His Father in Heaven through prayer.

We are told by John Mark that Jesus went to prayer very early in the morning. To me it seems it was His custom to pray everyday. I don't believe there was a day He didn't talk to His Father.

There is also another portion of the Bible where we are shown how Jesus was so passionate about prayer.

In Luke 6:12 the Bible says, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God".

Jesus went into the mountain alone to pray and he continued all night in prayer to God. That's news!

How many are praying all night to God alone in their closets ? Jesus was God but He did pray. He was on earth so He had to humble himself and connect with His Father through the means God provided – prayer!

If prayer was not that important to the success of Jesus ministry then Jesus wouldn't need to pray early in the morning and sometimes all night to God. The fact that He committed Himself to prayer in His earthly ministry then it tells you volumes that prayer is very crucial.

So success is also connected to your prayer life. How prayerful you are can also determine how successful you'll be in your endeavors.

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1)

If prayer was not important Jesus wouldn't have wasted His time doing it and He wouldn't have taught His disciples to do it.

My friend, if we don't pray we will fail. The work we are doing is not by mighty nor by human power but by the Spirit of God (Zechariah 4:6). You need the divine element to succeed in life and you access it through heartfelt and continued prayers.

In my early days of ministry I used to pray a lot. I was very young but I would spend time in the mountains praying. Sometimes I spent all night prayers in my mother's kitchen alone praying to God.

Daily I would call my friends and go to the backyard of ZAOGA FIF Budiriro 5 District Church to pray. Many times we got tired and dozed off to sleep while walking up and down praying sometimes in the mountains and some other times at the backyard of our church.

Now that I have my own ministry and the church I am leading, do you think I pray less ? I have found out that without prayer I am a big failure. So I don't stop praying. Come rain, come thunder you'll find me praying to God.

The Apostle Paul said, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18)

I realized that a Pastor who doesn't pray will experience heavy attacks from the devil and have his church in troubles and too many problems. He will have a lot of insurmountable problems that he can't solve because he is not prayerful.

The same thing happens also to a business man who is not prayerful. After giving his tithe and seed offerings to the church, he still faces financial challenges, and few to no customers and wonder what's going on. He generally thinks that giving to God will bail him out of challenges, trials, problems and attacks of the devil in his business. But that's not so.

After giving to God, go and pray. Satan will not be happy that you are a giver in the Kingdom of God. He will launch attacks on your businesses and finances so pray and invite God to honour His word in your life.

Remember the Lord had said, He will rebuke the devourer for your sake so that he will not destroy your produce and profits (Malachi 3:11). Pray that it will be exactly that.

In my few years in ministry I noticed that the days I was so busy or tired to pray, Satan had a field day at church. He would cut off our electricity during preaching time and if we turned on the Generator it would not work till the service is over. We would do all we can to make it work but it wouldn't in many occasions and when the church service was over the generator would function normally.

Some times we would have funny happenings during service times. Babies would start crying at once in church and they would not stop. A lot of such like disturbances would happen because we were tired or busy to pray prior to the church service.

At another time we had birds breeding right inside our church. No matter how we tried to remove them and their nests they would not just go. They stayed and made funny sounds during preaching and had droppings over the heads of the congregants. This happened because we were relying on our physical strength and not prayer.

Satan is not afraid of your physical muscles or hard work. If you are not prayerful all physical strength and hard work will mean nothing. The Bible says, "...for by strength shall no man prevail". (1 Samuel 2:9)

You have to learn to pray for your church, ministry, business, job and family and all that concerns you if you want to be an all round success!

God will help you if you pray. Don't think that He will just step into the affairs of your life uninvited. You have to pray and ask Him to help you always. That's how it works here on earth.

A business man who doesn't pray may have cheques that always bounce, he will have bad debtors always and sometimes he will have many unending problems with his clients and workers.

I know of a business man who wasn't prayerful. His factory woke up one day full of strange rats that were busy eating everything they came across; from electric wires, computer cables, furniture, couches, carpets etc.

He put rat poison but somehow the rats didn't eat the poison and they evaded all rat traps he set.

These were not ordinary rats. Satan was upto something. He wanted to destroy this man's business and when I told him to pray about it. After a week or so of daily intense prayers the rats just disappeared. He never saw them again!

A Pastor who doesn't pray will have similar to worse problems in church too. He may have too many breakaways each time he is about to have serious ministry breakthrough. Sometimes he will have more sick people and untimely deaths of in his church.

The devil thrives where prayer is not made regularly by God's people.

The Apostle Peter, a man who walked with Jesus, a man who was the great of all the Apostles and who had a very successful ministry said,

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world". (1 Peter 5:8-9)

How do you resist the devil if you are sinful, cold and prayerless ? It is an impossible mission till you are converted, holy and prayerful.

James the brother of Jesus Christ also said, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded".(James 4:7-8)

He says to draw nigh to God; of course he is telling us to pray. You can't draw nigh to God without spending time with Him in prayers. He also tells us to forsake evil ways and cleanse our hands. Holiness

is a requirement for a successful life in the kingdom of God.

If you can be busy to do something else be busy then, but never be busy to pray. Prayer is important.

CHAPTER FOUR

OBEDIENCE

To be obedient is to be willing to comply with the commands, orders, or instructions of those in authority.

Obedience is essential in any christian army. The Bible says we are soldiers.

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". (2Timothy 2:3)

Once you see such a scripture above just know that's how God sees you. He doesn't see you as an ordinary Christian but as a a Soldier of Jesus Christ.

To God, you are not an ordinary civilian; you're a soldier in God's Army!

As I have already said above, obedience is essential in any army. Every soldier is required to be obedient. Any form of disobedience will attract a penalty!

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons". (Hebrews 12:6-8)

So be a good soldier in the Lord's Army and to be a soldier you have to learn to be obedient, to follow commands, and instructions of our Chief Commander the Lord Jesus to the dot!

Most people want to be successful but they don't want to obey the teachings of the Bible and that's the reason they always fail in their endeavors.

Success is not an accident but a choice one makes in life. If you choose to obey the commandments of the Lord then you have chosen to be successful. Abraham was a successful man. The Bible shows us how he became a success. It didn't happen over night but it was a result of continual obedience to the commands of the Lord God Almighty.

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

SO ABRAM DEPARTED, AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN UNTO HIM; and Lot went with him: and

Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. (Genesis 12:1-4)

Abraham obeyed the Lord when he was told to leave his country and his father's house. He had grown up there but the Lord said move out. He didn't argue or question the Lord, but he obeyed and went. That was the beginning of Abraham's success.

Imagine what had happened to Abram if he had disobeyed God. He would have lost it all. He would have remained a pauper, a sufferer and a struggler in the house of his father Terah.

In Deutronomy 28:1-2, We are told the benefits of obeying the Lord.

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God".

Obedience comes with so much benefits that many are dying to get out there. The only problem is that they don't know that the secret is obeying the Lord.

A song writer once wrote, "Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey!"

Soldiers are not allowed to behave as civilians. They are people who are trained to obey commands and to read coded language and to understand it.

This is the same with you a soldier of Christ. God has wired you with intuition, and He has filled you with the spirit of obedience therefore He expects you to obey Him.

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Colossians 3:5-6).

This scripture is only telling us that there are the things that if you do they will attract the wrath of God, that is, you will not be a success. Things like

fornication, covetousness and such the like that Apostle Paul listed above are not befitting to a child of God.

Jonah

One day the Lord wanted a man to preach against the sins of Nenevah and he sent Jonah on that mission but something happened, Jonah disobeyed. He didn't want to go to Nenevah so he headed for Tarshish. That was disobedience in play before the very eyes of God.

"Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD". (Jonah 1:1-3)

Jonah heard the commandment of the Lord but he decided to disobey and went down to the sea, found a ship that was going to Tarshish and paid the fare thereof and got into one of the ship's deck and slept.

The Lord was not pleased with that. Jonah's disobedience prompted the Lord to work against him.

"But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken". (Jonah 1:4)

The problem was the disobedience of Jonah. Remember the Lord had said in Deuteronomy 28 that if one was to obey His commandments He was going to bless and set the obedient above all the nations of the world!

Jonah disobeyed and a mighty tempest was coming against him in the sea. Death was imminent and everyone in the ship including the captain was crying for help. They all prayed except Jonah the Prophet.

What happened next was frightening. The mariners and the shipmaster took Jonah upon his request and threw him over board into the raging sea.

"Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

So they look up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging". (Jonah 1:14-15)

The disobedience of Jonah almost made the mariners to lose their lives and the ship. If they knew they wouldn't have accepted the money of Jonah to travel with them!

I don't know the disobedient one in your ship, business or ministry. He may be the one who is causing your business, company, ministry or ship as it were to capsize each time you row hard towards success!

The disobedient ones have no future. They are heading for a total business crash, ministry crash, or market crash!

The Lord said, "But if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries". (Exodus 23:22).

In other words if you obey the voice of the Lord then you will never have to worry about your enemies and adversaries again because they will face the Lord before they face you!

Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God".

And 1 Samuel 12:15 also says, "But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers".

No one in his right senses would want the hand of the Lord to work against him. Therefore obedience is the safe place of the righteous.

It is better to obey than to sacrifice.

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams". (1 Samuel 15:22)

Have you been disobedient of late ? It's now time to repent and to turn to the Lord in total obedience.

Disobedience is disobedience whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament.

Imagine how King Saul lost his throne through disobedience.

The Lord had commanded him through the voice of Prophet Samuel saying,"...the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. " (1 Samuel 15:18)

But unfortunately King Saul disobeyed that order. He didn't destroy all the Amalekites but he spared

Agag the King of Amalek and brought him and the spoil home.

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king". (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

We have men who lost their thrones, businesses, jobs, ministries, and lives through disobedience.

Adam lost the garden of Eden and his throne as the king of the earth through disobedience. (Genesis 3:23-24)

Romans 5:19 says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous".

By the disobedience of Adam we were all made sinners but by the obedience of Jesus Christ we

shall all be made righteous if we believe and receive Him!

In obeying the voice of the Lord many receive miracles and breakthroughs in life. At the wedding of Cana the mother of Jesus said unto the servants,

"...Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (John 2:5)

Thank God the servants obeyed and did everything Jesus said and a miracle happened, that is, they got miracle wine!

Obedience pays!

"He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures". (Job 36:10-11)

Success is hidden in obedience. It is a product of obeying God's voice.

The prodigal son was an obedient son until money came. He felt he was somebody else and the spirit of disobedience came on him and he left his father's house to go and enjoy spending his money with prostitutes.

By the time his money finished he began to eat with pigs and his senses were restored by the reason of his suffering.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him".(Luke 15:18-20)

Maybe you have been like this prodigal son, very disobedient and living in sin but today you want to make a decision to come back to Jesus and stop living like a heathen.

Just say, "Lord I am sorry, I repent of all my sins and today restore me into your house and fellowship. And let your Holy Spirit help me to live for You all the days of my life!" Amen.

CHAPTER FIVE

DILIGENCE & DISCIPLINE

Without discipline and diligence you may never be a true success. These are fundamental requirements for a successful life.

You cannot be lazy and lousy and think that you'll wake up a success tomorrow.

Success is an enemy of indisciplined and lazy cadres!

Discipline is self control and diligence is hard work. In today's world you may find a man who is very disciplined but lacks hard work. And another who is

diligent but lacks discipline. Both will not be successful in life.

One of the principles of success in any field is diligence, that is, working hard. If you have no work, create one for yourself.

Let me tell you a short story. When God called me into the preaching ministry I was a young generation church member in ZAOGA FIF Budiriro District and I loved to preach but my church Elder didn't want me to preach in one of the assemblies I attended so he used to block me or brush me off.

Each time I asked him for 15minutes to preach he would say no, so I began to ask his wife and she allowed me to preach for a couple of weeks before I was stopped.

My gospel was simple, I had read the books of Apostle E.H Guti (the founder of ZAOGA FIF) and also my Bible, so I began preaching from those books.

I realized that my church elder didn't want me to preach not because my doctrine was wrong but

because he didn't want me to eat up his preaching time during each Sunday morning service.

At one time he allowed me to preach for 15 minutes but I went on to preach for 60 more minutes so much that he had no time to preach that day but to close service and go home. Maybe that's the day he decided to never give me time to preach again. You see, I was not disciplined enough to preach within the time frame I was given.

I had a burning passion to preach inside of me and no one could quench it. So I asked my friend, Lenex Zinanga to go out together and preach along the streets and along the railway lines that are between Budiriro 5 and Mufakose suburbs.

We went out daily and we would preach and win souls to God and invite them to our ZAOGA FIF assembly. This continued for years until I left Budiriro for a boarding school that was far from home. However, I continued preaching even at the Boarding school.

There was a time when an angel appeared to me during an all night prayer I was doing alone in

Mufakose-Marimba mountain (some call it Faison mountain) here in Harare.

The angel made me to know that Jesus Christ wanted me to start my own ministry and five months later from that all night event, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me and we talked for about two hours, that is from around 12 midnight to 2 am during an all night prayer session in Glen View 3, Harare.

Jesus told me to start a church and he gave me a mandate and a mission. It was very clear then as it is today!

I opened my first church on 7 September 2008 that grew to over 10 branches and 33 cell groups in few years. In the inception of my ministry I was a University student doing a degree program in Engineering. I didn't know much about ministry except preaching and praying for the sick.

I began preaching on Sundays and Wednesdays only but I felt it was not enough. I told myself that there must be more than just working two days a week so I went on a thorough search to discover my work as a Pastor and Prophet and to understand it.

I didn't worry about the numbers of the congregants, all I wanted was two or more gathered to hear the Word and I would preach my heart and lungs out!

One day, I took with me two books, Excellence In Ministry by Bishop David Oyedepo, and My Bible and went into careful study and prayers for three days and I discovered all the secrets of ministry I needed.

I finished my Engineering honours degree program at University of Zimbabwe and I went into full time ministry and then I discovered that I don't need to wait for someone to call me to preach in his/her church.

I realized that I can create work for myself. So I went on to create work for myself in my small church. I always wanted to have loads of work just like Econet Zimbabwe, a wireless telephone company. In short I wanted to work from Tuesdays to Sundays and rest only on Mondays. That's six days a week of hard work and one day of rest.

During my search, I discovered that the work of a Pastor ranges from Praying, Preaching, Teaching, Visiting members, winning souls, writing christian

books, counselling people, officiating marriages, funerals and dedicating babies, praying for the sick, etc. As you can see there is a lot of work a Pastor can do everyday and be a success.

I began to give myself to hard work from the day I discovered my work. I filled my diary with work schedules in my small church and left no space for invites so much that I told my secretary to turn down any invite from anyone. I was so busy with my work.

I organized three to five days conferences, weekly cell groups, crusades, home visitations, hospital visitations, prison visitations, healing and deliverance lines, one on one sessions with believers, and I began writing christian books.

To date I have written many Christian books that teach on marriage, faith, prayer, business, finances, etc and this week alone I wrote two new books called: "The Force of Wisdom" and this one "How To Achieve True Success".

I am a very busy man not because someone hired me, but because I created work for myself. I used to love to be invited but in the beginning of my ministry

no one knew me and even those who knew me did not like to invite me to preach.

But I created work in my church and got myself busy so much that I was preaching six days a week and on Sundays I would preach in atleast two of our branch churches and I needed no invites from anywhere. I had work enough to do in my church.

Work continued to grow and when others around me began to notice my presence they started to invite me to preach for them but I had no time so I turned them down.

I went on to open two offices, one at church and another in my house to keep myself busy working for God. That's how I overcame laziness and a habit of wasting time doing nothing productive.

I had many friends but I had to cut down a number of them because most of them wasted my time that I should have used to do God's work or to write books. My vision is to write at least 1000 Holy Ghost inspired books in my life time so you can imagine how busy I am every day.

The kind of my work doesn't allow me to go on

vacations. I wish to go on holidays and I have money to do so but honestly speaking I can't. I can only afford resting on Mondays and sometimes if I have unfinished business my Monday will be eaten up by work. I get to my office at 8am and sometimes leave at 10pm or at midnight.

God gave Adam work before there was any sin or curse on earth. So work is not a curse or a sin. Work is a blessing of the blessed. That is why you find me working always.

As I said earlier, I have very few friends. I guess I am known by too many people but I don't allow them to eat up my working hours to dilly-dally doing nothing productive!

I work very hard everyday so much that I don't beg for anything – food, clothes or money. I have never begged for a dime since the day I discovered my real work in the ministry in November 2014. I have never picked my phone to call anyone begging for anything. I always have more than enough.

God supplies all my needs as I glue myself to my God given assignment and work. My ministry and I we owe no one any cent. We don't borrow and we

have never borrowed anyone anything. We pay everything in cash because we are diligent in our pursuit of excellence in ministry!

To be a true success you need to be a disciplined hard worker. Someone who will set targets and meet them nomatter the odds will become a success.

Many organizations would be great today if the leaders were disciplined hard workers.

The Bible says, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men". (Proverbs 22:28-29)

However hard work and self control will not amount to success if you don't set goals and deadlines in any project or endeavors.

As I said in the beginning of this book, success is measured in levels and at each level you find yourself be a success and go to the next level.

Without goals and deadlines you will never be able to measure your success; in fact you'll not be a success!

If you just drive without a set destination how will you know if you have arrived ? You'll just be wasting time.

But if you set a destination and drive towards it within a specified deadline then you can be rest assured that you achieved your goals if you arrived there in time.

Imagine soccer players who spend time playing foot ball without goal posts and ending time. At the end of the day there will be no winner and therefore you can't measure success in such circumstances.

But if there are goal posts, and time limit for each soccer match then success can be measured at the end of each game. The team that scores more than the other will emerge a winner. Therefore in such scenario success can be measured.

If you want to succeed, you need to set definite goals and deadlines and be disciplined enough to work hard to achieve them.

Without goals you lack focus and direction in life.

Goal setting does not only allow you to take control of your life's direction; it also provides you a benchmark for determining whether you are actually succeeding or not.

Take for example, having a million dollars in the bank is only proof of success if one of your goals is to amass riches.

If your goal is to lose 5kgs of weight within a week and if it happens then you are a succes!

If your goal is to run 10km in 30 minutes and you actually do it and achieve it then you know you are a success.

To accomplish your goals, however, you need to know how to set them. You can't simply say, "I want" and expect it to happen.

Let's discuss this more in the next chapter.

SECTION B

CHAPTER SIX

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting is a process that starts with careful consideration of what you want to achieve, and ends with a lot of hard work to actually do it.

You must learn to set goals if you want to be a true success. I have researched on this topic on internet so deeply and most of the things you'll find here are well researched principles that worked for thousands around the globe. Of course I had to mordify some of the principles to suit the christian context and beliefs.

Set Goals That Motivate You.

If your goals cannot motivate you then it is good as you have not set them. They will not be useful to you because you will lack the drive and the commitment to achieve them.

Set goals that relate to the high priorities in your life. Goals that are inline with your vision and purpose for living. Such goals will excite you and you will want to achieve them without fail.

If you can tell yourself that you can do anything through Christ which strengthens you then you will have what it takes to make your goal a reality!

Set SMART Goals

I guess you have probably heard of SMART goals already. I did.

The simple fact is that for goals to be powerful, they should be designed to be SMART.

If you study different goal setting principles online you will notice that there are many variations of what SMART stands for, but the essence is this – goals should be:

S *pecific.*
M *easurable.*
A *ttainable.*
R *elevant.*
T *ime Bound.*

Set Specific Goals

You need to set a clear and well defined goal because vague or generalized goals are unhelpful. They don't provide sufficient direction.

Remember, you need goals to show you the way. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

Set Measurable Goals

When setting your goals include precise amounts, time frames, dates or deadlines, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success.

If your goal is simply defined as "To have money" how will you know when you have been successful? Instead of just saying I want to have money, say, “I will make a million dollars by end of year!”

Without a way to measure your success you miss out on the celebration that comes with knowing you have actually achieved something.

Set Attainable Goals

Do not demoralise yourself by setting goals that are not attainable within a time frame you have set.

Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set. If you set a goal that you have no hope of achieving, you will only demoralize yourself and erode your confidence.

However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. Accomplishing a goal that you didn't have to work hard for can be anticlimactic at best, and can also make you fear setting future goals that carry a risk of non-achievement.

By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance you need. These are the types of goals that require you to "raise the bar" and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

Set Relevant Goals

Goals should be relevant to the direction you want your life, business, ministry and or career to take.

By keeping goals aligned with your purpose and vision, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want.

Set widely scattered and inconsistent goals, and you'll fritter your time – and your life – away.

Set Time-Bound Goals

Your goals must have a deadline. Again, this means that you know when you can celebrate success. When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases and achievement will come that much quicker.

Goal setting is much more than simply saying you want to achieve something. Unless you clearly define exactly what you want and understand why you want it the first place, your odds of success are considerably reduced.

Write Down Your Goals

The physical act of writing down a goal makes it real and tangible. You have no excuse for forgetting about it.

As you write, use the word "will" instead of "would like to" or "might." For example, "I will get my first million dollars by 31st of December this year," not "I would like to get a million dollars this year"

The first goal statement has power and you can "see" yourself getting a million dollars and the second lacks passion and gives you an excuse if you don't get it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MAKE AN ACTION PLAN

This step is often missed in the process of goal setting.

You get so focused on the outcome that you forget to plan all of the steps that are needed along the way.

By writing out the individual steps, and then crossing each one off as you complete it, you'll realize that you are making progress towards your ultimate goal.

This is especially important if your goal is big and demanding, or long-term.

Action Plans are simple lists of all of the tasks that you need to finish to meet an objective. They differ from To-Do Lists in that they focus on the achievement of a single goal.

Action Plans are useful, because they give you a framework for thinking about how you'll complete a project efficiently. They help you finish activities in a sensible order, and they help you ensure that you don't miss any key steps. Also, because you can see each task laid out, you can quickly decide which tasks you'll delegate or outsource, and which tasks you may be able to ignore.

What is an Action Plan

An action plan is a checklist for the steps or tasks you need to complete in order to achieve the goals you have set.

It's an essential part of the strategic planning process and helps with improving teamwork planning. Not only in project management, but action plans can be used by individuals to prepare a strategy to achieve their own personal goals as well.

Components of an action plan include:

•A well-defined description of the goal to be achieved

•Tasks/ steps that need to be carried out to reach the goal

•People who will be in charge of carrying out each task

•When will these tasks be completed (deadlines and milestones)

•Resources needed to complete the tasks

•Measures to evaluate progress

What's great about having everything listed down on one location is that it makes it easier to track progress and effectively plan things out.

An action plan is not something set in stone. As your organization grows, and surrounding circumstances change, you will have to revisit and make adjustments to meet the latest needs.

Why You Need an Action Plan

Sometimes businesses don't spend much time on developing an action plan before an initiative, which, in most cases, leads to failure. If you haven't heard, "failing to plan is planning to fail" said Benjamin Franklin supposedly once.

Planning helps you prepare for the obstacles ahead and keep you on track. And with an effective action plan, you can boost your productivity and keep yourself focused.

Here are some benefits of an action plan you should know;

•It gives you a clear direction. As an action plan highlights exactly what steps to be taken and when they should be completed, you will know exactly what you need to do.

•Having your goals written down and planned out in steps will give you a reason to stay motivated and committed throughout the project.

•With an action plan, you can track your progress toward your goal.

•Since you are listing down all the steps you need to complete in your action plan, it will help you prioritize your tasks based on effort and impact.

How to Write an Action Plan

From the looks of it, creating an action plan seems fairly easy. But there are several important steps you need to follow with caution in order to get the best out of it.

Here's how to write an action plan explained in 6 easy steps.

Step 1: Define Your End Goal

If you are not clear about what you want to do and what you want to achieve, you are setting yourself up for failure.

Planning a new initiative? Start by defining where you are and where you want to be.

Solving a problem? Analyze the situation and explore possible solutions before prioritizing them.

Then write down your goal. And before you move on to the next step, run your goal through the SMART criteria as I said above. Or in other words, make sure that it is:

•Specific – well-defined and clear
•Measurable – include measurable indicators to track progress

•Attainable – realistic and achievable within the resources, time, money, experience, etc. you have

•Relevant – align with your other goals

•Timely – has a finishing date

Step 2: List Down The Steps To Be Followed

The goal is clear. What exactly should you do to realize it?

Create a rough template to list down all the tasks to be performed, due dates and people responsible.

It's important that you make sure that the entire team is involved in this process and has access to the document. This way everyone will be aware of their roles and responsibilities in the project.

Make sure that each task is clearly defined and is attainable. If you come across larger and more complex tasks, break them down to smaller ones that are easier to execute and manage.

Step 3: Prioritize Tasks and Add Deadlines

It's time to reorganize the list by prioritizing the tasks.

Some steps, you may need to prioritize as they can be blocking other sub-steps.

Add deadlines, and make sure that they are realistic.

Consult with the person responsible for carrying it out to understand his or her capacity before deciding on deadlines.

Step 4: Set Milestones

Milestones can be considered mini goals leading up to the main goal at the end.

The advantage of adding milestones is that they give the team members to look forward to something and help them stay motivated even though the final due date is far away.

Start from the end goal and work your way back as you set milestones . Remember not to keep too little or too much time in between the milestone you set. It's a best practice to space milestones two weeks apart.

Step 5: Identify The Resources Needed

Before you start your project, it's crucial to ensure that you have all the necessary resources at hand to complete the tasks. And if they are not currently available, you need to first make a plan to acquire them.

This should also include your budget. You can assign a column of your action plan to mark the cost of each task if there are any.

Step 6: Visualize Your Action Plan

The point of this step is to create something that everyone can understand at a glance and that can be shared with everyone.

Whether your action plan comes in the shape of a flowchart, Gantt chart, or table, make sure that it clearly communicates the elements we have identified so far – tasks, task owners, deadlines, resources, etc.

This document should be easily accessible to everyone and should be editable.

Step 7: Monitor, Evaluate and Update

Allocate some time to evaluate the progress you've made with your team.

You can mark tasks that are completed as done on this final action plan, bringing attention to how you've progressed toward the goal.

This will also bring out the tasks that are pending or delayed, in which case you need to figure out why and find suitable solutions. And then update the action plan accordingly.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MORE TIPS ON CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

An action plan is designed to guide your way to accomplishing your goals. It turns your vision into

actionable goals and steps. And it helps you stay focused and motivated.

From an individual employee in an organization to larger departments can make use of action plans to steer their way towards completing their goals.

A Successful Action Plan

In order to successfully complete your action plan, all participants need the following character traits:

i. Being able to work effectively under pressure
ii. The ability to complete work to a deadline.

A Good Action Plan

An effective action plan should meet several criteria:

i. It should be complete, listing all the steps to be taken.

ii. It must clearly state who will do what by when.

Iii. It must be current in terms of both market trends and your company's goals

An action plan is a way to make sure your business's vision is made concrete. It describes the path your company will take to achieve it's goals and objectives.

An action plan consists of a number of action steps. It provides a step-by-step framework for completing a project efficiently without missing any key steps.

CHAPTER NINE

WHEN TO USE AN ACTION PLAN

Here am going to summarise what I have been saying above. The reason is that I want these principles to sink in your heart and mind deeply so that you'll rightly use them in your life, ministry and business!

Whenever you need to plan a project, regardless of size, an action plan will help clarify exactly what is required to reach your end goal.

Identify the objective for your action plan

First and foremost you need a clearly defined objective that is achievable and measurable. Use these three steps to create an action plan:

1. Identify Tasks
Identify all of the tasks that you need to complete to accomplish your objective. List them in the order that you need to complete them. You should prioritise the tasks in terms of urgency and/or importance.

2. Analyse and Delegate Tasks
Now that you can see the entire project from beginning to end, look at each task in greater detail. Consider:

Do you need to carry out every single step in order to meet your objective?

Can you delegate any of the steps?

How long should each task take?

Do you have the resources to complete each step?

Can you delegate or outsource any of the actions?

3. Audit Your Resources
This is where you determine whether you have the physical space, financial resources, staff, equipment, materials, know-how and systems required to complete all the steps in your action plan.

I believe if you make use of the information you got from this book you'll become an all round great success that many generations to come will read about in magazines and many books!

And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end... (Ecclesiastes 12:12)