

Success #1
The Attitude Of Success
Joshua 1:8

I want to begin today by reading something for you that was written by “Chuck” Swindoll entitled “Attitudes.” “The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, and a home. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is ten percent of what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitudes.”

Please listen very carefully to this statement: I preach the ideal, but I realize that all of us live in the reality. This truth is seen in 1 John 2:1, “My little children, these things write unto you, that you sin not (that is the ideal). And if any man sin (that is the reality), we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

To listen to some preachers preach, and to read some of the books on the market today, you would believe that every Christian is receiving miracles; everybody is getting instant answers to prayer; everybody is feeling good, living good, and the whole world is bright and rosy. But, I must tell you today that is not the way things are for a great number of very honest, sincere Christians. And I have found that a growing number of Christians are at the breaking point and are ready to give up altogether. **None of the talk about giving up has to do with the Lord.** Very few Christian would even dare entertain thoughts of quitting on their love for Jesus. Most despairing Christians think only of giving up on themselves. I often hear Christians say things like, “I just can’t go on anymore. I can’t make it, even though I try so hard. It is hopeless, so why even try?”

All of us want to be successful, yet so few of us are. According to the Social Security Administration, only 2% of Americans reach the age of 65 financially independent. Of the remainder, 30% depend on charity, 45% depend on their relatives, and 23% have to work the rest of their lives.

I am convinced it is God's desire for every one of you to succeed. In 3 John 2, the Bible says, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be

in health, just as your soul prospers." The words "just as your soul prospers," means that the spiritual realm controls prosperity in the natural realm.

Prosperity and success begin in your thought life, in your decisions. You decide to accept or reject Christ in your mind. You decide which emotions will rule your unclimbable mountain. You decide to feel inferior or to say, "I can do all things through Christ." **That is a decision process.** The Bible says in Proverbs 23:7, "As (a man) thinks in his heart, so is he."

Success is not accidental. It is a by-product of your *attitude*, and your attitude determines your *attainment*. Your *attitude toward God* determines the eternal destiny of your soul. **Your attitude toward people will determine whether you are a friend or a foe.** Your *attitude toward wealth* determines whether you will ever have it - and if you get it, whether it will *destroy* you or make you *happier*.

It is God's will for you to prosper. But you must hear God's Word and obey it before success can be yours. God gives us this insight in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Listen once more to our text, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."

Success is not accidental; it is a by-product of your attitude. Has anyone ever told you that you have a bad attitude? People fling that phrase around today like salt and pepper. "You've got a bad attitude." **So what does that mean?** It means you are too **critical**. It means you are too **sarcastic...too arrogant...too mean...and too inflexible.**

If you have a bad attitude, it means that you generally choose to disagree. You whine and pout when you can't get your way. You like to live with a chip on your shoulder. **You can't keep friends.** You can't keep a job. You can't keep a wife or a husband, because you are a joyless toad. You are like Rosie O'Donnell, Donald Trump, Nancy Pelosi, and Attila the Hun all rolled into one.

Who is responsible for your attitude? You are. We try to blame our attitude on our husband or wife. **We blame our attitude on the weather, the car we are driving.** We blame our attitude on the IRS or PMS - we blame it on *something, anything*, except ourselves.

But you choose your attitude every morning when you get out of bed. In Psalm 118:24 David has given us the biblical example of our attitude, "This is the

day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Your attitude is a **choice**, not a **chance**. Do you wake up in the morning saying, "Good morning, Lord!" or "Good Lord, it's morning!" There is a difference in those two.

How do you change a negative attitude? You don't get a new attitude from the *New Age*, but from the *New Testament*. We have these attitude instructions recorded in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things."

Do you get mad thinking of something that happened in your past that still angers you? Paul said if you will think about things that are **true**, **honest**, **just**, **pure** and **lovely**, put that kind of thinking into practice, he says, "and the God of peace shall be with you."

If you think about the right kind of things, you will have the right kind of attitude and enjoy the peace of God. But if you think *negative* and *critical* thoughts, pretty soon your life will be ruled by a "**root of bitterness**" that will destroy you. Proverbs 23:7 reminds us that "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

Quit worrying about what happened to you in the past. All of us have had something to hurt us in the past. God is a healer of broken hearts. **He puts dreams back together again.** The Word of God tells us in Philippians 3:14 to forget the past and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Quit wading around in the bone yard of your miserable past and stand in the winner's circle with Jesus Christ. Quit whining about your circumstances. Quit blaming your mother or father, or God or the government, or everyone on planet earth, for your failures and mistakes. **You are a child of God.** You were born to win. Get up off your face, dust yourself off and get back in the race. You can be victorious through Christ the Lord.

Listen to the financial advice of Joshua, "This book of the law" (that's God's Word), "shall not depart out of your mouth" (that's your speech), "but you shall meditate therein day and night" (that's your thought life), "that you may observe to do all that is written therein" (that's obedience), and then afterwards, after you speak the Word, after you think the Word, after you obey the Word - "then you shall have good success."

That is a guarantee from God Himself. That is a guarantee worth living by. "Then you *shall* (not perhaps, not maybe, not hope for) have good success."

What is success? If you cannot define it, how will you know when you have found it? If you are *going nowhere*, *any road* will take you there. **Success is**

progressively, systematically moving toward your God-given goal in life. If you have no goal, you will never succeed. **Can you imagine watching a football game with no goal post?** The guy who got the ball would just running in every which direction with nowhere to go. **That describes your life if you have no goal!**

Success is not making a lot of money. If the only reason you're living is to make a lot of money, you are living for a shallow reason. **Money can buy you a \$50 steak, but only God can give you the appetite to enjoy it. Money can make you a millionaire, but only God can make you rich.**

Money can buy you the finest surgeons, but God can give you the health to never need them. Money can buy you a bed of absolute, pure gold, but only God can give you the peace of mind that gives you true rest. **Money can buy you a mansion, but only the love of God will make it a home.**

Success does not mean being accepted by the world. Ladies and gentlemen I don't want the world to accept me, I want God to accept me. **My desire is to see people come to Jesus Christ for salvation. Evangelism is what my life is about, winning lost people to Jesus Christ.** If the world likes that, that is fine, if they don't I could not care less!! **Success for me does not involve being accepted by the world.**

Success for the Christian is serving the Lord with all of your heart, soul, mind, and body. It is a seven-day-a-week experience.

When one studies the Word of God, you realize that God wants you to succeed. In fact, the Bible, the law of God Almighty, gives clear guidelines concerning success. **These are the basics.**

First, it is God's will for you to succeed. **Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 8:18, "But you shall remember the Lord your God: for it is he that gives you power to get wealth." Power to get wealth does not come from your genius; it comes from God's goodness.**

Psalm 1:1-3 says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates (thinks about) day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither (unlimited resources); and whatever he does shall prosper." After you think on and act on God's Word, you are destined to prosper!

Some of you read the Word of God, you think about the Word of God, you speak the Word of God, but you do not act upon it. You do not obey the Word of God. Nothing good is going to happen until you act.

Are you facing a problem so huge there seems to be no possible solution? If so, you are not alone. Consider the problem found in 1 Samuel 17 when David has faced the ten-foot giant Goliath. Evidently David was too young to join his brothers when they marched off to defend their land against the hordes of ravaging Philistines. But he must have jumped for joy when his father asked him to take some bread, parched corn, and cheese to his brothers on the battlefield. He could not believe it when he saw the giant Goliath parading on a hilltop and challenging any Hebrew to a duel, one on one.

David's spirit was set on fire with anger when he saw this Philistine belittle the people of God. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine," David asked, "that he should defy the armies of the living God?" After some discussion with his brothers and the king, it became obvious that David could not be persuaded not to fight the giant.

Seeing this boy come out to fight him, Goliath must have roared with laughter, "Come to and I will feed your flesh to the birds and your bones to the beast of the field." But David had a secret weapon that the Goliath know nothing about, as he shouted back to the giant, "You come to me with a sword, and a spear, and a shield. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts... This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will take off your head, and everyone will know that the battle is the Lord's, and He will deliver you into my hands."

The next thing Goliath knew was the impact of a small stone driven at enormous speed to a spot between his eyes. He sank to the ground. David ran forward, drew the giant's sword from his scabbard and cut off his head. The amazed Philistines fled, the Israelite soldiers followed them, and soon they had captured back what the enemy had stolen. And the whole nation rejoiced.

What was the difference between David and the rest of the Israeli army? The answer is simple: David had an attitude of faith!

Your attitude determines your attainment. A good attitude will produce a good result. A bad attitude will produce a bad result, every time.

Listen very carefully - What excuses are you using for failure?

The night before Calvary, Jesus told His disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Jesus

was a man with unusual circumstances. He was destined to die, but with His death He purchased for us life, and life more abundantly!

I Peter 3:22 reminds us that Jesus Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." **What does that mean to us here today? It means that God is greater than your circumstances.** God is greater than your *heartache*. God is greater than the *divorce* you have just gone through. God is greater than the *bankruptcy* you have just endured. God is greater than any *crisis* you are facing. **Lift up your heads and rejoice, the living God is within you!!** You are more than a conqueror!!

Today is the first day of the rest of your life!! Why not make the best of it?? **Put your past behind you and trust God with your future!!**

If you are not saved, why not today?

Everyone please stand for prayer.

Father,

As Your child I boldly come before Your throne of grace that I may receive mercy and find grace to help in this time of trouble. Your eyes are upon me, therefore, I confess there is wonderful joy ahead, because I am "more than a conqueror through him that loved me." In Jesus' name. Amen.