

How to Succeed



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 27

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Deuteronomy 18:15–22; Joshua 1; Hebrews 6:17, 18; Genesis 24:40; Isaiah 53:10.

MEMORY VERSE: “Be strong and brave. Be sure to obey all the teachings my servant Moses gave you. If you follow them [the teachings] exactly, you will be successful [have success] in everything you do” (Joshua 1:7, ICB).



Mr. Zander wanted his students to understand the A was a gift. This gift could teach them about success.

BENJAMIN ZANDER was the music director for a famous band of musicians in Boston. Zander also taught a music class. Zander noticed that his students got nervous whenever they played for their teachers. Zander didn't want them to feel afraid. So, Zander made a special announcement on the first day of class. Everybody in the class would get an “A.” Zander didn't expect his students to earn the A. Zander wanted his students to understand the A was a gift. This gift could teach them about success. The A showed the students what was possible for them to do as musicians.

The book of Joshua teaches us about doing new things. Moses was Israel's leader for 40 years. But now Moses was part of Israel's past. The journey in the desert was over. A new group of Israelites was ready to enter the Promised Land. The land was God's gift to Israel. The Israelites couldn't earn this gift. God gave the Israelites the land to teach them how to live. God gave them this gift to show them what was possible for them to do, with His help.

Let's study the way God helped His people start a brand new life. God can do the same thing for us, too.

**A NEW MOSES (Deuteronomy 18:15–22
and Joshua 1:1–9)**

The book of Joshua starts with a promise about what will happen after Moses dies. Why is this promise so important? Read Deuteronomy 18:15–22 and Joshua 1:1–9 for the answer.

Moses died. Then God chose a new leader, Joshua. When we compare Joshua with Moses, we see they are alike in many ways. God told both men they would lead their people into the Promised Land. The Lord told Joshua: “ ‘I promised Moses I would give you this land. So I will give you every place you go in the land’ ” (Joshua 1:3, ICB). Joshua will finish the work that Moses started. Joshua really was a new Moses.

Read Exodus 33:11; Numbers 14:6, 30, 38; Numbers 27:18; Numbers 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:38; Deuteronomy 31:23; and Deuteronomy 34:9. What do these verses tell us about Joshua?



Joshua must serve and obey the Lord his whole life before he is named “the LORD’s servant” (Joshua 24:29, ERV).

Yes, Moses is dead. But his name is written ten times in the first chapter of the book of Joshua. Joshua’s name is written only four times. Moses is named “the LORD’s servant” (Joshua 1:1, ERV). But Joshua is named “Moses’ helper” in this same verse. Joshua must serve and obey the Lord his whole life before he is named “the LORD’s servant” (Joshua 24:29, ERV).

Joshua 1 shows us a change in leadership from Moses to Joshua. But we must remember that the most important leader is the Lord Himself. The book of Joshua starts with the Lord’s words. The Lord guides His people in the whole book. The Lord is the real leader of Israel.

In every age of history, the Lord chose men and women to lead His people. At the same time, why must we remember who the real, invisible leader of the church is?

CROSS! TAKE! DIVIDE! SERVE! (Joshua 1)

Read Joshua 1. What can we learn from this first chapter about the form of the book of Joshua? How is the book of Joshua put together? What are its different parts?



The things God does for Israel are shown in four action words: “cross,” “take,” “divide,” and “serve.”

Joshua 1 introduces the whole book of Joshua. The book of Joshua has four parts. The four parts include: (1) crossing the Jordan River; (2) winning the land (Joshua 1:10, 11); (3) dividing the land (Joshua 1:12–15); and (4) serving and obeying the Lord. The first chapter of Joshua also includes four sermons. Each sermon helps us understand one of the four parts of the book.

The book of Joshua shows us God’s actions for His people. God always takes the lead or makes the first move. In each action, God gives a special task to Joshua. Each task is about winning the Promised Land. Also, the book of Joshua talks about each task after Joshua finishes it.

In the end, God keeps all His promises about giving the Promised Land to His people. From then on, the Israelites are responsible for keeping the land. They can do this only with faith and obedience.

The things God does for Israel are shown in four action words: “cross,” “take,” “divide,” and “serve.” The people must obey and serve the Lord. Again, the book of Joshua has four parts. The action words below help us understand the most important idea in each part:

1. Cross (Joshua 1:1–5:12)
2. Take (Joshua 5:13–12:24)
3. Divide (Joshua 13:1–21:45)
4. Serve (Joshua 22:1–24:33)

As we see, the four parts of the book of Joshua show us its important message. God works **for** His people. But He also works **with** His people. The people must believe and obey. They must work with God if they expect God to help them. God does so much for us. He does many things for us that we can’t do for ourselves. So, He asks us to serve Him. We must obey Him and do what He commands us to do. The picture of God’s end-time people in Revelation 14:12 teaches us the same idea. We must have faith in what God does for us. Faith leads to obedience.

Think about some of the promises in the Bible that are most precious to you. What do you need to do to make these promises real in your life?

GOD'S PROMISE TO HIS PEOPLE (Joshua 1:4–6)

In Joshua 1:2, the Lord tells Joshua that He is giving the land to the Israelites. But verse 3 (NKJV) says that God already gave them the land. How can that be?!

The land was a gift from the Lord. The Lord was the real Owner. In Joshua 1:2, 3, the word for “give” has two different meanings. The first meaning shows us that God is giving the land to His people. The Israelites already won some land before they came to the Jordan River. But most of the Promised Land didn't belong to them.

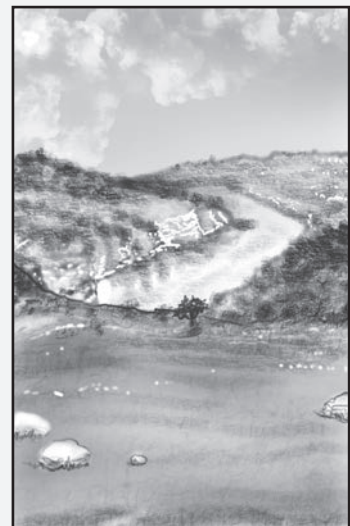
In Joshua 1:3, the word “give” is used to mean that God **already gave** the land to Israel. The things God promises in the Bible are sure and true. So, we can trust that we have them now, even before we get them.

In Joshua 1:3, the words “you” and “your” mean both Joshua and the people. So, God gives His promise not just to Joshua. God makes His promise to everyone in Israel.

Also, the Hebrew word “kol” is used many times. “Kol” can be translated as “all” or “every,” as we see in chapter 1. This word helps us to understand that God, Joshua, and the people must be in perfect agreement. They must be joined together in their hearts and minds as one people. Then God can help them fight for the Promised Land.

Read Joshua 1:4–6 and Hebrews 6:17, 18. At the beginning of Joshua 1, the Promised Land was only a promise. But in the opening verses, God says the land is more than that. The Promised Land is His gift to Israel. When people die, they often leave their money, property, or land to their children. As God's children, Israel is getting the Promised Land from God. This gift makes Israel God's special heirs. An heir is someone who gets the money, property, or land of someone who dies. God's riches include more than money or land. His riches include His promises. How are we the “heirs” of God's promises?

We can trust God's promises to happen because He says He will be with us. Israel needed God to be with them so that they could succeed. Without God, Israel would have been just another country, with nothing to show they were special (Exodus 33:12-16). Joshua needed God to be with Him to succeed, too. Nothing today has changed. We need God's help to succeed. That's why Jesus made us a special promise in Matthew 28:20.



**As God's children,
Israel is getting
the Promised Land
from God.**

BE STRONG! (Joshua 1:7–9)

Why did the Lord need to tell Joshua two times to be strong and courageous? Read Joshua 1:7–9 for the answer.



Because the Lord promised to be with Joshua, Joshua was not afraid.

God gives Joshua a hard task to do. The Lord doesn't want Joshua to be afraid to do this task. The walls of the cities in Canaan look as if they can't be broken. The people in the land are trained to fight. The Israelites aren't fighters. They don't have any war machines to break down the city walls. History tells us that Egypt couldn't take control of Canaan. At that time, Egypt was the most powerful country on earth.

God wants Joshua to be strong and courageous in war. But the Lord's command to Joshua is about more than being brave in battle. The Israelites will need courage and strength to stay loyal to God's law and its rules. These laws and rules were part of Israel's special agreement or relationship with God.

Today, we may not need to fight in war. At the same time, how may God's words in Joshua 1:7–9 give us courage and spiritual strength in hard times? Also, read Ephesians 6:10–18 to help answer the question.

Today, as Christians, we must help God finish His work on earth. We may have many hard times ahead, the same as Joshua did. As we do God's work, we must fight against our own sins and against the devil. Jesus promises us that He will be with us in this fight: " 'You can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end' " of time (Matthew 28:20, NIV). Because the Lord promised to be with Joshua, Joshua was not afraid. God's promise to be with us should be enough to remove our fears, doubts, and worries today, too.

We must get to know the Lord very well. When we know Him, we will trust in Him and His promises to us. More than anything else, we need a personal relationship with Him.

Joshua stayed loyal to God and Bible truth. How can we stay loyal to Bible truth that isn't popular to follow or so easy to obey?

GROWTH AND SUCCESS (Genesis 24:40)

Read Joshua 1:7–9, along with Genesis 24:40; Isaiah 53:10; and Psalm 1:1–3. What do these verses teach us about growth and success?

The Hebrew word “saka” is written as “success” in the English language in Joshua 1:8, NIV. “Saka” is success that comes from plans that turn out well. “Saka” also can mean things that happen in your favor.

The word “saka” means “to be wise” in the Hebrew language (Joshua 1:8). “Saka” also means “to enjoy success.” But “saka” can mean “to act wisely,” too. “Saka” is used a lot in the books of Job, Proverbs, and Psalms. In these books, the idea of success is closely connected to acting wisely. People who act wisely respect God and obey Bible truth.

So, what do these words tell us about the Bible’s idea of success? Success is about much more than being wealthy. (At the same time, success may include riches.) Bible success includes spiritual truth and wisdom. We see this Bible truth in everything God made and in His law.

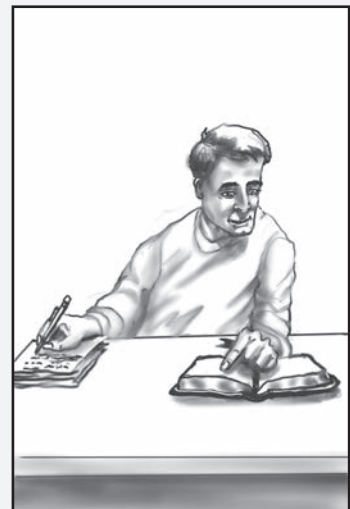
So, we must trust in God’s promises. God promises to save us with His mercy when we believe in Him. We also must obey God. God’s saving mercy and our obedience are not against each other. They are part of God’s plan to save us.

Read Romans 3:31. What does this verse say about the connection between law and faith?

Law and faith always work together. So, we must not think that if we believe that Jesus saves us, we don’t need to obey His law. We must understand that the law is important. Then we will understand the part that obedience has in God’s saving plan. We also will understand that God’s “law” and “mercy” work together.

The writers of the Old Testament respected God’s law. The law filled them with joy (Psalm 1:2; Psalm 119:70, 77, 174). The law helps us see our sin (Romans 7:7). The law also helps us understand that we need Jesus very much (Galatians 3:24).

God helps us to keep His law. But why will we always continue to need Jesus’ holy life to cover us, the same as clothes?



Bible success includes spiritual truth and wisdom.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Read Ellen G. White, “Crossing the Jordan,” pages 481, 482, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*; “Entering the Promised Land,” page 175, in *The Story of Redemption*.

“All Jesus’ promises and warnings are meant for me. God loved the people on this earth very much. That’s why He gave us His only Son. When I believe in Him, I will not die. I will have everlasting life. The experiences in the Bible are **my** experiences. All the prayers and promises, rules and warnings are mine. . . . With faith, we accept Bible truth. Then Bible truth becomes part of us and our lives. When we accept the Bible into our hearts, its truth will change our thoughts and cause us to grow. Then we will become the same as Jesus in our hearts.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 390, 391, adapted.

“We are sinners. We can’t save ourselves with our own good behavior. We are saved because of our faith in Jesus. We must think about this idea more often than any other Bible truth.”—Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*, page 19, adapted.



When we accept the Bible into our hearts, its truth will change our thoughts and cause us to grow.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Joshua’s life and experiences may be very different from ours. At the same time, what Bible truths can we learn from his life?
- ② Discuss the connection between God’s promises and our obedience to Him. How do they work together? What is the danger of saying that God’s mercy is more important than His law? On the other hand, what is the danger of saying that God’s law is more important than His mercy?
- ③ What is the Bible’s idea of success? Where do riches fit in?
- ④ Imagine in your mind how Joshua felt when he became the leader after Moses died. What promise did God give Joshua to help him do his work? Read Joshua 1:5 for the answer.

WORSHIPING A TREE

Sudhakar was a church pioneer at a hospital center in Thailand. Sudhakar noticed the strange tree right away when he arrived at work. Colorful ribbons were tied to the branches. Small statues of stone and wood sat in a circle around the roots. Someone put bananas, apples, and burning perfume sticks in the trunk of the tree. Sudhakar learned that the townspeople believed that a spirit of their ancestors lived in the tree. So, the people worshiped the tree.

The spirit tree stood on land that a kind-hearted woman gave to the Seventh-day Adventist hospital. Sudhakar was confused because he didn't understand why the community people came to the hospital to worship the spirit tree. A pastor explained that the townspeople worshiped the spirit tree long before the lady gave the land to the church.

Sudhakar understood that the people might get upset if the ribbons, statues, fruit, and other objects suddenly disappeared.

But Sudhakar decided to do something about the spirit tree. He prayed about it to God. Sudhakar also became friends with the community leader and other townspeople. Sudhakar invited them all to cooking classes, English classes, and worship services in the new worship center near the spirit tree. Little by little, Sudhakar started to clean up the tree. Sudhakar removed the ribbons, the statues, the bananas, apples, and perfume sticks. The work took Sudhakar about a week.

No one in the community said a word to him about his cleaning up the spirit tree.

Not long after, Sudhakar walked past the tree after he taught a class. A strange voice said his name. The voice came from the tree! The voice offered Sudhakar a lot of money if Sudhakar would obey him.

But Sudhakar didn't want the money. He didn't want anything from the spirit. He wanted the spirit to go away. Sudhakar said, "I command you in Jesus' name to leave and never come back."

Three days later, Sudhakar noticed that the tree was dying. All of its leaves fell off. Four weeks later, the tree was completely dead. Sudhakar chopped the tree down with an ax.

The townspeople were amazed! Soon everyone in the community knew what happened to the tree. When they heard what happened, many people came to the new worship center at the hospital. Sudhakar taught the townspeople to pray only to the God of heaven. Seven people started to attend church at the worship center. Later, they were baptized.

Pray for pioneers the same as Sudhakar who are starting churches in places where people don't know Jesus. Learn more about Global Mission pioneers: <https://bit.ly/GMPioneers>.

INSIDE *Story*



Sudhakar chopped the tree down with an ax.



Sudhakar