Four Keys To Success

Text: Joshua 1: 1-9

A. Do you want to be successful? Are you successful? How do you know?

1. The world defines success differently than God defines success.

   Webster: Success: - the fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect, or fame
   - the correct or desired result of an attempt

2. Spiritual Success:
   a. An advocate of the prosperity gospel, J. Prince defines success as:
      *God sees your relationship with Him as the only thing that you need for
      every success in your life.* (This definition measure success in terms of the physical.)
   b. Our text will show that success is focusing your thoughts and energies on God.
   c. Spiritual success is a relationship which does not end when this life on earth ends.

B. Stanford MBA school professor Jeffrey Pfeffer gives six keys to physical success.

1. Energy and physical stamina are essential.
   a. High achievers work relentlessly. (*From school to grave drifter don’t succeed.*)
   b. Successful people average 60 to 65 hours weekly; they outlast the competition.
   c. Likewise, spiritual success also does not come without effort.

2. Focus
   a. CEOs have typically stayed in one industry
   b. One’s mind must not be diluted by learning different world views
   c. Spiritual success also requires focus on the one goal which God has set.
      *Col. 3: 2 – Set your mind on things above, not on things that are on earth.*

3. Sensitivity to others
   a. Persuasion requires one know what others want and how to best communicate to them.
   b. One must listen and understand the position of others.
   c. An empathetic relationship must established before the gospel is communicated.

4. Flexibility
   a. One must be able to use facts to modify his behavior.
   b. Clinging to the past prevents progress.
   c. Spiritual growth requires that information be added and that the new information must be applied to one’s life.
5. Ability to tolerate conflict
   a. One must have the fortitude to stand without retreat when others disagree.
   b. One must have sufficient grasp of the facts to defend a correct position.
   c. The Christian must know the doctrine of Christ well enough to defend it.

6. Submerging one’s ego
   a. Must be willing to accept it when proven wrong.
   b. When forced to change, do not take it personally.
   c. This is a tricky one in the spiritual realm. What’s true is important, not who’s right.

C. In our text God gives us four keys to spiritual success.  
   1. Obey God’s commanded to meditate on His word day and night.
   2. Conscientiously do all that is written in the scriptures.
   3. God’s word must never depart from our mouth.
   4. Trust God to take care of us.

Let us take a brief look at these four keys to spiritual success.

I. Meditate on God’s word day and night. (Meditation is a lost art in U.S.)
   A. How often does one have to eat to maintain health and strength?
      1. You’ve never met anyone who eats only once a week.
      2. I’ve met some who eat once a day, but healthy people eat three or four times daily.
      3. Food is of no value to the body until it is digested.
         a. No one is filled or satisfied just reading the menu.
         b. No one is satisfied just watching other people eat.
         c. Food in the stomach is of no value until it is converted to sugar, etc. by digestion.

   B. Just reading the word is of little more value than reading the menu.
      1. Reading is not a meritorious work.
         a. Every Christian should be a daily bible reader.
         b. Just reading the bible through a couple times a year will not in itself cause growth.
      2. But, the word must be taken in before it can be processed, before it can be digested.
         a. Deut. 11: 18 – You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart
            (God through Moses commanded … ) and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.
c.  **Jer. 15: 16** – *Your words were found and I ate them.* And **Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart;** For I have been called by **Your name, O Lord God of hosts**

b.  **I Tim. 4: 13** – **Until I come,** give **attention to the public reading of Scripture,** to exhortation and teaching.

c.  **Col. 4: 13** – **When this letter is read among you,** have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and **you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.**

3.  Receiving the word prepares us to begin growing.
   a.  **Ezek. 3: 10** – Moreover, He said to me, “**Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I will speak to you and listen closely.**”
   b.  **I Pet. 2: 2** – Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that **by it you may grow in respect to salvation,**

C.  **Christians digest the word like cows digest grass.**
   1. **A cow consumes as much grass as it can while the due is still on it and when the sun gets hot they find a shady spot and ruminate it.**
   2. **The mother of Jesus “ruminated” on the events surrounding His childhood.**
      **Luke 2: 19** – But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.
   3. **Receiving the word into one’s heart has great benefits.**
      a.  **Psa 119: 11** – **Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.**
      b.  **James 1: 21** – Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.  (cf - I Pet. 1: 22 )
      * c.  D.L. Moody : “**God did not give us the bible to tell us what happened in the past but to equip us to live in the present in light of the future.**”

D.  **Once received, the word of God must be laid up on our hearts.**
   1. We must commit the word to our active memory.
      a.  Memorization is difficult for many and so it’s sometimes not very productive.
      b.  Put verses on a card and read them throughout each day maybe 3 to 5 times.
      c.  Repeat them to yourself after you read them and review them in the future.
   2. Think about those verses during the day and in your quiet time each evening.
   3. Ask yourself questions about those verses.
      a.  What was God communicating for your life? Every verse has value for you.
      b.  The scriptures were written long ago, but they communicate eternal values.
      c.  What are the eternal values taught here and how can you apply those to your life?
d. When applied to your life, how will these values change your life?

4. Study the verses that you are contemplating.
   a. How does it relate to the overall context of the section, the book, and the bible?
   b. Is the same concept addressed by other scriptures?
   c. What do the words mean? Compare translations.

5. Season the whole process with prayer and continue until discernment is achieved.

D. Meditation requires effort, but it is not optional.  

1. Joshua was commanded to meditate on the word day and night.
   Joshua 1: 8 – This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

2. Christians are commanded to set our minds on things above.
   Col. 3: 2 – Set your mind on things above, not on things that are on earth.

3. God monitors our meditations.
   Psa. 104: 34 – Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the Lord.

II. The second key to spiritual success is to obey all that is conveyed in the scripture.

A. We don’t study and meditate just to gain knowledge and discernment.

1. Joshua 1: 8 – This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

2. Jesus said that obedience is essential to relationship with Him.
   b. John 14: 15 – If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

B. We seek knowledge and discernment in order to be able to obey God.

1. When our heart is filled with God’s law, it filters the evil out of our life.
   Psa. 119: 15-17 I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways.  
   16 I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word.  
   17 Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.

2. The Apostle Paul communicated the same concept to the church.
   Phil. 1: 9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until
the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

III. The third key to success is God’s word must never depart from your mouth.

A. God requires that His followers to advocate for Him in the world.

1. **Joshua 1: 8** – This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, *(include in topic of conversation)*

2. Christians are called out from the world in order to be advocates for God.
   **I Pet. 2: 9** – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; *(You have a purpose in life!)*

B. God has no other way to get the gospel of salvation into the world.

1. There is no “plan B” God is depending on you. *You are His only plan.*

2. **Matt. 5: 14-16** … We ARE the light of the world. *(We must show the way.)*

3. When we stand before God we He will judge … did we shine or were we ashamed.

IV. The fourth key to spiritual success is to trust God to care for us.

A. Notice our text:

1. **Joshua 1: 9** – Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

2. Jesus has given Christians that same assurance.
   **Matt. 28: 19-20** – Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

B. The Apostle Peter gave us a very similar admonition.

1. **I Pet. 3: 14-15** – But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence

2. The Apostle Paul urged Christians to have the courage of their convictions.
   **I Cor. 16: 13** – Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

3. Jesus Said:
   **Matt. 6: 33** – But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
CONCLUSION:

A. Our text has given us four keys to spiritual success. 
   1. Meditate on God’s word day and night. 
   2. Do all that is written in the scriptures. 
   3. Never let God’s word depart from our mouth. 
   4. Trust God to take care of us. 

B. I pray Paul’s pray for the brethren at Philippi for you as well. 
   Phil. 1: 9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. 

C. When people see true peace and trust, they want it. 
   May they see it in you and in me. 
   1. They will if you bring the word in, digest it, apply it, let it pour forth from your lips. 
   2. Watch your thoughts, they become words. 
      Watch your words, they become actions. 
      Watch your actions, they become habits. 
      Watch your habits, they become character. 
      Watch your character, it may determine your destiny. 

INVITATION: 

--- Communion Slide ---
Lesson Text :

Joshua 1: 1-9
1 Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, 2 Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. 3 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory. 5 No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. 8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1: 8
This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.