



### **Joseph was successful because...**

- **He had the right purpose in life (Genesis 50:20; Col. 3:17; I Cor. 10:31)**
- **He had the right plan for his life (Genesis 37:1-11; Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 29:11)**
- **He had the right practices in his life (Genesis 39; Hebrews 12:11)**

**Last week we talked about having the right plan for our life.**

**We learned that when God talks about the right plan for our life that He calls it His will for our life. (Col: 4:12)**

**We learned how we can discover the will of God for our life.**

- **Scripture**
- **Circumstances**
- **Wise counsel**
- **Authority**
- **Prayer**

**God's plan for your life includes both where God wants you to end up and how he wants you to get there. It includes the ends and the means. It includes the goal and the strategy. It includes the destination and the road map.**

**To reach the destination and follow the road map to success we must be like Joseph and have the right practices.**

**By right practices I mean the right patterns of life, the right habits, the right routines, manner of life, conduct, behaviors that will enable us to fulfill the plan.**

**For the successful farmer this means tilling the soil, planting the seed, watering the seed, and removing the weeds.**

**For the athlete this means his regular physical and mental training.**

**For the soldier this means his regular physical training, mental training, and practicing with his team.**

**Last year in January I weighed 238 pounds. Today, I weigh 198.**

**To be successful at losing weight, I needed to have...**

- **The right purpose**
- **The right plan**
- **The right practices**

**It is not enough to just have the right purpose and the right plan.**

**I am on the board of directors at Kimray Corp. For us to be successful, we need to have...**

- **The right purpose**
- **The right plan**
- **The right practices**

**In my personal finances, I need to have...**

- **The right purpose**

- **The right plan**
- **The right practices**

**In my marriage, I need to have...**

- **The right purpose**
- **The right plan**
- **The right practices**

**In my discipleship of others, I need...**

- **The right purpose**
- **The right plan**
- **The right practices**

**For many years I coached boys high school basketball. I knew that for our team to be successful, we needed to have...**

- **The right purpose**
- **The right plan**
- **The right practices**

**Having the right practices sounds like a lot of work.**

**It sounds like a lot of work because having the right practices requires a lot of work!**



**It is at this fork in the road in life that I have watched so many Christians make the decision to fail. They have the right purpose. They have the right plan. But they do not have the right practices. They do not have the right**

**practices because they choose not to do the work that it takes to be successful.**

**Why do so many Christians make this wrong choice?**

**Many Christians do not know have a work ethic!**

**What is a work ethic?**

**A work ethic is the principle that hard work is intrinsically virtuous and worthy of reward and not working hard is wrong.**

**When I first became a Christian, I was surprised to discover how much the bible says about working hard. I realized from the Word of God that working hard is virtuous and not working hard is morally wrong.**

**According to the bible, the work ethic originates in the nature of God. The bible tells us that when God created the heaven and the earth, He worked six days and rested on the seventh. (Genesis 1:1-31: Genesis 2:1)**

**God created the first man and woman in His image. After God created them in His image, He gave them a challenging job. They were the caretakers of the garden of Eden and they had dominion over the earth. Even though the scripture does not explicitly say how many days they worked each week, since they were created in the image of God, it would be safe to assume that they worked six days and rested on the seventh.**

**After the fall of man, the bible tells us that God commanded His chosen people to work six days and rest on the seventh.  
Exodus 20:9-10**

**9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,  
10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.  
NKJV**

**A workday was sunup to sundown. A work week was six days. God said having this work ethic was a requirement for His people.**

**working hard=working long**

**When I first started attending church consistently at the age of 17, I was encouraged to spend a lot of time meditating on the book of Proverbs. As I read and reread the 31 chapters in Proverbs, I kept seeing these admonitions to men about the value of work.**

**Proverbs 6:6-11**

**6 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise,**

**7 Which, having no captain, overseer, or ruler,**

**8 Provides her supplies in the summer and gathers her food in the harvest.**

**9 How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep?**

**10 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep —**

**11 So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 10:26**

**26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy man to those who send him.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 12:24**

**24 The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 12:27**

**7 The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man's precious possession.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 13:4**

**The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 15:19**

**19 The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 18:9**

**9 He who is slothful in his work Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 19:24**

**24 A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 20:4**

**4 The lazy man will not plow because of winter; He will beg during harvest and have nothing.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 21:25-26**

**25 The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.**

**26 He covets greedily all day long, But the righteous gives and does not spare.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 22:13**

**13 The lazy man says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!"**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 24:30-34**

**30 I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding;**

**31 And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with nettles; Its stone wall was broken down.**

**32 When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction:**

**33 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest;**

**34 So shall your poverty come like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.**

**NKJV**

**Proverbs 26:13-16**

**13 The lazy man says, "There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!"**

**14 As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed.**

**15 The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.**

**16 The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.**

**NKJV**

**I saw that the work ethic was one of the main themes of the book of Proverbs. King Solomon wrote the book for his sons. He apparently knew that having a work ethic would be a serious struggle for them. The problem was probably magnified since Solomon was rich and his sons had incredible privileges.**

**After Jesus died for the sins of the world, rose from the dead, ascended unto heaven, and established His church, the bible tells us that God commands the members of His church to have a work ethic.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-12**

**10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

**11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.**

**12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.**

**NKJV**

**Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ. He wrote this admonition to the church in a region in Asia Minor called Thessalonica to a people called the Thessalonians. He felt compelled to write it because some men in the church did not have a work ethic. He said this failure caused these men to have disorderly lives. The word disorderly means irregular. Another word for irregular is unstructured and undisciplined. The adage is true, “Idol hands are the devil’s workshop.” Having a work ethic is a part of living a holy life that glorifies God.**

**We are not saved by works but we are saved unto good works. (Ephesians 2:10). The fulfillment of God’s plans for our life will take a lot of hard work.**

- I. It was hard work for Noah to build an ark.**
- II. It was hard work for Abraham to travel from Ur to Canaan and become successful as a shepherd.**
- III. It was hard work for Jacob to marry his wife Rachael.**
- IV. It was hard work for David to tend to his father’s sheep.**
- V. It was hard work for David to train to be a warrior.**
- VI. It was hard work for David to train become an excellent musician.**
- VII. It was hard work for Solomon to build a temple for the Lord.**

- VIII. It was hard work for Jesus to make disciples.**
- IX. It was hard work for Jesus to spend time in prayer in the wilderness.**
- X. It was hard work for Paul to learn the scriptures.**
- XI. It was hard work for Paul to plant churches and to train elders to lead those churches.**

**After I reflected on these truths in scripture, I came to realize that the person who was the greatest influence on me to have a work ethic was my father.**



**In 1931, our country was suffering from the great depression. The dust bowl had destroyed farms throughout the Midwest. Looking for opportunity, many Midwesterners decided to move to California. My father, Wilbur Jessie Wells, was one of those opportunists.**

**In 1931, my father was 20 years old. He left the family farm in New Mexico and hitched a ride in a box car of a train that was heading west. He only had a few dollars left in his pocket when he got off that train. He eventually found a job in real estate in Avenal, California. He became a member of**

**what American journalist Tom Brokaw called “The Greatest Generation.”**

**The greatest generation in America was made up of men from all races and nationalities. They shared certain positive qualities that were shaped in them by their father and grandfathers. Perhaps the most important of those qualities was that they had a will to work.**

**The will to work has been called having a work ethic. My father was a great example to me. While he was attending high school, he worked on the farm for his father and he worked as the janitor at his school. He also was the captain of his high school basketball team. When he started his family in California, he worked extra hours so that my mom could stay home and take care of my older brother. When he moved the family to Oklahoma, he built our families first home during the evenings and on the weekends while he worked during the day at Tinker Air Force Base. When our family outgrew that home, he built a larger home on the lot next door to our first home.**

**My father died in 1977. His work ethic was the most important part of the legacy that he left his three children.**

**Working hard comes from a belief that working hard is a virtue. Like so many men in his generation, my father did not say much to teach his children virtues. He just exemplified what it looked like to have a work ethic and disciplined us when he thought we were being lazy. We all got the message. Working hard is a virtue.**

**When I was a young, I frequently heard complaints that men from the greatest generation were workaholics. I rarely if ever hear those complaints today. Instead, I hear just the opposite. My husband is lazy. My son is lazy. My brother is lazy. Many able-bodied men do not believe that hard work is a virtue. They expect their wives or their live-in girlfriend to work to support them while they play video games, watch Netflix, go to the gym, or hang out with their friends.**

**In 2020, most of the men in our country age 18-29 still live with their parents. Many of these men blame their failure to be responsible men on unjust conditions in our society or their personal circumstances. They have a victim mentality even though they live in the most prosperous nation in the history of the world during the most prosperous time in our nation's history. There are many possible tragic circumstances that can cause financial poverty in a family that are beyond anyone's control. But the greatest cause of poverty in our country is the failure of men to have a work ethic.**

**Without a work ethic, you will always struggle with some form of poverty in your life. Just as it takes hard work to prosper financially, it takes hard work to become spiritually mature. It takes hard work to develop healthy relationships. It takes hard work to develop useful skills.**

**I am sorry if you were not fortunate enough to have the legacy of a work ethic that my father left me. The family was designed by God to be the institution where virtue is formed in boys. But your past does not have to dictate your future. But to change your future you must change your view of**

**work. You must join those men that believe that working hard is a virtue. You will never be successful unless you have the right practices in your life and you will never have the right practices until you have the right work ethic.**

**Over the years many men have come to me and told me they believed God was calling them to start their own business or to go into full time ministry. For some of those men, I felt very good about their future success because of their abilities and their will to work. (Phil Chain; Dennis Jernigan; Ben Manis)**

**For others, I could see they had the ability to be successful, but I knew they would not succeed because they did not have a good work ethic.**



**Some of you did not have the kind of leadership that I had from my father.**

**How can you start having the work ethic that God wants you to have?**

- **Accept what God says about the righteousness of work in His word.**

**Agree with God. Consider working hard to be morally righteous and laziness to be a sin.**

- **Be born again of the Spirit of God.**
- **Repent of any attitude of entitlement.**

- **Become accountable to your boss.**
- **Connect with other Godly Christians.**