

Seven Success Practices

In **1 Corinthians 9:24** the apostle Paul said this, **“Run in such a way that you may obtain the prize.”** (NIV) Literally, *“Run to win,”* or *“Run in such a way as to succeed.”* God encourages winning or successful ways. The Bible is a manual that’s been divinely configured for victory. It is the code of practice of true champions!

Today we will examine **“Seven Success Practices”** habits that every Christian should cultivate. Note, you do not really decide your future, you decide your habits. And it’s your habits that decide, frame or shape your future! Acquiring the right habits will draw you toward your God-given destiny more effectively than anything else! Aristotle put it this way, *“You are what you repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”* Therefore, practising sound Biblical principles develops excellence - which leads to success.

In the best seller **“The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”**, Stephen Covey states, *“Your character is basically a composite of your habits - sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit. But sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny! Habits are very powerful factors in your life. Because they are consistent, often unconscious daily patterns, they constantly express your character and produce your effectiveness, or, ineffectiveness.”* Horace Mann once said, *“Habits are like a cable. We weave a strand of it everyday and soon it cannot be broken!”*

In order to make something a habit in your life, you must know what to do (have **knowledge**), then you must know how to do it (have **ability**), and finally, you must really want to do it (have **desire**). While these three qualities are active a “habit” is established - whether good or bad. Even when applying God’s word you need *knowledge, ability* and *desire* for it to be effective. This means that you should develop recognisable habitual practices that are in line with the word of God.

I have found **7 highly effective practices** that you can work on. Habits that you can cultivate in order for you to become the very person God meant you to be:

[Habit 1] **BE RESPONSIBLE.** Live your life with the understanding that you are having to give an account for your actions to God. **Romans 14:12** says, **“So then, each of us shall give an account of himself to God.”** Therefore, you must take responsibility for your own life. Your behaviour is a function of your decisions, not your conditions! **Hebrews 4:13** declares, **“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”**

Get into the habit of taking responsibility for your own actions because you know God is watching! Nothing escapes His notice. The day you make a positive decision about your life is the day your life will change for the better. So decide to be responsible! Look at the word responsibility - “response-ability” - the ability to respond (*to choose a response*). So choose to respond correctly, and don’t be like a wave driven and tossed by the winds of circumstance. Act wisely and choose exactly how you would like to respond. *Take responsibility!* If you desire to have God working on your behalf at all times, this is a vital habit to cultivate. You can create a season of success every time you choose to respond correctly (as one who must give an account).

[Habit 2] SEE THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH. Stop gazing at where you've been and start looking at where you are going! Learning to focus on that which is ahead, that which is not seen is a habit that will guarantee positive results. **2 Corinthians 4:18** encourages you to, ***"...Not look at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal"*** The first mode of vision is natural; the second is spiritual - supernatural! Created things were all made by that which is not seen. This verse tells you to get into the habit of seeing through the *eyes of faith*.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The climate of your life will change every time you decide to use your faith! So stop gazing at the things that are causing you hardship and "by faith" see more than your present circumstances - see the victory!

You must get into the habit of seeing temporary things in light of the eternal. All things are created twice, once in the spirit and once in the natural. The spiritual is the first creation; the physical is the second creation (to all things). Remember, God sees the end at the beginning!

To be able to see the physical is sight, to be able to see the spiritual is faith. The primary organ in the first discernment is intellect; the primary organ in the second is God's Word! ***"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God"*** (Romans 10:17). All through the scriptures the contrast between sight and insight (faith) is revealed, and invariably we are taught to measure by that which is not seen. ***"Seek first the kingdom of God* (that which is not seen), ***and all these things will be added* (those things which are seen)" - Matthew 6:33.****

[Habit 3] PRACTICE SELF-MANAGEMENT. Life only changes when your daily priorities change! And you will never attain your full potential until your priorities become habitual. Get into the habit of 'prioritising' as this is the highest form of self-management. The Bible says, *"People are destroyed for lack of self-control."* God could easily have said, *"My people are destroyed through lack of self-management."* The apostle Paul reasoned with people using ***"righteousness and self-control"*** (Acts 24:25). He also said, ***"I train my body and make it obedient"*** – 1 Corinthians 9:27.

Self-management is about training yourself to *being compliant* to the priorities you have set for yourself. And prioritising is simply putting first things first! Do what really needs to be done, but do it right now! And only do things that are going to be effective. In other words, *"organise and execute your life around priorities that matter."* A word of warning, you will never prioritise correctly unless you can learn to say NO! Most people think their main fault is lack of discipline. But the real problem is their priorities have not become deeply rooted in their minds. Your life will always move in the direction of your strongest thought. So make your strongest thought your "top priority".

[Habit 4] LEARN TO WEIGH THINGS UP. Legitimate accomplishment is continual movement toward that which is "just." The Bible says that an unjust measure is an abomination to God. ***"You shall have a perfect and just weight, and a perfect and just measure, that your days may be***

lengthened in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God” – Deuteronomy 25:15,16.

In **Proverbs 11:1** this is confirmed, ***“Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight.”*** Both scriptures reveal that God detests anyone who does not measure things correctly. And the reason for this is - God is first and foremost a just God! Therefore, to be just your frame of mind and heart must be to constantly seek the ‘mutual benefit’ of all, in your human interactions.

[Habit 5] BE TEACHABLE. Socrates said, *“I wise man can learn from a fool, but a fool cannot learn from a wise man.”* Being teachable means seeking to understand before you seek to be understood. It means listening before giving your own opinion. **Proverbs 1:5** says, ***“A wise man will hear and will increase in learning.”*** You must get into the habit of diagnosing first before you prescribe anything. Imagine if you went to your GP and he prescribed a medication before having diagnosed your illness! Well, this is what many of you do! If you do not listen, you are unteachable and you will never change. Growing means change. Dare to accept change (dare to listen to new ideas and concepts), and you will succeed. Remember, if you remain teachable, your best days are just ahead!

[Habit 6] PRACTICE CREATIVE CO-OPERATION. What does this mean? It means that you respect differences and value variety. It means that you are willing to allow others to have their own views. It means that you can disagree without being disagreeable. Anger will never create permanent co-operation from another. This habit should be centred around the will and desire to communicate more effectively and more sensitively. Every time you co-operate with others and are creative enough to bring about unity, you establish a very powerful situation. And what’s more, with believers, God also becomes involved. In **Matthew 18:19** Jesus says, ***“... If two of you shall agree on earth, concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.”***

When you learn to practise ‘creative co-operation’, your life will be potent, effective and exciting. A life filled with healthy relationships that are held together by the unifying presence of the Holy Spirit. Why, because He is the Spirit of Unity - the Spirit of Oneness!

[Habit 7] PRACTICE RENEWAL. This is preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have - you! Jesus said to love others as you love yourself! Loving yourself is the habit of consciously renewing the four dimensions of your nature - spiritual, physical, mental and emotional/social. God’s word has much to say about renewal, but it is often referred to as *refreshment*. And this refreshing comes from the presence of God.

Let us now look at the four areas that need renewal:

(a) Spiritual renewal or refreshment. This comes from a lifestyle of worship. **Psalm 34:1** says, ***“I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be continually in my mouth.”***

- (b) Mental renewal. **Romans 12:2** says that you must, “**Not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind.**” The word of God renews the mind, so study and practice the Word. When you get into the Word, the Word will get into you!
- (c) Physical renewal. Your body needs to be refreshed and strengthened as well. After all it is the temple of the Holy Spirit! You need an exercise regime; proper nutrition,; and stress management. Any disorder in your life can create the death of your dream!
- (d) Emotional renewal. You need to have a healthy and exciting social life. Stop attending pity-parties and start attending interesting functions. In **Psalm 51:10** the psalmist said, “**Lord, renew a steadfast spirit in me.**” Many of you need a constant spirit in you! So why not try to help someone else in need? Very often, the broken become masters at mending! Remember, your contribution to others, will determine God’s contribution to you!