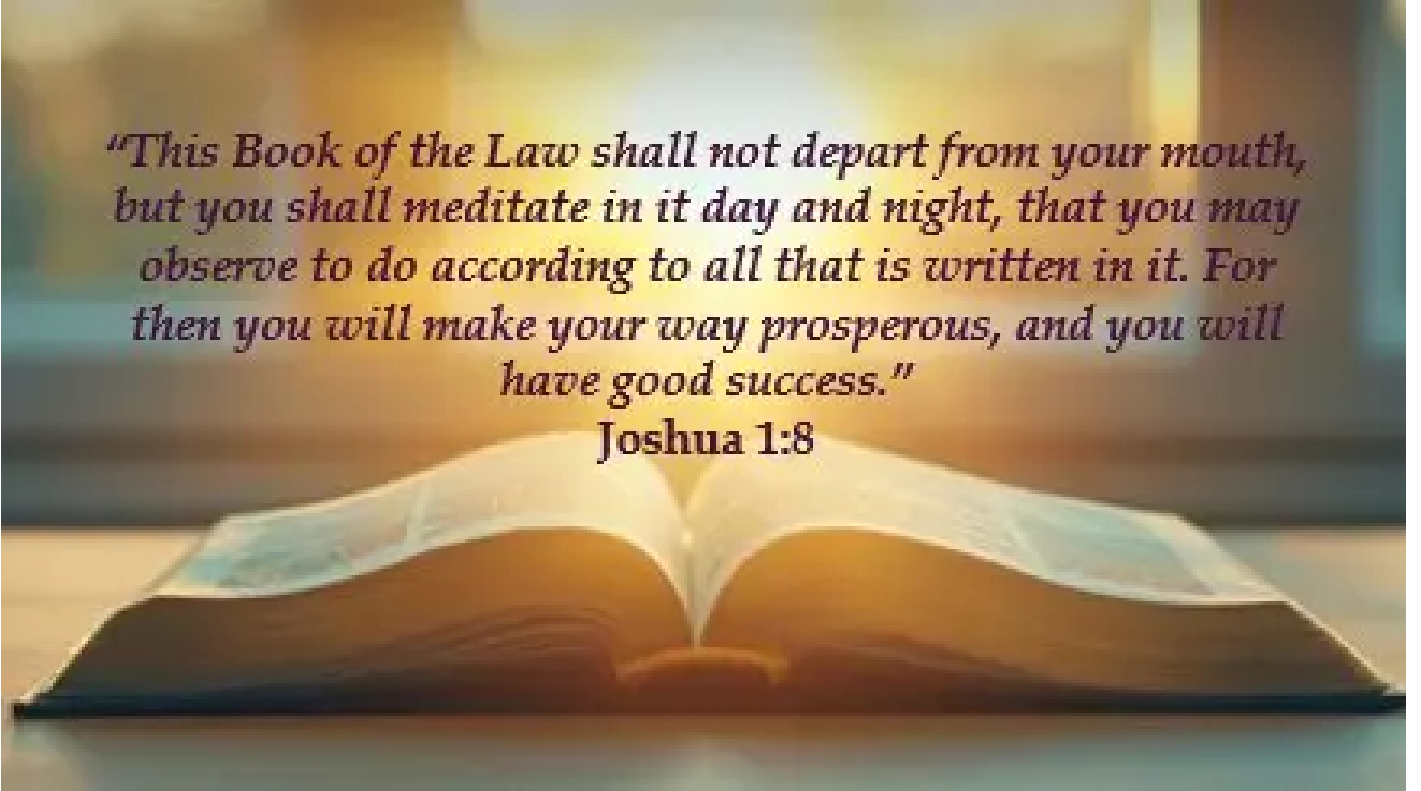


An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat. The pages are white and slightly aged. Overlaid on the upper half of the image is a quote in a dark, serif font. The background behind the text is a soft, out-of-focus image of the book's pages and the surrounding environment.

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and you will have good success."

Joshua 1:8

Old Testament Reading – Ecclesiastes 12:1-15
New Testament Reading – 1 Timothy 4:1-16

A Challenge to our Students

“The Price of Success”

Joshua 1:8-9

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

Today's children and youth are living in an unprecedented level of anxiety and isolation. Even though they are being raised in a hyper-connected digital age and appear to be comfortable with it, they still face the same issues that plague every generation at that age:

- **Self-esteem** – body image, academic excellence, and the pressure to measure up to the goals their parents and their peers set for them.
- **Bullying** – the fight for who's going to be the king of the hill or the leader of the group they associate with.

- **Stress** – today's teens are more stressed than any generation since the 1950's. They are not only worried about their academics or if they will make the team, but also about family issues, the fear of going to war, and other global issues.
- **Sexuality** – with the media's constant sexualization of children and youth, sexual curiosity and exploration now begin in the pre-teen generation.
- The number one problem facing older children and teenagers today is a severe mental health crisis, specifically dominated by anxiety and depression, with the suicide rate for today's youth, ages 12-18, much higher than previous generations, especially among females.

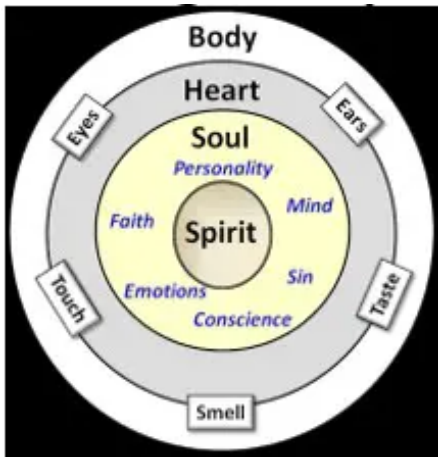
However, according to Christian psychologists, today's older children and youth have a deep empathy for those in need and a strong desire to be of help to them.

- They desire the absolute truth in every situation or circumstance, total transparency in their relationships, and an uncompromising authenticity in the adults with whom they relate.
- While they are interested in spiritual things, including the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, they are skeptical of organized religion or of any evangelical denomination.
- To win the heart of today's youth will require authentic mentorship; adults, primarily their parents, who will allow them the right of self-discovery, within scriptural boundaries, rather than a list of rules.
- This will require the parents to develop witnessing relationships through which the gospel can be communicated as a part of their daily lives rather than an evangelistic event or activity at church.

***Success is not determined by what we are,
but rather by what we are compared to what we could be.
Success is not measured by what we have done,
but rather by what we have done compared to what we could have done.***

Just as God called Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land, God calls each one of us to follow His leadership into that personal, intimate, relationship with Him, through which He will give us whatever we need to be successful.

1. Receive Jesus Christ as your Savior; make sure you have been born again in your spirit.



- Just as God gave us the five senses as our windows into the physical world, seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and touching, He also gave us five senses as windows into the spiritual world. Ephesians 1:17-19, Galatians 3:2, James 4:8, Psalm 34:8, 2 Corinthians 2:16.



- When a child is around 9-years of age, they become aware of a conflict within their inner nature – their desire to please self and their desire to please God and others

2. Surrender Your Life unto the Lordship of Christ.

- Surrendering our lives to the Lordship of Christ means moving beyond our head knowledge of Jesus and His plan for our salvation and fully submitting our lives to His authority, trusting Him to guide our steps day by day and decision by decision, so we are following His perfect will for our lives. Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 2:20, Luke 9:23
- When Jesus saved us by the shedding of His precious blood, He also bought us: we belong to Him. In John 1:12, the Apostle said that those who receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord become “**children of God,**” and God desires His children to walk in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Psalm 37:4
- The sequence of our surrender to the Lordship of Christ according to Romans 12:1-2:
 - **Present our bodies to the Lord as living sacrifices.** 1 Corinthians 6:19
 - **Refuse to be conformed to the world.** 2 Timothy 2:2

- **Determine to be transformed by renewing our minds through consistent study of the Scriptures.** Philippians 2:5-11

If we will do that, God will reveal His perfect will for our lives, and we can expect success. Joshua 1:8-9

A special note to parents:



A parent's primary responsibility is to lead their children to the Lord with their lives, not just their lips, and to teach them to love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind, and might.

If parents do that, their children will ultimately fulfill God's plans for their lives, and that should be a parent's greatest desire. This will require more than just enforcing behavioral obedience. The real target is their soul, mind, will, and emotions, where the battle between the flesh and the spirit is going on. The Parent's God-given assignment is to their children to surrender their will to God's will without breaking their spirit.

3. Saturate Your Mind with the Scriptures

- Joshua 1:8: ***"You shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."***
- Psalm 1:1-3: ***"In His law he meditates 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 shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."***
- How to mediate on the Word of God.
 - Select a place where there are no fleshly attractions or earthly distractions.
 - Select a book of the Bible and read a small section each day. I suggest new Christians begin with the gospel of John.
 - As you read the Bible, ***"receive, with meekness, the engrafted Word, which is able to save your soul."*** James 1:21
 - Look for a promise to claim, a warning to heed, an example to follow or avoid, or an attitude of life to adopt or reject.

- Adjust your will to God's will by agreeing with that truth and applying it to your life.
- Repeat that process each day as you walk with the Lord in the Light of His Word.
- The Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. Romans 8:16

Over time, you will sense several things happening in your life:

- Your faith in God, in the Word of God, and in your ability to understand and apply the Word of God will increase.
- Your love for the things of this world will decrease, and your desire for the joy of the Lord will increase.
- You will have victory over sin. The more of God's Word that you store in your heart, the more truth you have to counter Satan's lies.

Accept these challenges:

- **Let God define your calling** – don't try to figure out what He may be calling you to do; focus on His calling to draw closer to Him.
- **Protect your purity and identity** –guard your eyes, your ears, your mouth, your feelings and your relationships.
- **Take responsibility for your future** – avoid the trap of downtime, which can quickly become destructive time.
- **Be quick to obey God's Word** – true success comes when you become a doer of God's word and not a hearer only.
- **God fulfills His promises with those who are actively developing their character to equal their calling.**