

Discover what it takes to get ahead

TEENS

PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

STRAIGHT TALK FROM
CHARLES HENNING

Owner of the Largest Company of It's Kind in North America
Plus: Operations Manager, Tool Designer, High School Teacher,
Foreman, U.S. Marine, and Author of Over 200 Books

Teens: Preparing for a Successful Future

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Teens: **Preparing for a** **Successful Future**

Note to Reviewers

I am still open to make changes to this book. That's my major reason seeking your input. Proverbs 27:5-6 say, "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." I urge you to express your opinions freely.

How can I make this book better for teenager entering the workforce or college? That's my major objective.

I like to point out that www.SommerLearning.com is under development. Hopefully when the book is finally published it will be up and running. Thanks for your willingness to read this book.

STRAIGHT TALK FROM **Charles Henning**

Owner of the Largest Company of its Kind in North America,
U.S. Marine, Operations Manager, Tool Designer, Foreman,
High School Teacher, and Author of Over 100 Books

Teens: Preparing for a Successful Future

Dedication

This book is dedicated to teens who are searching for a life of success. There are many pitfalls in life. This book shows how to avoid the pitfalls by presenting proven principles so teens may have a successful future.

Teens: Preparing for a Successful Future

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Acknowledgment

I want to especially thank those who have reviewed this book. It's amazing what other eyes can see. You do your best, then you receive critiques from others, and the book becomes sharper and clearer.

King Solomon said, "In a multitude of counselors there is safety." This book has reinforced the fact we're not an island to ourselves. Desiring and using the wisdom of others is an important principle for success in all kinds of endeavors.

I've made major revisions because of comments I've received. A deep heartfelt thanks to those who shared their thoughts.

Teens: Preparing for a Successful Future

About the Author

Charles Henning, a devoted educator and successful businessman, has a passion for communicating values and practical learning skills. Charles Henning is a pen name for Carl Sommer. Since Carl Sommer has authored many award-winning character-building resources for public schools and libraries, he felt it would be wiser to use another name for books that support a biblical worldview. Otherwise, his secular books that support biblical values would be censored. Sommer's moral views for this book are from the Bible, the inspired Word of God. The church he attends is a member of National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). The NAE represents over 45,000 churches and nearly 40 different denominations.

In 1951, during the Korean War, Sommer was drafted into the Marine Corps. At age 40, he became a New York City public high school teacher. To become certified, he attended Oswego State University, City College of New York, and New York University. Sommer taught and also became an Assistant Dean of Boys in a high school with 3,600 pupils where he counseled students and parents. As Sommer taught, he witnessed firsthand the many deficiencies of the educational system and began to investigate. His exhaustive ten-year study led to publication of his first book in 1984, *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success or Failure?*

Across the nation, Sommer appeared on radio and television programs, including the nationally syndicated Oprah Winfrey Show. He has served on the Texas State Board of Education Review Committee and taught a Junior Achievement economics course at Prague University, Czech Republic. Sommer is the founder and president of Advance Publishing, which includes a recording and video studio, and Reliable EDM, a precision machining company specializing in electrical discharge machining. Today it is the largest company of its kind in North America (www.ReliableEDM.com). Three of his sons manage his companies, therefor allowing him to pursue his passion to produce motivational character-building books and videos.

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With a passion to help others, Sommer has authored numerous books. His *Sommer-Time Stories* include 42 children's books that have won over 65 prestigious national awards. They include read-alongs and videos that impart values and principles for children's success. The *Sommer-Time Stories* have been printed in Spanish, Korean, Arabic, Afrikaans, and Chinese. His videos, in which he shares character-building principles to children, are shown around the world. He has also written technical books and produced a video program that covers math from addition to trigonometry. His *Number Success* program consists of over 550 videos that demonstrate where math is used in the real world. He is currently near completion of *Phonics Adventure*, a motivational phonics literature-based reading program for kindergarten to grade 2 that he has worked on for over 25 years. It includes over 150 readers, six textbooks, numerous apps, support books, over 100 web-based lessons for kindergarten, and images and sentences for over 4,800 words (www.SommerLearning.com).

Born in 1930, Sommer has been happily married since 1955 and has five children and 20 grandchildren. Sommer likes to read, and his hobbies are swimming and fishing. He eats healthy and exercises five times a week at home. He's in good health and has no plans to retire. Don't think of him as an old weak man. To this day, Sommer can do over 25 chin-ups and over 100 pushups at one time. From Sommer's rich experiences he's still dreaming of producing new materials that promote virtues and life skills that lead to successful living.

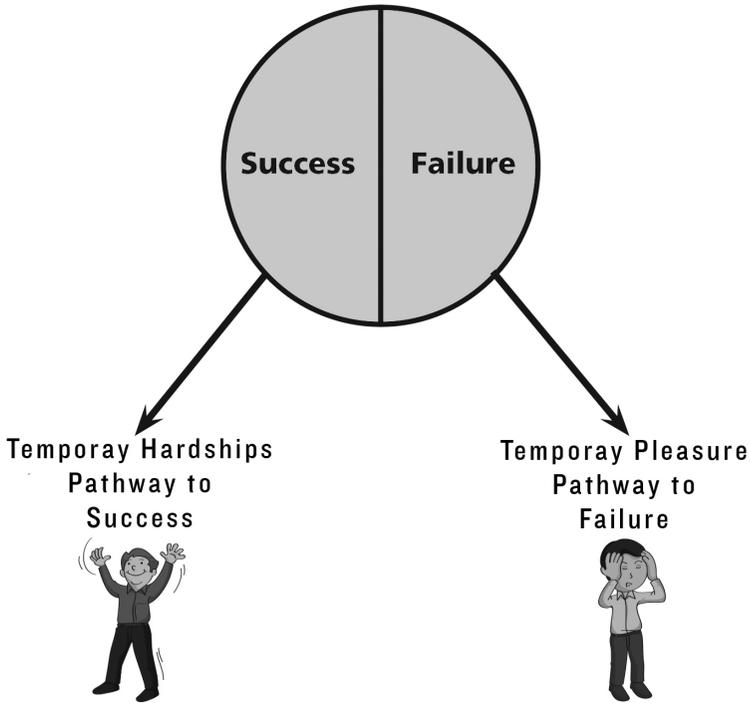
As a successful businessman and educator, Sommer is uniquely qualified to teach teens the principles necessary for success in an increasingly complex world.

Part 1

Introduction

Teens: Preparing for a Successful Future

Why This Book Was Written



The aim of this book is to help teens have a successful future. In reading this book, I warn you, I'll be speaking straightforward. I'll challenge you to *think*. Some of you will squirm—so if you don't want the truth, don't bother to read this book. This book is for those who are eager to learn and are serious about making a better life for themselves. I also hope that parents will read this book so that together we can help *you* have a successful future.

You can aim for a life of pleasure that desires to always take the easiest path, but you'll discover it's a path that leads to a life of discouragement and failure. Or you can aim for a life of success where you may encounter hardships, but the difficulties you'll encounter won't stop you from your

determination to have a successful future. You'll discover that by reading and applying the lessons in this book, you'll have a much higher chance for success.

Your life is like a book, and you're writing the beginning chapters. The choices you make now will largely determine the last chapter. I'd like to share a few things about my background to help you get on the right path for a successful future.

The Great Depression

I was born in 1930, at the beginning of the Great Depression in Brooklyn, NY. Twenty-five percent of the workers at that time were unemployed. My father and mother emigrated from Germany. My father learned his trade as a baloney maker in Germany. When he first came to New York City, he slept on park benches.

I rarely received any new toys. I got my pink rubber balls by lifting up the corner sewer plate. I took a string and a can with punctured holes and lowered it into the water to retrieve anything I found. On Saturday morning I'd go and search garbage cans to see if I could find something. At about the age of 12, I became a pretzel salesman. On Saturday morning I'd walk about half a mile and purchase 25 cents' worth of pretzels at a bakery. I got 50 pretzels and sold them for a penny a piece (100% markup). They were regular size pretzels. Of course I ate a few. So for a morning's work, I'd earn from 20 to 24 cents if I sold them all.

In my junior year of high school I worked part time. After graduating from high school I found employment in Manhattan on Wall Street, first at an insurance company earning 75 cents an hour and then at Chase Manhattan Bank earning 80 cents an hour (minimum wage was 75 cents an hour). I soon realized clerical work wasn't for me. So during my lunch break I'd visit employment agencies in Manhattan and look at their job openings.

I longed to find employment in a machine shop, but without any machining background, no machine shop would hire me. In order to get into the machining trade, I took two nighttime machine shop classes at Brooklyn Technical High School. With that school experience, I began searching for a machine shop job.

Why This Book Was Written

I found a job in a small storefront machine shop in Brooklyn. The machine shop had one employee and the owner. To get the job, I offered to work at half the minimum wage. So by working eight hours, I earned three dollars.

“That’s foolish!” you may say. “No way should you have worked for half the minimum wage!”

Yet that was one of the smartest employment moves I ever made. After three months, I earned 75 cents hour. A year after that, I was hired to learn the trade of becoming a tool and die maker—one of the highest paid jobs in manufacturing. My entire life has benefited from that decision. So if you want a successful future, lesson #1 is:

When looking for employment, don’t look just for what you’ll earn now. Look for what you may earn in the future.

Greatest Event in My Life

During that time the greatest event in my life happened. Since my friends had motorcycles, I decided to buy one also. I told my dad what I was going to do, and he firmly said, “No!”

I wasn’t happy about it, but I had no other choice. Since my friends were riding motorcycles, I was alone. As a child I went to a spiritually dead church. I was baptized as a baby, attended confirmation classes, but after that I quit going to church. However, during those years I always had a desire for the Lord. Then, at the age of 19, I visited a Bible-believing church. What a difference from the church that I was raised in! Here people really worshiped the Lord.

The reality of God consumed me. I read through the entire Bible in four to five months. I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior, and my life was totally transformed.

Marine Corps

A year and half later, while working as an apprentice tool and die maker, I was ordered to report to Brooklyn for the draft because the Korean War was going on. The draft board had stamped “USMC” (United

States Marine Corps) on my papers. All new Marine Corps recruits in our area were sent to Parris Island, South Carolina. There they cut off our hair, gave us physicals, and issued us new gear. They were going to train us new recruits into, “The Few. The Proud. The Marines!”

The first thing they taught us was discipline. In war you don’t have time to debate. You’re trained to obey. Whatever the drill instructor (DI) said, we had to do. Period. We ate, slept, stood, went to class, marched, and ran whenever the DI gave orders. In boot camp we weren’t even allowed to go to the head. (Head is a Navy term for restroom. The Marine Corps is part of the Department of the Navy; we were their naval infantry.) If there happened to be an emergency, we had to go to the DI’s office, knock on the door, and wait for permission. When permission was granted to come in, we took three steps in, stood at attention and said, “Carl Sommer requests permission to go to the head, Sir.” If we got or didn’t get permission, we were to do an about face and run out.

When a DI yells “Attention!” you had better quickly snap those two legs and arms together and stand still. And don’t you dare swat that fly that’s sitting on the end of your nose.

“But the fly tickles my nose,” you may object.

Go ahead. Swat that fly in front of a DI and discover what happens. It will probably be the last time you’ll try. I’ll tell you one thing—I wouldn’t want to be in your shoes.

I remember the small sand fleas at Parris Island, South Carolina. The back of my hands and neck were swollen from their bites. My lips were sore from blowing the sand fleas from my face. We wouldn’t dare swat them when the DI was looking. The Marine Corps did this because discipline is extremely important in the military. You cannot win battles with undisciplined soldiers. Likewise in life, if you want to become successful, you must be disciplined.

Dating, Marriage, Bible College, Pastoring

I was faithful to attend church the whole time I was in the Marine Corps. During boot camp I would read my Bible and pray. I’d get on my knees at my bunk in the barracks and pray in front of all the Marines. I made it a habit to read my Bible and pray every day. The Marine Corps

Why This Book Was Written

often moved us about. I learned it was wisest to let those around you know right away what you believed in. I was determined not to be ashamed of Christ. You may think I was a bold person, but I was very shy. I never was in a school play, and I hated public speaking. However, I could fight. I wouldn't start a fight, but neither would I walk away from one. For three years, from the age of 16 to 19, I lifted weights. At 19, I weighed 162 pounds, and I could military press 180 pounds (a military press is slowly lifting a barbell over your head). If you go to CarlSommer.com, there's a video that talks about my life. In the beginning of the video you'll find pictures of me what I looked like at that age, a video of me doing one arm chin-ups, and also my time in the Marine Corps. By the way, since my conversion I've never been in a fight.

On Sundays we were off duty, and that's when I went to church. I went to church because the Bible says in Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another." We are commanded to assemble ourselves with other believers. While in the Marine Corps I received my call into the ministry. After being honorably discharged, I came out of the Marine Corps a much stronger believer.

I went back to my home church, and there I met a girl who really loved the Lord. A year and a half later we got married. After marriage I went to Bible college and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible. I started a church across from a multi-racial housing project in Queens. The surrounding area was predominantly white. I knocked on every door in that housing project and invited adults and children to attend. Since God loves all races, I invited anyone to attend. Those who came were mostly black. I worked the whole time as a part-time tool and die maker to support my growing family and pastoring the church. After nine and a half years I turned the church over to a black church ministry.

New York City High School Teacher and Assistant Dean of Boys

After pastoring, I got a job as a foreman in a tool and die shop in Brooklyn, NY. Then I decided to take a test and become a New York

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City high school teacher. I passed the test. Even though I had a Bachelor of Arts degree, to become certified to teach in New York City, I had to take additional college classes. I attended Oswego State University, City College of New York, and New York University (NYU). In addition, I became an assistant dean of boys in a high school with 3,600 pupils, where I counseled students and parents. I saw firsthand the deficiencies of our educational system.

I'd give a third to fifth grade math test to my high school students, and up to half the class would fail. Something was seriously wrong with the education the students had received. But the educational deficiencies were not only in my school, they were a nationwide problem. I felt the Lord wanted me to write a book offering solutions for the educational, disciplinal, racial, and moral crisis. Since I attended NYU, it allowed me to use Bobst Library, the largest research library in New York City. I spent countless days researching its many magazines and books.

I took a year's leave of absence without pay from teaching to investigate the schools. In each of the five boroughs of New York City, and in some of the worst schools in the city, I served as an elementary, an intermediate, a junior high, and a high school teacher, teaching all grades from 1 to 12 in 27 different schools. To discover solutions to the problems plaguing American education, I interviewed students, parents, teachers, assistant principals, and principals. After ten years the book was published, *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success or Failure?* I was told this book had a major impact on school reform in many states, and earning an appearance on the national Oprah Winfrey Show. (The book can be read free at www.AdvancePublishing.com, under "Free Resources." It's also available as a free e-book.)

From my research and my experience as a pastor, high school teacher, assistant dean of boys, and substitute teacher in some of the poorest schools in New York City, I have much to say about why many youth end up as losers. No one in their right mind would want to hire some of the youth I've encountered. Some teenagers will wake up after traveling the road of hard knocks; others will cling to their defiant and bitter attitudes and suffer for it for their entire lives. The purpose of this book is to help you become successful, regardless of your upbringing or education.

Off to Texas

When I gave my heart to Christ at the age of 19, I believed the Lord was much smarter than I. So whatever the Bible said, I was determined to obey its teachings. In Psalm 34:8 it says, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” I loved to teach. I was earning maximum pay as a high school teacher in New York City, with a BA plus 60 additional college credits. I was 46 years old and felt led to move to Texas. When you’re single, it’s easy to move, but my wife and I obeyed the Lord. We packed up, and with five children moved to Houston, Texas. The pay offered to me for teaching in Houston was insufficient to support my family, so I went back to my trade as a tool and die maker.

Tool Designer and Operations Manager

After working two years as a tool and die maker, I found employment as a tool designer in a large tool and die stamping shop and a machining company. After working there only six months, the president said he was looking for an operations manager. He described the benefits, and then pointed to me and said, “And you’re the man.”

I received a substantial raise in salary and then managed the entire tool, die, and stamping company, and another company specializing in making pelletizer blades for the plastic industry. As operations manager I interviewed many employees for the company. Later on in this book I’ll explain why I was offered that lucrative job promotion within only six months of employment.

Founder and Owner of Three Businesses

After working five and a half years there as operations manager, I decided to start an electrical discharge machining (EDM) company with my son, who had an engineering degree. So early in the beginning of my company, I began a study, “Biblical Principles for Success.” For many years, my philosophy in life has been, “God is much smarter than I am, so whatever God says, I’ll do.” I discovered the key for making a company successful was to obey the Golden Rule, “Therefore, whatever

you want men to do to you, do also to them” (Matthew 7:12). I asked myself,

“If I were a customer, how would I want to be treated?”

Within four years, we became the largest wire EDM job shop in Texas. During that time I also started Advance Publishing, as well as a recording studio and video production company. After nine years, Reliable EDM, with 15 wire EDMs, became the largest wire EDM job shop west of the Mississippi River. Today we have over 80 EDMs, and a branch in Broussard, Louisiana. We are now the largest EDM job shop in North America (www.ReliableEDM.com). I’ll be sharing why we were able to achieve this.

I’ve written 42 character-building children’s books. Some of you may have read some of them. Today you may be one of those teens reading this book. I’ve written a secular book for high school students, *Teen Success in Careers and Life Skills*. I’ve included some of that material in this book. However, this book goes much deeper. It’s jam-packed with wisdom from God’s Word, the Bible, the true source of all wisdom.

The Sommer-Time Stories series, read-alongs, and videos have now won over 65 prestigious national awards. The books have been translated into foreign languages. In our video studio, we produced videos from these books where I read the stories and endeavor to motivate children to learn successful skills. These videos are now shown on many television stations throughout the United States and around the world. What happened?

That’s what this book is about: How *you* as a teen may become successful. I’ve interviewed many employees, ministering to teens as a pastor, taught teens as a high school teacher, had 19 consecutive years of teenage experience from my five children, and lots of experience from my 20 grandchildren. This book is not just my ideas. I’ll be sharing secrets from many individuals and leaders on how they discovered their road to success.

Part 2

Education

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2

Importance of Education

Dramatic changes are taking place everywhere, and having an education is extremely important if you want to understand and take advantage of these changes.

Technology Explosion

The cause for these dramatic changes is the explosion of technology. Let's look at a simple operation, such as writing and publishing a book. To write my first book I used a typewriter. After making many changes by using scissors and pasting together my manuscript, and then retyping it numerous times, I finally sent it to the printer. Then the printer retyped the book to make hard type in order to print the book. We still weren't finished with the book. We had to examine the hard typed copies for mistakes, and the printer had to correct the mistakes manually. This was an extremely labor-intensive way of producing books. It took me ten years to write my first book: *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success or Failure?*

The Arrival of the Computer

Then computers arrived. They radically transformed writing and publishing. I quickly embraced this labor-saving technology. With the aid of the computer, I've written technical books and numerous full-color picture books. Today, we can take a full-color book, make a PDF file, and send the file directly to the printer by means of the Internet. The printer takes the PDF file and automatically produces plates to print the full-color books. The printer never receives a hard copy of the book. It's all done electronically.

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Computers have also transformed industry. My EDM company relies heavily on computers. We now do machine work that was impossible to manufacture a few years ago. Computers have dramatically reduced the cost of making many parts. You may visit our website at www.ReliableEDM.com and view our training videos to get a better idea of this amazing technology. We also have a video and recording studio. Computers have also dramatically altered the way videos and music are produced.

I've written the book, *Non-Traditional Machining Handbook*, which provides information on the latest technology concerning lasers, water jets, electrical discharge machining, rapid prototyping, photochemical and electrochemical machining, and abrasive flow and ultrasonic machining. Dramatic revolutionary and labor-saving changes have taken place in industry. Under "The Machining Revolution," I stated:

From the earliest ages, individuals learned to use various hand tools to shape objects. As knowledge increased, the use of tools also increased. The industrial revolution arrived and introduced more sophisticated and precise tools such as drill presses, lathes, and milling machines.

Another revolution came—CAD/CAM (computer aided design/computer aided machining). Instead of manually moving machines, computerized programs were downloaded into machines and the operations proceeded automatically. The use of these machines dramatically increased productivity...

Other innovations include automatic tool changers, robots, workpiece and pallet changers, and artificial intelligence that enables machines to "think" through complex machining sequences.¹

Modern technology has decreased the number of jobs in both agriculture and industry. Today less than 1% of the US population claim farming as an occupation. People are not eating less; rather, farming

Importance of Education

methods have become extremely efficient. Large automatic machines now do most of the farm work that used to be done by hand. Today there are farm machines that use computer monitoring systems, global positioning systems (GPS) for location, and self-steering systems that allow machines to become more precise and more productive in the use of fuel, seed, pesticide, and fertilizer. The screens on these new farm machines look like a jet cockpit. Cows are now fed automatically, according to the quantity of their milk production. Infrared cameras are installed to determine if chickens have fevers.

The global economy and increased productivity have caused declines in the industrial workplace; however, the industrial workplace is still an extremely viable field with many high-paying jobs. In contrast, the service industry has exploded. This includes such industries as transportation, utilities, financial investments, insurance, teaching, wholesale, retail, health care, social media, entertainment, recreation, science, and technical services. The cause for these dramatic changes is the explosion of technology.

I'm Thinking of Quitting School

Today the number of high school dropouts is a major problem. Many high school students are fed up with school and are thinking of quitting. It's a very tempting situation. These quitters are likely to shout, "Hooray! No more books; no more studying. This is great! I'm free at last. Now I can get a job, start earning money, and do whatever *I* want."

Let me say in bold capital letters:

**QUITTING SCHOOL IS THE DUMBEST
DECISION YOU CAN MAKE**

Quitting school is the easiest road to take. But I warn you, you're in for a real shock. You're hallucinating if you think you can get a job, earn good money, and do whatever you want. Because of your lack of education, you'll likely find yourself in a minimum wage job such as sweeping floors, cleaning tables, flipping burgers, washing dishes, digging ditches, cutting lawns, stuffing envelopes—or being unemployed.

High School Dropouts

I've asked students in my classes why some employers require job applicants to have a high school diploma in order to stock shelves. The students were puzzled that an employer for such a simple job as stocking shelves would require a diploma. The reason? High school dropouts tend to be quitters. When the going gets tough, they quit. Dropouts have never mastered toughing it out when things get hard. That's one of the key ingredients for success.

High school dropouts usually lack discipline. A great benefit of getting a high school diploma is it proves you have the stamina to stick it out. Put yourself in an employer's shoes. If you had a choice between hiring someone who quit school or one who graduated from high school, who would you choose?

Can you take a moment and stop and really think of the consequences for quitting school? Do you realize that dropouts are much more likely to be unemployed, end up in prison, and live in poverty? Dropouts are also more likely to be divorced, single parents, unhealthy, and earn less money. Do you want this to be your future? Don't take the easy road and quit school. Instead, take advantage of the education you are now being offered. You'll never regret staying in school.

You may decide to take the easy road and quit. But don't gripe when you can't find a decent job and employer after employer rejects you. Yes, there are always minimum wage paying jobs available, but one day you may get married and have kids. To support your family with a decent life, you may have to work two jobs to survive. Do you want this to be your future?

The Need for Education

To earn decent wages you need to be educated. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, part of the US Department of Labor, reports that full-time workers age 25 and over who earned a high school diploma earn 40 percent more than those who dropped out. Those holding at least a bachelor's degree earn over 70 percent more wages than those who graduated just from high school.²

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Say a dropout earns \$30,000 yearly, a high school graduate would then earn \$42,000 yearly. That's \$12,000 a year! And for those with a bachelor's degree, they would earn \$71,400 yearly. That's a difference of \$29,400! Think about it. For the rest of your working career, you'll earn extra money every year just by being a college graduate rather than just a high school graduate. For many students it pays to go to college and earn a degree.

Let me share my experience about the importance of education. I attended Grover Cleveland High School in Queens, New York. I took an academic course that required me to take algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. If it were up to me, I wouldn't have taken these difficult courses. When I began working as a tool and die maker, I discovered I needed to know algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. I brushed up on my math, and began using these three subjects. My entire career would have suffered if I hadn't taken these courses.

After serving in the Marine Corps, I went to college. One of the required courses was English, where the teacher stressed writing reports. If it were up to me, I would have skipped this "boring" subject. A few years ago I had the opportunity to speak at a student assembly at the college that I graduated from. I told the students that out of all the subjects I took in college, in hindsight, English turned out to be the most profitable. Why was English so important? I've written over 200 books, many are coming out with my literacy program, and I'm still writing. You may say, "I'm not a writer. Knowing English isn't important to me."

That's what you think. Today, English is more important than ever. We're now corresponding with one another more and more with email. Do you want to look uneducated when you write your email? You need to know how to write if you want to get one of those high-paying jobs that requires communication.

Did I see the future for what I would be doing when I was in high school? I never dreamed of becoming a tool and die maker, foreman, tool designer, operations manager, teacher, assistant dean of boys, award-winning author, and owner of three businesses.

You may give this excuse, "Schooling may have benefited you, but

I still don't see any value for me." Is that the real reason you want to quit, or are you too lazy to take the hard road and begin studying and doing the things you know you should do? Booker T. Washington said, "Nothing ever comes to one, that is worth having, except as a result of hard work."

Solutions for Failing Students

You have two options—quit school like a dummy, or buckle down and do everything possible to graduate. Okay, you messed up. You refused to listen to your teachers. You cut classes whenever you could. You had your fun; now you're paying for it. Regardless of the reasons, you're failing most of your classes. What's the solutions? Face your problems and say with gutsy determination, "Whatever it takes, I don't want to be a failure. I'm going to graduate from high school! I'm not ruining my entire future and earn much less money because I took the easy road by quitting school!"

Go to your teachers or school counselor and ask for advice on what you can do. Let me warn you, this won't be easy. You'll have to buckle down and begin to study and do your homework. Be willing to take remedial classes. Whatever you do, make sure you stick it out and graduate from high school. You'll never regret it.

Who are your friends? Are they a group of quitters? If they are, find new friends. There's an old saying, "Show me who your friends are, and I'll show you what you'll become." Don't let your friends drag you down. You'll avoid many problems if you learn to choose your friends wisely. The path of failure is littered with those who followed their friends. The Bible says, "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26). Proverbs 13:20 also says, "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed."

In some schools the "cool" ones are those who don't study, don't carry books, and cut classes. They mock those with books and label those who get good grades as "nerds." One day the tables will be turned. These so-called "nerds" who carry books and are interested in getting a good education will be the managers of the "cool" ones who refused to study

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and cut classes when they felt like it. One day these uneducated “cool” ones will be sweeping the floors and taking the trash out of the offices of the “nerds.”

Wise up. Refuse to follow and listen to the crowd who ridicules education. These so-called “cool” ones are foolish. What employer will want to hire them except for low-paying work? Stiffen your back and be determined to do what’s right and not be a crowd pleaser. Envision your possibilities with an education.

Wall Street Journal reports, “Only 37% of American 12th graders were academically prepared for college math and reading.”³ I’ve got good news for you if you’re struggling with math. Many students ask this question, “Where will I ever use this math?” It’s a very legitimate question to ask. If you go to www.NumberSuccess.com, there’s a free program that I developed that demonstrates real-world math with over 550 videos. The four teachers have won the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics from the National Science Foundation teaching the course, and I’m the practical math teacher demonstrating where math is used in the real world.

If you want to get ahead academically, develop good reading habits that challenge your mind. Set aside thirty minutes every day to read books about topics that interest you. Above all, start daily Bible reading. Don’t become one of the 37 percent who are unprepared to enter college. Prepare yourself for a great future.

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3

Overcoming Failure

You want to make your future bright and successful, but you say, “I’ve tried to get good grades in school, but I couldn’t grasp it. I tried to be the class president, but was rejected. I tried to join a team, but wasn’t chosen. Everything I do ends up in failure.”

Or you may be like me, my parents were born in Germany. My home language was German. I was born one year after The Great Depression. About 25% of the people at that time were unemployed. My parents never took me to a library. There were very few books in our home. I just about passed the English exam to graduate from high school. I could have been labeled as an at-risk child.

You may be able to add your reasons for why you’re a failure. Benjamin Franklin said, “He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.” Abraham Lincoln said, “My great concern is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with your failure.” I’d like to ask you, “What leads to success or failure?”

What Leads to Success or Failure?

Read the following list and choose the people who you believe become a success.

1. Born a slave; mother kidnapped; didn’t walk until three years of age; was sickly and stuttered when he spoke; graduated from high school at the age of 21; was rejected from college because he was black.

George Washington Carver became a world famous scientist. He created over 300 products from the peanut alone.

2. He came from a family of 17 children, and at the age of ten his father pulled him out of school to learn his trade.

Benjamin Franklin became a writer, businessman, inventor, scientist, and ambassador. He helped Thomas Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence.

3. At the age of one she became sick with scarlet fever, leaving her blind and deaf. As a child she had a bad temper; she pinched, hit, and kicked to get whatever she wanted.

Helen Keller went to Radcliffe College, the best university for women in the United States. She learned through braille to read and write French, Greek, German, and Latin. She wrote 12 books and traveled around the world, speaking to promote the needs of the physically challenged.

4. Was born in a tiny one-room log cabin, mother died when he was nine years old, lost eight elections, failed twice in business, and suffered a nervous breakdown.

Abraham Lincoln became the 16th president of the United States, and in 1863 signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves.

Learning Disabilities

In the *Psychology Today* article “Facing the Invisible Handicap,” clinical psychologist Steven Schulman reports:

Learning disabilities don’t automatically lead to low achievement in life. Many accomplished scholars, politicians, artists, entertainers, entrepreneurs, athletes and professionals have had to struggle with learning disabilities. Serious weaknesses in one area seem to spur some people on to develop exceptional strengths in other areas. The extra energy of hyperactive individuals, for example, can come in handy once it is put under control.

Albert Einstein would probably be diagnosed as learning disabled if he were growing up today. He showed no signs of genius in his early years; his parents and teachers feared he was less than normal intellectually. It has been reported that he did not learn to talk until he was 4 years old nor read until he was 9, and he failed his entrance exam the first time he applied to the Federal Institute of Technology. In his own words, “As a pupil I was neither particularly good nor bad. My principal weakness was a poor memory and especially a poor memory for words and texts.”

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One of his problems—and, ironically, his later claim to fame—was that he either could not or would not solve scientific and mathematical problems in the usual ways. Instead he invented his own unique, creative ways of conceptualizing problems.

Today the young Thomas Edison probably would be recognized as dyslexic, but during his childhood he was simply thought of as stupid. “I remember I used to never be able to get along at school. I was always at the foot of my class...my father thought I was stupid, and I almost decided that I was a dunce.” Eventually he was withdrawn from formal schools and tutored at home by his mother. He never did learn to spell or write....

Sculptor Auguste Rodin had difficulty learning to read and write. His father said, “I have an idiot for a son,” and his uncle agreed, “He is in educable.” President Woodrow Wilson didn’t learn his letters until he was 9 years old or learn to read until he was 11. General George Patton never learned to read well and is said to have gotten through West Point by memorizing whole lectures. Other historical notables now thought to have learning disabled include Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, Leonardo da Vinci and Hans Christian Andersen.¹

One of the reasons people suffer so much from failure is because of their pride. They want everyone to see them as the picture of success. Living your life with the constant aim to impress others can lead to a frustrating life. Learn to accept yourself the way the good Lord made you. Your goal in life should always be to do your best, and not to be concerned about what other people think.

If you want encouragement in your failure, go to a nursery where children are learning to walk. You’ll see them fall again and again. What do they do? They get up and try again. They don’t give up in spite of their repeated failures. You need to have the same attitude. Okay, you failed—you messed up—but don’t lie in a pit of despair and groan the rest of your life. If you have sinned, repent, then trust God for forgiveness. Now get up, brush the dust off your clothes, and evaluate what you can do to become successful. Because of constant discouragements, some spineless youth take the foolish path and think of committing suicide. Face your problems! Stop worrying what others think! Take steps to become successful.

Using Failures as Stepping Stones to Success

You'll find that many great men and women encountered failure, but they used their failures as stepping stones to success. Remember, the only ones who never fail are those who never attempt to do anything. Once there were two frogs that fell into a pitcher of cream. One frog said, "What's the use?" So he gave up and croaked. The other frog kept kicking and kicking until the cream turned into butter. He then jumped out.

The story is told about how people began to eat young chickens or broilers. In 1923, Mrs. Wilbur Steele ordered 50 baby chicks from a mail order house, but by mistake they sent her 500. She realized that if she let these chicks grow to full maturity, she'd have so many eggs she wouldn't know what to do with them. She got the bright idea to sell those birds while they were still young and tender. From that incident the broiler industry was born.²

Joseph Boyett and Jimmie Boyett, in the book, *The Guru Guide*, about "The Best Ideas of the Top Management Thinkers," said this about failure:

One experience you absolutely must have to become a leader, say our gurus, is failure. Failures seem to be the spark that ignites early leadership lessons and burns them into your consciousness. Warren Bennis cites the executives he knows well who felt that they learned the most when they hit bottom and really screwed up. Problems, he says, shape leaders like weather shapes mountains; "difficult bosses, lack of vision and virtue in the executive suite, circumstances beyond their control, and their own mistakes [are] the leader's basic curriculum." Bennis quotes Margaret Thatcher: "It's at that moment when the iron entered my soul that gave me the steel I needed to have the resilience to become a really first-rate leader."³

Take a good look at your failure, and then say with gritty determination, "You're not going to keep me down! I may be defeated, but I'm not giving up!"

Gritty Determination

Early one bitterly cold morning two brothers went to school to build a fire in the pot-bellied coal stove to heat the room before their teacher and classmates arrived. One of the boys was thirteen and the other was eight. By accident, the boys used gasoline. There was an explosion. The schoolhouse was filled with flames. The unconscious eight-year-old was dragged out of the flaming building. His older brother died from his wounds.

In the hospital the doctor told the mother that her eight-year-old son would surely die, too. But this young boy wanted to live. The doctors got together to decide what was best for the boy. His knees and shin bones had no flesh, all the toes on his left foot were gone, and the arch was practically destroyed. The doctors called the parents in and informed them that since the legs were so severely damaged, the best thing to do was to amputate the boy's legs.

When the boy heard this, he pleaded, "No, no! Please, no! Please don't cut off my legs!"

Upon hearing the pleas of their boy, the parents decided not to go along with the doctor's advice. The mother kept massaging the boy's legs and encouraged him to work hard so he could stand. At this point the boy spent most of the time in bed or a wheelchair.

One day as he sat in his wheelchair, he got out of the wheelchair and pulled himself through the grass to a picket fence. He pulled himself up and began dragging himself along the fence stake-by-stake. Every day he did this, until he made a smooth path around the fence. His determination paid off. Slowly he began to stand up, then haltingly walk, and then run.

He began walking to school, and then decided to run to school. In college he joined the track team. This young man, Glenn Cunningham, who was thought to be a hopeless, ran the world's fastest mile. In 1933 he won the prestigious Sullivan Award as the nation's top amateur athlete. In 1974 he was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame.

John C. Maxwell, in *Developing the Leader Within You*, stated:

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A study of three hundred highly successful people, people like Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Winston Churchill, Albert Schweitzer, Mahatma Gandhi, and Albert Einstein, reveals that one-fourth had handicaps, such as blindness, deafness, or crippled limbs. Three-fourths had either been born in poverty, came from broken homes, or at least came from exceedingly tense or disturbed situations.

Why did the achievers overcome problems while thousands are overwhelmed by theirs? They refused to hold on to the common excuses for failure. They turned their stumbling blocks into stepping stones. They realized they could not determine every circumstance in life but they could determine their choice of attitude toward every circumstance.⁴

Street Kid Transformed

When I was five years old, I went through a very traumatic experience. My father was furious that my mother had attended a church and began living a Christian lifestyle. “I’ll convert you,” he yelled. In a violent rage, my father dragged my mother around the room by her hair in order to knock out her conversion experience. He broke a chair, picked up a part of the chair, and began beating my mother on her arms and legs. He put a gash on her head. Then he smashed her head through a window. Thank God, my mother refused to give up her newfound faith.

Because of the constant tension in my home, I lived my life as a street kid. I slept and ate at home, but I didn’t want to be around the home with my dad. My father often yelled, so I preferred to be outside playing in the streets of New York City.

However, my mother had a great influence on my life, so from my earliest years I always had a desire for the Lord. Often I’d stop and listen to street corner preachers. Since we weren’t allowed to listen to religious programs in my home, sometimes I’d take a radio to bed with me and listen to religious broadcasts under the bed covers. One day I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior.

After I accepted Christ, I had a new hunger for wisdom. My vocab-

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ulary was extremely deficient. I made my own dictionary and wrote down words I didn't know. I began reading the Bible and other books. I was determined to follow the Lord at any cost. The Lord was going to be the leader of my life. After serving in the Marine Corps, graduating from college, and pioneering a church for nine and half years, I felt led to become a high school teacher. At the age of 40, I passed the test to become a New York City high school teacher. This provided me a great opportunity to work with teenagers.

Lazy Students

When I was a teacher, one night I was on my way home after speaking to parents at our high school open house when I met a furious student in the hall. He was yelling at his aunt who took care of him. He had received a failing grade from one of the teachers. I asked him about his problem. He told me what happened. I asked to see his report card. I examined his report card and said, "Judging from the report card, you were a goof-off and didn't do the required work and studying."

He readily admitted this. "What you should do is look at yourself and try to change," I said. Then I added, "Do what you're supposed to do."

What was I doing? I was challenging this student so he would take intelligent action for his failures. He listened. It was one of those beautiful moments when I witnessed a raging student being transformed by listening to instruction. I used straight talk to help him see that his problem wasn't the teacher, but his lackadaisical attitude toward learning.

In the dean's office, a 19-year-old student was reported for being disruptive in his English class. These are some of the reports on his record: threw a chisel in his woodworking class, used abusive language, was repeatedly late to school and classes, was defiant, refused to identify himself, defaced an English textbook, cursed a substitute teacher, and raised his fist at a teacher. He had many other negative comments on his record as well.

As the dean, I discussed the son's defiant and rude behavior with his mother. But she defended him by saying he had these problems because he was black. I told her we had many black students in school, and they were never in the dean's office.

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This same student happened to be in my automotive class. He really enjoyed this class, and out of all the students in the class, only one other student received a 100 on a test. Some of his grades on his report card were: chemistry 40, speech 65, English 60, and automotive 93.

I told his mother about the grades, and she called him stupid. As a dean we can be very frank with parents. I disagreed with the mother and told her that her son wasn't stupid, but lazy, for only her son and another boy in my class received a 100 on a test.

On the last day of school another student came and asked if I would change his failing grade of 60 to a passing grade of 65. I went over his record and showed how he failed the tests and didn't do most of his homework. I had warned him, but he never listened. Now that he had failed, he was concerned. I told him that to get ahead, he must be able to read, study, and apply himself. Then I said, "I purposely gave you a 60 to show you that you nearly passed. One day you'll thank me more for the 60 than if I gave you a 65. I hope this will wake you up to apply yourself." He smiled.

Why did I do this? It wasn't to punish him, but to help him realize that to become successful in life, he had to work, study, and apply himself. Let me say this to those who are planning on going to college. Some of will be paying lots of money to get an education. Be intelligent. Make the most of your college education. Don't just take the easy courses. Take advantage of the opportunity to learn. You're paying for it.

Labeling Yourself a Failure

Another destructive attitude is labeling yourself a failure when you fail at something. If you put a walleyed pike into a fish tank with minnows, soon there'll be no minnows. The pike will eat all of them. Take this same fish tank and put a glass pane in it that separates the pike from the minnows. The pike seeing a minnow will launch an attack. He will hit the invisible glass and fail to catch one. He'll keep trying and finally learn the futility of his efforts to catch minnows.

An interesting thing happens when the glass is pulled from the tank. The minnows can swim around the hungry pike, but he'll never again make an attempt to eat one. He has experienced so much failure, he's convinced it's senseless to try again. He'll literally starve himself to death

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with minnows swimming around him.

Elephants are the same. Elephants are powerful and can easily uproot large trees. However, when an elephant is a baby, the owners will tie one leg to a tree. The young elephant will keep trying to get free so it may roam. Finally the elephant realizes it's hopeless and gives up. It has permanently learned its lesson. When the baby elephant is fully grown, it can be tied to a small tree which it could easily uproot, but it will make no attempt to do so. This powerful creature has limited its present capabilities because of its past failures.

Many people are just like the pike and the elephant. They encounter one failure after another. They become convinced they can never succeed. They'll never try again. On their minds they have stamped, "I'm a permanent failure."

Let's examine how to achieve success.

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4

Secrets for Success

As we saw in the previous chapter, many famous individuals could have made excuses for being failures. Benjamin Franklin said, “He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.”¹

Notice, successful individuals don’t look for excuses. They take action. You must make the decision if you want to become successful. The secret to success is:

YOU must take full responsibility for your actions.

Stop blaming others. You may have legitimate reasons you’re failing now. But that doesn’t change a thing. You must decide if you want to stay a failure or become successful.

Taking Responsibility

Denis Waitley has a doctorate in human behavior and has been one of America’s most sought-after keynote speakers on self-determination and productivity. In *Readers Digest*, Waitley, wrote about “What Makes a Winner?”

In many years of interviewing successful people—Olympic athletes, business executives, astronauts, government leaders and others—I have come to realize that there is a fine line between them and the rest of the pack. I call this line the winner’s edge.

This edge is *not* the result of a privileged environment or having a high I.Q., a superior education or unusual talent. Nor is it a matter of luck. The key to the winner’s edge, I have found, is attitude.

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There are many ingredients in a winning attitude, but the most important is being honest with yourself. To do this, you must follow three major precepts.”²

Waitley lists these three precepts. The first one is, “Don’t escape—adapt.” The second, “Find your own gifts; follow your own goals.” The third precept, and the one I want to stress is:

Assume responsibility for your actions. The Bible tells us that as we sow, we reap. Scientists talk of cause and effect. The meaning is the same: our rewards depend on the contributions we make. You yourself must take the credit or the blame for your place in life. Responsible people look at the shackles they’ve placed upon themselves and, in a moment of truth, declare their independence.

Joe Sorrentino grew up in an inner-city neighborhood, became a teen-age gang leader and served time in a reform school. Remembering a seventh-grade teacher’s confidence in his academic aptitude, he realized that, despite his poor high-school record, his only hope for success was through education. He returned to night school at age 20, went on to the University of California where he graduated *magna cum laude*, and then finished at Harvard Law School. He became an outstanding juvenile-court judge in Los Angeles. None of this would have happened if Joe Sorrentino had not had the courage to alter his destiny.³

What’s your attitude? Do you always blame others for your failures? You’ll find for some individuals learning comes naturally. For others, learning requires hard work. Regardless if learning comes naturally or with difficulty, do what Waitley says and assume responsibility for your actions. Look failure in the eye and say, “I’m going to take full responsibility for what I did and for who I am. I’m going to change with God’s help and take control of my life. I’m going to do my best to make my future bright and successful.”

Discipline

One of the most important keys for success is discipline. What's discipline? Discipline is eating the crust of a sandwich first and saving the middle of the sandwich for last. Those with discipline are willing to sacrifice the present for a better future.

Look at successful athletes. Everyone admires successful athletes, but many don't realize the sacrifices these athletes have to make in order to become great. Successful athletes are willing to work hard to obtain their desired goals. The key to success is to have goals. Do you want to be successful? If you do, are you willing to pursue a lifestyle of discipline that leads to success?

Parental Advice

One of the best sources of wise counsel for teenagers is from their parents. Don't forget, we parents were once exactly your age, and we still can remember those days. As parents we love our children. I always wanted what was best for mine. It's unfortunate the disrespect that many parents get from their children. So long as parents are not telling children to do something the Bible condemns, children are commanded to obey them. The fourth commandment states, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). So if you want a prosperous and long life, honor your parents.

Coach Paul William "Bear" Bryant

Coach Paul William "Bear" Bryant in his days won the most games in the history of college football. According to the Paul W. Bryant Museum, he was "national coach of the year three times, SEC [Southeastern Conference] coach of the year eight times, coached six national championship teams and on November 28, 1981, he became the winningest coach in the history of college football. Bryant retired from coaching with an astonishing 323 victories."⁵

Tomas J. Stanley, in *The Millionaire Mind*, writes about a senior sales executive, called Hugh, who had played for Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant at

University of Alabama. Stanley wanted to find out why this coach was successful. This is what he said:

I wanted to ask why Coach Bryant was so successful, but thought it might take hours for this former football player to respond. So I asked Hugh a different question: “What was the first thing Coach Bryant said to you and the other scholarship athletes after you arrived on campus?”

Surprisingly, Coach Bryant asked the group:

Have you called your folks yet to thank them?

According to Hugh, after hearing those words the players looked confused—most had their mouths open. They looked at one another with disbelief. Apparently not one of them had anticipated this question.

These freshman athletes had been on campus less than twenty-four hours, but they already had their first lesson in team productivity. I understand that no one in the room that day acknowledged having called home with words of thanks. What was the essence of this lesson?

Hugh said that Coach Bryant followed up his initial question with a second statement:

No one ever got to this level without the help of others. Call your folks. Thank them.

In other words, the coach had news for these gifted freshmen. Extraordinary natural athletic talent does not fully account for success in football. Without their folks nurturing, protecting, and sacrificing for them, they would not have had the opportunity to play football at Alabama.

Hugh told me that he never forgot this initial experience. It served him and his teammates well during four very successful years playing football. He also gives much credit to this and related lessons from the coach for his success and achievements in business.

It's rare that anyone becomes successful without the assistance of others. A group of individuals, no matter how gifted, is not a team at all. How many running backs became All-Americans without their linemen opening up opportunities? Zero. Becoming wealthy in America is very similar. I have never met one affluent person who takes complete credit for his economic success. Most will give credit to their spouse, key employees, mentors, and others. No man or woman is an island, whether the context is sports, business, or building wealth—nobody gets to the highest peaks without the help of others.⁶

Never forget, your parents want what's best for you, and there's no one who loves you more. I know that in today's culture parents are often ridiculed. But listen to what the Bible says, and you'll never go wrong. Parents want their kids to receive a good education and many want them to graduate from a trade school or college. Why? They know what's best for their kids. Don't be a fool. Be wise. Listen and follow your parents' advice. If you really want to obtain wisdom, take the initiative and go to your parents and ask how you can improve yourself. Tell them, "Don't pull any punches. I want to hear the whole truth."

For my *Number Success* math program I filmed my grandson Andy playing basketball to show how math is used in the real world. That night we invited his family over for dinner. His father wanted to see the video. While they were watching the video, I called Andy into my study and said, "If you really want to be good at playing basketball, ask your dad how you can play better."

Andy immediately went to his dad and asked how he could play better basketball. The next time he played, his team beat an undefeated team 22 to 19, and Andy made 16 of the 22 points! Andy listened to me and to his father's advice.

I went to a swimming contest where my 10 year-old grandson, Daniel, had nearly won the swimming match doing the breaststroke. As I watched him, I saw he wasn't swimming properly. He would pause and glide a short time before taking another stroke.

Learn from the Experts

I wanted to help him. I went to the Internet and did a search on Olympian swimmers. Why did I choose Olympian swimmers? They're some of the best swimmers in the world. On the web they had close-ups of these champs swimming, even underwater. I spoke to my grandson and gave him a lesson about imitating success. I encouraged him to imitate these champion swimmers. He lives in the metropolitan area of Houston. They had a swimming meet that covered an area over 50 miles in diameter. Daniel listened to me and ended up being the number one champion for all swimming strokes.

Unfortunately, many teenagers are proud and stubborn and refuse to listen to advice. They hate being corrected. Reasoning with them has the same effect as wind against granite. It's one of the most destructive attitudes teenagers can have. Many youth will suffer, even when they're older and married, because of their bitter and defiant attitude toward wise counsel. Many would love to help, but these defiant and unteachable individuals have built an iron fence around their minds.

Don't become like those proud and stubborn teens. Become a devout lover of wisdom. Here are a few Bible verses about the importance of desiring correction:

“Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid” (Proverbs 12:1).

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise” (Proverbs 12:15).

“A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke” (Proverbs 13:1).

“Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored” (Proverbs 13:18).

“He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” (Proverbs 29:1)

If you're yearning for success, listen to instruction, and *always* be open to receive correction. Now apply these principles to your life. One of the most important principles for success is choosing a proper career.

Part 3
Career Preparation and
Advancement

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5

Choosing and Preparing for the Right Career

In choosing a career, the intelligent thing to do is to plan early what you'd like to do with your life. The important question is: What kind of work are you best suited for and enjoy? That's the ideal job—something you're naturally gifted at and something you'd enjoy doing. But in the pursuit of your career, be realistic. Statistics bear out how much more money college graduates earn because of their degrees. But they need to be useful degrees. You may desire to be a specialist in a certain field, but if there are only ten positions in that field nationwide, there's little likelihood you'll get that job.

Some don't bother to think. They enter the job market and simply accept the first job someone offers that pays decent wages. Bingo. They didn't have to bother to think about choosing a career. However, five to ten years later, they find they're in a dead-end job, leaving them dissatisfied.

For many the ideal employment would be playing professional sports. Certainly there are opportunities in sports, but those opportunities are only for a few individuals with exceptional abilities. You're much wiser to choose a career that gives you a good chance of getting the employment you'd like. If your parents are short and you're five-foot-five inches tall, don't aim to become a professional basketball player because you love to play the game. Some claim that whatever you dream, you can achieve. I don't care how much you dream, at your height it's practically impossible to become a professional basketball player. Be intelligent and dream *realistic* dreams. Remember, choosing a career is one of the most important decisions of your life, so think carefully and seek advice.

I was on a men's retreat with my church, and a father told me about

his 24-year-old son who was working as a waiter. Now working part-time as a waiter and going to high school or college is an excellent job, but there are much better jobs available when you're older. His son now realizes that he should find some another career. The problem is he has no experience. In contrast, his younger sister is in college, studying to be a doctor of physical therapy. She'll probably start work earning three times the wages of her older brother.

"I don't know what I'd like to do," you may say. "Is there a test I can take that will tell me what I'm best suited for?"

Yes, there are ability and career tests that you can take that will show your strengths and weaknesses. That's a good place to start. Speak to a school counselor about these tests or go online. Choosing a career requires much thought. If you want a successful career, you must be willing to examine yourself. Take a survey of yourself on what you'd like to achieve.

Others are scared. It's understandable to be concerned. Your entire life will be affected by your decision. But don't forget, your career choice isn't something that's written in stone. You'll have opportunities to make future changes.

I met a third-year student who told me he was going to an out-of-state college. He was going to an out-or-state college because he had a football scholarship. I asked him, what he was taking. "Social science," he replied. Then he added, "It doesn't have any math.

"What are you going to do with social science?" I asked.

"I don't know," was his reply.

Now there's nothing wrong with social science if you know what you're planning a career where social science degree will help. But to pick social science just because it didn't require math, isn't a wise decision.

Occupational Outlook Handbook: US Department of Labor

The US government publishes an excellent sourcebook for hundreds of different types of jobs. The information is free at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>. For each job listed, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* tells you:

- The training and education needed

Choosing and Preparing for the Right Career

- Earnings
- Expected job prospects
- What workers do on the job
- Working conditions

The handbook provides job search tips and links to information about the job market in each state. It is a nationally recognized source for career information. Every two years the handbook is revised to ensure you are receiving up-to-date information about the workforce.

One of the advantages of figuring out what kind of career you'd like to enter as early as possible is you may choose extracurricular activities in your school that relate to your chosen career. This will help you learn and develop your skills in your field. Proactive career planning can also save you money when you go to college.

You may also explore the possibility of finding employment in that field during summer recess. It would be an entry-level position, but it would provide you an excellent opportunity to develop skills and to learn about your choice of occupation. This would also provide you with credentials and a better chance to be admitted to the college of your choice.

Your choice of occupation, trade school, or college can affect your entire future. It's best to examine your life's objectives before you go to college. Some students enter higher education without any idea what they want. They take different courses, and then in their junior year finally make up their minds. But since they didn't take an early survey of themselves, they end up taking courses that didn't benefit them. This results in additional costs and time in college.

The intelligent approach is to ask these questions concerning your choice of a career. Write down your answers.

Interests: What do you like to do? What subjects in school do you enjoy? What are your hobbies?

Personality: Are you outgoing or more introverted? Do you like to be around people and talk, or are you more the quiet type?

Gifting: What are your inherent talents or abilities? Are you

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mechanically inclined and like to figure out what makes things work, or would you rather operate equipment, or work in an office? Do you like to deal with people, as in sales? Choose a career that naturally fits you, and examine that career.

God's Will: Go to the Lord in prayer and seeking his guidance. God is a good God, so don't be afraid to trust him. Many times the Lord lets you choose what you desire. The Bible says, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4).

Seek God's Wisdom

If you're a believer, pray and seek God earnestly for wisdom. I'm constantly praying for wisdom. Above everything, I want the Lord's will for my life. The Holy Spirit is given to us to be our guide and helper. The Bible says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). Jesus said, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26). When you pray, become an empty vessel and let the Holy Spirit speak to you. Trust in the goodness of God. Always remember, the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and the Holy Spirit will never have you do anything that violates God's Word.

Once you get an idea that the Lord is leading you, don't just sit down and relax and expect everything to fall into place. Apostle Paul instructed Timothy, "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:6-7). God called me to be a writer, so along with studying the Scripture, I bought books on how to become a better writer. When I felt led to start a business, I studied the Bible and also bought business books.

King Solomon said, "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel" (Proverbs 1:5). Solomon also said, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14). Seek counsel from the

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wise, your pastor, and especially your parents. Find individuals in an occupation that you want to get into, and go to them and ask them for information. Many will be thrilled to see a young person seeking advice. King Solomon said, “Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (Proverbs 20:5). I’ve used this principle of picking the brains of the wise many times, and have reaped much wisdom. But above all, be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit on what you should do.

Some reading this may be called into the ministry. I was called into the ministry, but I was always bivocational. Now my ministry is around the world, and my biggest project, *Phonics Adventure*, a motivational phonics literature-based reading program, that I’ve been working on for over 25 years is about to be released. When I was a young person serving the Lord, I never dreamed what the Lord would accomplish with my life. But my guiding philosophy was: “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him” (Psalm 34:8)! I was determined to always obey God’s will. Today I’m an extremely blessed man because of that decision.

Choosing Future Employment

Due to globalization and automation, many jobs today have shifted from agriculture to service. However, it needs to be emphasized that there are many high-paying jobs in industry: well-trained electricians, plumbers, air conditioning and heating mechanics, auto mechanics, computer repair technicians, machinists, mold makers, tool and die makers, and many others. These specialties offer satisfying careers and well-paying jobs in today’s economy. Some with these trade skills will earn more than those with college degrees. They also offer an excellent opportunity to open your own business. Today there are thousands of high-paying jobs for skilled trade workers while some college graduates can’t find employment. One of the complaints of business owners is the lack of skilled labor.

Plan carefully. Don’t end up with thousands of dollars in debt with no financial benefits. Graduating from college definitely pays off for many students. But for others it would have been wiser to enter into a trade

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school. Just because you graduate from high school doesn't guarantee college success. Some four-year college graduation rates are less than 30 percent. Many students drop out of college with a load of debt.

Graduating from some trade schools requires two years or less of schooling. In addition, many companies offer on-the-job training. However, to get top positions, education is often required. Some trades, such as electricians, plumbers, and beauticians, require a license in which individuals must pass a test in order to become qualified.

Be careful of some of the art degrees. Many of these degrees are fun, but there's much competition for jobs in these fields. Your arts degree may get you your first employment, but afterward it's your performance that counts. There's nothing wrong with taking these courses as electives. However, let me warn you, the arts are often very difficult to have a successful lifetime career.

I do extensive work with Adobe InDesign and Photoshop, and have done work with Adobe Premiere and Final Cut Pro. I've discovered how simple it is to learn these programs. At first it looked very intimidating watching those I hired zipping about using shortcuts in these programs. I remember sitting next to one of my employees doing the editing and telling him what I wanted. It was a slow process. Then one day I made the decision, "I'm going to learn to do this." I didn't go to school. I asked questions, went online, and learned. Now I zip around with shortcuts, particularly with InDesign and Photoshop. Since I now know these programs, I've saved much time doing my own editing work.

You can choose from many careers in the service field: doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, dentists, psychiatrists, veterinarians, ministers, police officers, journalists, insurance agents, government workers, and many others. Find out the educational requirements for the occupation you choose. The key is to find a career in which your natural gifts make you the best candidate and provide you with a satisfying job.

The *USA Today* article, "High-tech Jobs that Don't Require College Degree," reported:

When people think of high-tech jobs, they typically think of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and Ivy League Ph.Ds. But according to a new definition of STEM [Science, Technology, Engineer-

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ing, Math] jobs—those requiring skills in science, technology, engineering or math—half of all high-tech positions are held by employees without a bachelor’s degree.

A recent report by the Brookings Institution redefines STEM jobs to include those with a substantial base of technical knowledge, but not necessarily requiring a bachelor’s degree. With this new perspective, high-tech jobs are not limited to advanced degrees and represent a larger part of the American middle class.¹

The article mentioned how computer systems analysts don’t require a bachelor’s degree but average twice the national average wage. It further stated, “Though a four-year college degree is not a prerequisite, many of these jobs still have rigorous requirements. Most plumbers, pipefitters and steamfitters go through a four or five year apprenticeship program, which includes studying math, physics and chemistry, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Registered nurses, by far the fastest growing STEM job that does not require a bachelor’s degree, need to take courses in anatomy, chemistry and microbiology.”²

Wrong Choices

I’ll talk straight with you. If you make a wrong choice, you’ll probably suffer for it. A wrong choice isn’t the end of the world, but it can cause much misery and cost lots of money. A former employer who I worked for had a son who earned a degree in hotel and restaurant management. That’s a great job. However, one needs to realize the busiest times for a manager of a restaurant are in the evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays.

If you’d like to raise a family and be at home to play with your children, being a restaurant manager isn’t an ideal job. He worked at it for a few years and then quit to work for his dad who owned a machine shop. He’s now the manager of the machine shop. Think of the money and time spent in college studying restaurant management. How much wiser would it have been if the son had studied engineering? This would have greatly benefited his career.

A very disgruntled college graduate told me about how much he hates his well-paying job as a geologist. This man loves nature, and a geologist is one who scientifically studies how the earth was made and formed.

Geologists also study earthquakes, landslides, floods, and volcanic eruptions. Being a geologist sounded interesting to him. He got a job in the oil and gas industry. Now he finds himself sitting before a computer all day and hating his job. He has three children, and is thinking of going back to college, becoming a nurse and earning half the wages he's earning now. To do this, his wife would have to go back to work.

Let me warn you, many jobs today require much computer work. One of my sons is a mechanical engineer and spends a large part of his time on a computer designing complicated electrodes for our ram EDM machines. He's also the vice president of our company and supervises the workers.

I basically sit before a computer all day as well, writing and designing for my motivational phonics literature-based literacy program. At present I also go to my recording studio and read the many stories for this program. I love what I'm doing because I'm helping people and children to become successful.

When you do make a career choice, be wise and investigate your career choice thoroughly. Try to visit and interview those working in that field. People are often glad to speak to you. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Careful and intelligent planning can result in a fruitful and satisfying career.

Hasty Decisions

Get-rich-quick schemes are abundant. Some experts claim by reading their literature and practicing their principles you'll discover the path to financial success. However, you must first purchase their materials to gain their secrets. You'll probably discover that the road to quick riches fills the experts' pockets with cash, but empties the pockets of those paying for their secrets.

When I was a boy, my friend challenged me, "I'll stand across the street, and I'll put *'you'* on the ground in ten seconds."

Since I was a street kid, there was no way he was going to put *me* on the ground in ten seconds. So I said, "I dare ya!"

I bet him a dime that he couldn't put me down on the ground in ten seconds if I were across the street from him. Back in the early 40's, a dime represented a lot of money. We could buy two ice cream cones, the subway was a nickel, and a large soft pretzel cost one cent. That wise guy took a piece of chalk and wrote the letter "U" on the sidewalk! The result? I had

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to pay him a dime. That incident left an indelible lesson on my mind to this day, worth much more than the dime I lost. Give sufficient thought before making decisions. Don't be gullible. Think before you act.

Debt: Don't Let This be Your Story

You are probably not in debt. But I warn you, going to college can be very costly. Listen carefully to what I have to say, it could have a dramatic impact for your future. *Consumer Reports* tells the story of a girl who had \$128,000 in student loans, and that loan mushroomed to \$152,000, and she had to pay \$1,200 every month to pay off the loan. This is her story.

When she was 19, Jackie Krowen took out her first student loan to attend a community college in Oregon. She borrowed more when she transferred to Portland State University, and still more for nursing school at the University of Rochester in New York.

"You didn't have to meet with anybody," she says. "You just clicked some buttons on the computer and you had a huge check."

When she finished school in 2011, she was \$128,000 in debt. Today, with a good job as a nurse, she still can't make a dent.

Looking back, Krowen realizes she had no idea what she was doing when she took out her loans. Her parents, she says, encouraged her to borrow because the interest rate was low. Like many young borrowers, she didn't know how much interest could accrue. "It didn't make sense to me," she says.

Now she understands. Her balance is currently \$24,000 more than what she borrowed.

Buying a house isn't an option, she says, and the idea of having a family seems financially impossible. She fears it will be that way for the rest of her life.³

This young person didn't understand debt and interest rates. Now she lives in misery because of her debt, even though she has a well-paying job as a nurse. One of the major problems of teens is their lack of understanding about money and interest rates. Credit card companies entice new card

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owners with a low introductory percentage rate. The new card owners don't realize that after six months the APR (Annual Percentage Rate) may jump up to 15% to 23%. And if you're late on payments, they can penalize your entire debt with a charge that can be 29.99%. Many are ignorant of credit card charges that deal with percentages.

A 15% APR means that you'll be paying 15 cents a year for every dollar you owe the credit card company. Banks want you to have a credit card so they can earn interest. That's how banks make money. Paying 15 cents on a dollar may not seem like a lot of money, but for every \$1,000 dollars in debt, you'll be paying \$150 dollars a year!

Take someone who has accumulated \$20,000 in credit card debt, with an APR of 15%. If that person doesn't pay off the debt, he'll be paying \$3,000 each year to the credit card company. Keeping that debt for 10 years, he would pay \$30,000. If he has \$40,000 in debt, the interest cost for an APR of 15% for ten years would be \$60,000. The total debt would be the \$40,000 for the original loan, and the \$60,000 for the accumulating debt for 10 years. The total owed now if there was no loan payment would be \$100,000! And if you have bad credit, the credit card charges could be doubled!

Jessie Suren earns \$39,000 a year selling vacation packages. She went to college and borrowed \$72,000 and still owes \$90,000. Her monthly payment is \$900. In the article, "Lives on Hold," *Consumers Report* tells this story:

Suren was raised by a single mom who worked in the restaurant business. She pushed Suren to get an education. "My mom wanted for me what she didn't have," says Suren, who did well in school and became the first in her immediate family to attend college. She knew she'd have to finance it herself. Her mother hired a consultant to help with the financial aid forms, at a cost of nearly \$2,000, but that didn't prepare Suren for the obligations she was taking on. Nor did her high school counselors, she says. "No one talked to me about whether I could afford college, how much it would cost or how interest would work. I knew nothing about money."

Suren decided to go to La Salle University, a private Catholic

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school. Grant money and scholarships didn't cover the \$36,000 a year for tuition, fees, and room and board, so she took out the maximum she could in student loans. Her aunt co-signed a private loan and her mother took out a federal loan designed for parents.

By the time Suren graduated in 2010, she was already \$72,000 in debt....With such a high monthly payment, she wonders if she will ever be able to buy a house or start a family.⁴

Notice in the two examples from *Consumer Reports* that neither individual understood debt and money. You may have hated math when it came to interest and percentage rates. I urge you, for your future good, to make time to understand this important issue. It can have a devastating effect on your future.

Free Videos on Debt: Dream Destroyer

I have put together three free videos on how to help you save money:

1. Debt: Dream Destroyer (33 min.)
2. Key Money Lessons (16 min.)
3. Understanding Debt and Loans—Quick Review of Decimals, Fractions, and Percents (22 min.)

If interested, go to www.NumberSuccess.com/FreeResources. I strongly encourage you to view these videos. They can prove to be very profitable to you. Also on that website are free videos from addition to trigonometry showing where math is used in the real world. They are all free.

When I started my machining business I was very careful about going into debt. I remembered what King Solomon said, "Prepare your outside work, make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house" (Proverbs 24:27). In other words, take care of your business first, then build your home. When some people earn a little money, they foolishly make a down payment and purchase a new car or house.

A young man working as an electrician apprentice told me he had bought a new car. When I asked him why he won't go out with the young people to eat, he said, "I can't afford it." Now, because of his new car and his debt, he has to live like a poor man.

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Let me offer some advice that can save you thousands of dollars. I was in my sixties, and only when I was successful in my business, did I buy my first new car. I bought many used cars. Since I have five children, I often bought station wagons. It's very difficult to buy good used station wagons. If you buy a used two-year car with 60,000 miles, or a ten year-old-car with the same mileage, they are basically the same. But you'll save thousands of dollars by buying a ten-year-old car.

To avoid excessive debt when I began my machining company, I bought used machines. Later on, when we were successful, I bought a few new machines. Today we have over 80 EDM machines, and the great majority are used. By the way, my wife and I still live in the same used house I bought when I first moved to Houston 38 years ago. It's the only home I ever owned.

Beware of being proud and wanting to impress others. I've met people like that. The Bible says, "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 16:5). "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). In addition, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

Make a list of the schools you plan to attend. If it's possible, it's also good to visit the school, or at least take time to thoroughly investigate their website. One of the critical factors to consider is the cost of going to college. *Consumer Reports* in the article, "Having the College Money Talk," states they did a "Nationally representative survey of more than 1,500 student loan borrowers. Forty-four percent of those who have left college say they have had to cut back on daily living expenses, and 28 percent have had to delay major goals like buying a house and 37 percent put off saving for retirement. The financial impact is so daunting that 45 percent of borrowers say knowing what they know now, their college experience wasn't worth the cost."⁵

Ways to Reduce College Debt

What can be done to avoid this problem of debt? You can jump-start earning college credits by taking high school advance placement classes that give college credit, and dual enrollment classes at local colleges during the summer or after school. To avoid regret for going to college,

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involve your parents. If your parents are paying some of the expenses, they definitely need to be involved.

If you live in an area that has community colleges, you can save thousands of dollars by living at home and taking basic courses at these colleges for the first two years. You can also find a part-time job and begin saving for college. You can take online courses as well. If you do decide to go to a community college, make sure the classes you take will transfer to the college you're planning to attend. Some colleges may accept your classes, but only as electives and not for your major.

According to the National Center on Education Statistics only 39 percent of students graduate in four years.⁵ Spending extra time in college means extra debt. One way to avoid spending more time in college is to take summer courses or online courses and shorten the time in college. *Consumer Report* states, "Those who graduate on time will owe an average of 40 percent less than those who graduate in six years."⁷

Grants, Loans, and Work-Study Employment

The US Department of Education awards billions of dollars a year in grants, low-interest loans, and work-study funds. Go to www.StudentAid.ed.gov. On their website it states, "The U.S. Department of Education offers low-interest loans to eligible students to help cover the cost of college or career school."⁸ The website covers:

- How do I prepare for college?
- What types of aid can I get?
- Do I qualify for aid?
- How do I apply for aid?
- How do I manage my loans?

Many colleges also offer aid and scholarships. When you choose a college, examine their website for how you can reduce your costs for going to college. If you're looking for aid or scholarships when you start your senior year of high school, you need to fill out the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA). Many scholarship programs use this application to determine who will receive aid. Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information.

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Some colleges offer low costs for their first year to get students to attend their college. Some expensive colleges may offer scholarships for the first year to get you to attend. To find the true cost, ask what it would cost for the entire time at college. You may receive an athletic scholarship, but if you're injured does your scholarship still continue? If you receive a merit scholarship, what are the requirements to continue to receive aid? Beware of private loans with low introductory offers, and with rates that increase later with few debt relief options. Federal loans come with consumer protection and flexible repayment.

Choosing the Best College

Choosing a college can become overwhelming. City school or rural school; in state or out of state; private or public; large research university or small liberal arts; secular or religious. Christ-centered colleges may be more expensive, but one of the great advantages is that your faith will be supported. *Christianity Today*, quotes Steve Henderson, president of Christian Consulting for Colleges and Ministries, in, "A Question of Price Versus Cost", that "The results of nearly 25 years of research consistently reveal that those who do not attend a Christ-centered college will experience a decline in religious values, attitudes, and behaviors during college."

Using data from a "George Fox University professor Gary Railsback, a fellow researcher," Henderson stated, "I determined that more than 52 percent of incoming freshmen who identify themselves as born-again upon entering a public university will either no longer identify themselves as born-again four years later or, even if they do still claim that identification, will not have attended any religious service in over a year. This means over half of our kids are reporting a rejection of family religious students who are beginning their college years."¹⁰

The article also stated, "Approximately 75 percent of students change their major during the first year. This includes 50 percent of those who first reported being 'absolutely sure.'"¹¹ There are many advantages in going to a Bible believing college or university. If college cost is still a consideration, attend a lower cost Bible college for the first year to get a biblical grounding. Then transfer to another school for your major. I was very concerned about the colleges my children choose. Since we lived in New York City and Houston, I encouraged them to attend city schools. All my five children

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attended city schools and remained active in the local church while attending college. I'm extremely thankful that all of them are still active 30 years later.

I attended a religious college for four years as well three secular colleges when I became a high school teacher. I stood up and defended unbiblical beliefs. My belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God became stronger after my secular college experiences. Let me say very boldly:

Believers in the Inspired World of God Have an Intelligent Faith

If you do decide to go to a secular school, prepare yourself by reading books that will support what you believe. Books on apologetics will help you to present reasoned arguments for biblical truths. In my sequel book for college students, *Success in College, Career, and Life*, I also write about apologetics and my experiences in defending my faith in college.

Be aware that some liberal Bible colleges and universities do not adhere that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Speak to your pastor for recommendations. I like to point out that many secular schools have dynamic Christian ministries on campus. By all means, plan on joining them. Many times the friends you make at college will become life-long friends.

All this may be very intimidating for high school students planning their future. But if you're a believer, trust the Lord to guide you. I'm writing this book to help you. Remember, I was once your age, and I've crossed many bridges in my life. But I'm exceedingly grateful, that after I accepted Christ into my life and made him my Savior and Lord, I made the Lord my guide. As a result I've had a very blessed life. Unfortunately, many believers live frustrated and defeated lives because they don't trust and believe the promises of God. But you can live a life of joy and peace if you believe the inspired Word of God. Here are a few of God's promises:

The Promises of God

- “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).
- “And these things we write to you that your joy may be full” (1 John 1:4).
- “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to

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present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24),

- “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3).
- “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).
- “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).
- “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

6

The Resume and the Interview

You may be looking for employment after graduating from high school, or while attending high school. For some employers, you may need to prepare a resume. The information in this chapter will also be extremely valuable when you graduate from college and search for employment. A resume is a summary of your qualifications and experience that is given to an employer. It is your personal marketing brochure to get an employer to provide you an interview. Your resume is the first thing an employer sees, and a well-written resume will provide a great first impression to a prospective employer. Sometimes an employer has many applicants, so it's extremely important that your resume stands out. Also go online and see what others say about writing an impressive resume.

You may ask, "What resume? I never had a job before."

Did you do any volunteer work, babysit, work in a church helping or teaching children, mow lawns, do chores for the sick or elderly? It all counts. What are your strengths? Are you enthusiastic, energetic, and hard working? Give examples that would support your statements.

The Resume

Contact Information: The first thing in a resume is to make sure you have your contact information. This includes your full name, address, phone number, and email address. You want to be available if the person wants to hire you.

You may have this greeting on your cell phone: "Yo, dude. What's up?" If your prospective employer hears this, he may have second thoughts about hiring you. You'd be wise to change your message to, "Hi. This is Dave. Please leave a message."

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Education Experience: Tell where you went to school and your major. Also include any extra courses you completed and whether you're an honor student. If you have any citations for outstanding achievement, include them.

Skills: Are you computer literate? What programs are you familiar with? What kind of skills do you have that would benefit the company? Tell something about yourself that an employer would like to hear. Don't embellish your story. Nothing turns off an employer more than someone who exaggerates or is dishonest.

Work Experience: If you were employed, list your previous employers. If not previously employed, include any extra volunteer work you've done.

References: List at least two adults who know you well and will have something good to say about you. A good source would be your previous supervisor. If you have never worked before, you won't have any references dealing with your work experiences, but you can list individuals who know you instead, such as teachers, coaches, or others with authority. Ask permission to use someone as a reference. Include the person's name, company, address, phone number, email, and their relationship with you.

Many students don't have enough job experience to create a compelling resume. Think of anything positive about yourself that would help you get the job. For example: "I've had perfect attendance for the last two terms." Don't be overly concerned; employers don't expect a lot of experience when hiring a young person. They're searching for someone with the right attitude and a willingness to learn. But resumes are important, particularly when you have a lot of competition. When looking for a job, spend time researching the company. Most companies have websites. Show interest by spending time looking over their website. If you're just interested in a low-paying job, you won't have to do this. But if you're interested in a job with great potential, then think and ask yourself, "What can I do to demonstrate the benefits for this company to hire me?"

Inferiority Complex

One of the most damaging attitudes to have when seeking employment is an inferiority complex: feeling lower in value than others. Many

people are plagued with this attitude. But why should you feel inferior when we're all created equal?

For years you may have felt inferior and unworthy. Someone may have put you down and made fun of the way you look: your nose, hair, eyes, ears, skin color, glasses, or whatever. Stop! Don't be foolish and go around defeated because of someone's opinion. Some things you can change. If you're overweight, then be disciplined and go on a diet. If you're failing in school, take corrective action. But some things you can't change. You can't change the color of your skin, your nationality, and the shape of your nose, ears, or eyes. I know some use plastic surgery to alter their bodies, but I think many would be a lot wiser to put the money in a bank and learn to accept themselves the way they were born.

Healthy Self-Esteem

Think positively. Lift up your chin and look straight ahead. Never be ashamed of the way the good Lord created you. Remember, change what you can change; accept what you cannot change. A healthy self-esteem is critical to success.

"I was constantly tormented by worries and fears and self-consciousness," said Elmer Thomas, a former senator from Oklahoma. "I was extremely tall for my age and as thin as a fence rail. I stood six feet two inches and weighed only 118 pounds."

The kids poked fun at him and called him "hatchet-face." In recalling what happened, Thomas said, "Every day and every hour of the day, I brooded over my tall, gaunt, weak body. I could hardly think of anything else."

His mother advised him, "Son, you ought to get an education, you ought to make your living with your mind because your body will always be a handicap." Thomas went to college, but he still had that inferiority complex. Then something happened that turned his life around. His mother urged him to enter a speaking contest at a fair. "I didn't have the courage to talk even to one person—let alone a crowd," Thomas said. "But my mother's faith... inspired me to enter the contest."

He memorized the speech and rehearsed it a hundred times. He won first prize! He was astounded. Those boys who had ridiculed and poked

fun at him said, "I knew you could do it, Elmer."

His mother hugged him and cried. Then he said, "As I look back in retrospect, I can see that winning that speaking contest was the turning point of my life."

Thomas continued his education and worked. In order to pay for his educational expenses, he said, "I waited on tables, looked after furnaces, mowed lawns, kept books, worked in the wheat and cornfields during the summer, and hauled gravel on a public road construction job."

No longer did he fear making speeches. The excitement he received from speaking made him desire to enter politics. He studied law and public speaking. He became editor-in-chief of the university paper. He opened a law firm, then for 13 years served in the Oklahoma senate. He went on to become a state representative in Congress for Oklahoma, and then his "lifelong ambition," a United States senator from Oklahoma.

"I have told this story," Thomas remarked, "not to brag about my own fleeting accomplishments, which can't possibly interest anyone else. I have told it wholly with the hope that it may give renewed courage and confidence to some poor boy who is now suffering from the worries and shyness and feeling of inferiority that devastated my life."¹

Endeavor to develop a healthy self-esteem. I purposely chose the word, "healthy" self-esteem. Some people have a proud self-esteem. They think they're better than everyone else. They don't listen to advice. They're the source of all wisdom. That's destructive self-esteem. Another example of destructive self-esteem is someone who blames others instead of oneself. I met many of students of this type in my classes as a high school teacher. I've met those who were lazy and showed no interest in learning. But who did they blame for their failures? Anyone else except themselves.

However, healthy self-esteem means to accept, without reservation, the way you were created. You're not devastated by criticism. You're not overconfident. You're willing to take advice. You're able to laugh at yourself when you do something wrong. You're not intimidated by others. You accept responsibility for your actions. You're willing to take risks. You're willing to stand up for your convictions. You have a sense of purpose. If you have a healthy self-esteem, you won't be intimidated when you have to go for an interview.

The Resume and the Interview

In going for an interview, the first thing you'll probably do is give a handshake.

The Handshake



The way a person shakes hands speaks volumes. Just think of someone whose handshake feels like shaking the tail of a dead fish, or someone who grips a firm hand. What kinds of messages do these handshakes reveal about the individuals?

In the article “Handshake All-Important,” the *Houston Chronicle* states, “A handshake done well exudes confidence. Done badly—which includes looking over the shaker’s shoulder or down at the ground—it makes someone look clueless, uncomfortable, and out of place.” The report went on to say:

One day Helene Cavanaugh discovered how much a poorly performed handshake can hurt a job candidate.

Cavanaugh was working as a recruiter for a staffing agency and she couldn’t understand why her candidates weren’t getting offers. They had the skills. They had the education. They tested well.

Yet the clients made vague references to not having a “good feeling” but couldn’t explain why. Cavanaugh did some investigating and found that her candidates’ handshakes were giving off vibes of either submissiveness or aggressiveness, strong yet subtle impressions that clouded the rest of the interviews.

The best way to shake a hand is to hold yours out so it’s perpendicular to the floor—sort of like a knife slicing straight through the air, said Cavanaugh, who is now executive director of Texas Association of Personnel Consultants and the Houston

Area Association of Personnel Consultants.

“It gives the subtle message you are equals,” she said. “It also says: ‘I’m confident, I’m strong, but I’m not overbearing.’”²

Your handshake often reveals your character. When you go for a job interview, look the person in the eye, and give a firm handshake. But before you go for the interview, practice shaking hands so you’ll be comfortable doing it the right way.

The Interview

The way you act in an interview is critical for your success in getting the job. I’ve interviewed many individuals for employment, both skilled and unskilled. One of the first things I look for is whether the person is energetic. Sometimes I reject the applicant within the first few seconds. Here’s an example.

The secretary where I was operations manager gave a prospective employee an application to fill out. After the form was completed, the secretary called me to the office to interview the applicant. When I saw the applicant in the lobby, I called him to come with me. This young applicant got up so slowly that he acted like a crippled 80-year-old man. Within one second of seeing him getting out of his seat, I had already rejected him. Why? If he’s that sluggish just to get out of a chair, I could just imagine the amount of energy he would put into his work.

I watch the way applicants walk. Do they have energy or not? Now I may be wrong in my judgment, but I just have a few moments to evaluate applicants. So I must make quick judgments. John H. Harvey, William John Ickes, and Robert F. Kidd, in *New Directions in Attribution Research*, tell this story about J. C. Penney:

In a radio interview some years ago, the department store tycoon suggested that a good way to spot executive potential is to observe whether an individual salts his food before tasting it. Mr. Penney reasoned that any person who salts food without determining that it in fact needed salt might not weigh all the facts before making important executive decisions.³

The Resume and the Interview

Joe Cirulli owns Gainesville Health & Fitness Center in Gainesville, Florida. According to an American expert, it's the best fitness business in the United States. They have five steps for applicants to be hired at the fitness club. First, they give the applicant a four-page form consisting mostly of puzzles and games. Shawn Steward, the company's operations manager, says, "We eliminate most of the lazy people with that."

They check references, do group interviews, and have one-on-one interviews with a department head. On one occasion Steward went to interview an applicant who had excellent reviews. The applicant was sitting in a room when Steward arrived. "They need some chairs next door," Steward said as he began picking up chairs and taking them to the room.

Steward kept doing this until two chairs were left. The applicant didn't move, except to take his feet off a chair. "Well," said Steward, "thanks for coming, but this place is really not for you."

"But you haven't interviewed me yet," the applicant complained.

"Yes, I just did," Steward said as he led the applicant out of the room.⁴

Paul Boynton, employment director for Socony-Vacuum Oil Company has interviewed over 60,000 job applicants. He wrote the book, *Six Ways to Get a Job*. Boynton said, "The biggest mistake people make in applying for jobs is in not being themselves. Instead of taking their hair down and being completely frank, they often try to give you the answers they think you want."⁵

The first rule for the interview: Don't be a phony. Be energetic and show enthusiasm, interest, and ambition. Don't be arrogant, thinking you're doing an employer a favor if he hires you. Look the person in the eye and give a firm handshake. Demonstrate a positive attitude.

If you happen to have work experience, don't talk against your former employer. Often I call the former employer and ask about the applicant I'm interested in hiring. Learn to build a good reputation for yourself.

Dress appropriately. It's better to be on the neat side. Don't come with dirty or worn jeans, sloppy clothes, and messed-up hair. That's true even for a factory job. Women, dress modestly and use makeup conservatively. Carolyn Gustafson, an image consultant, said, "We make quick decisions about people based on their appearance. Whether or not that's right, that's the reality of it."⁶

Teens: Preparing for a Successful Future

You may think tattoos and body piercings look cool, but there are employers who think otherwise. They don't want employees meeting customers with exposed body art and piercings. You may object, "I don't want anyone telling me what I can or cannot do."

You have the right to your opinion, but the employer also can say, "I don't want anyone to tell me the type of person I should hire."

In the end you may find that the job you're seeking will be elusive. Zig Ziglar, a successful salesman, motivational speaker, and businessman, tells in his book, *Top Performance*, about a student who kept looking for a job but was constantly turned down. He went to his professor and asked why. "Are you absolutely certain you want to know why?" his professor asked.

"I am," said the student.

"You look like you've been on a six-month camping trip."

The student became indignant. "Are you referring to my hair and my beard?"

"Yes, and your clothes, and your shoes, and your breath."

"That's not fair."

The professor then replied, "You didn't ask if it was fair, you simply asked why."⁷

Employers Reluctant to Hire Teens

Being a teenager, you may think that employers are eager to hire you since you'll earn minimum or close to minimum wage. Many aren't. Why? It's very costly for employers to train employees. Now, if you're doing a simple job that requires no training such as handing out flyers, you won't have any problem getting hired. But if the work requires skill, employers have to spend considerable time training. Many teenagers don't realize this training is costly and time-consuming. Teenagers have a tendency to be flighty. Some will quit after a few months and all the costly training is lost to the employer. So what do employers want? They want employees who are eager to learn and are willing to stick it out. One way to get hired is to show enthusiasm for the employment you're applying for.

Extra Steps

Say you find a company you'd like to work for during the summer that will help you in the field you've chosen in college. What could you do to get a job at that company? Here's an important tip: Show a sincere interest in that company.

Most companies have a website. Find the company's website and learn as much as you can about the company and the kind of work it does. Learn about its products and services. When you go for the interview, talk about your future plans and how you'd be eager to work for this company. Tell about your research. Remember, employers are looking for employees who are eager to learn. Be willing to do any kind of work.

John Wanamaker pioneered the first department store in 1876 and is credited with being the father of modern advertising. A young man came to Wanamaker and asked for a job. He told the young man he didn't have a job for him. "I am willing to do anything," the young man replied.

Wanting to get rid of him, Wanamaker said, "The only job I have is a job of washing windows."

"I will take it," the young man said.

The young man became the best window washer. Eventually he became the manager of the great store. After working there for 25 years, the manager died. Afterward Wanamaker said, "I am willing to pay as high as one hundred thousand dollars a year for a manager who can fill the place of the one I lost."⁸ (That was a lot of money in those days.)

That young man's enthusiasm was a hallmark of his personality, and it transferred into whatever he did. Every employer would love to hire employees like this.

Interpersonal Skills

If you're really interested in having a prosperous future, it is of utmost importance that you develop interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are the ability to work effectively with others. Having these skills often leads to advancement. In contrast, great knowledge and technical skills without interpersonal skill often doesn't lead to advancement.

Having interpersonal skills means knowing how to get along with people. Let's examine ten important interpersonal skills:

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1. Are you a listener?
2. Do you like to help others? Are you kind and compassionate?
3. Do you have a healthy self-esteem? Can you communicate with others?
4. Do you have a positive attitude, or do you have a tendency to complain a lot?
5. Are you a team player and flexible, or are you proud and want everything done your way?
6. Can you speak and work with culturally diverse people? Do you show good manners to all people?
7. Are you responsible and willing to accept challenges? Do you desire to find solutions to problems?
8. Do you seek advice? Can you accept correction and criticism?
9. Can you handle pressure?
10. Do you have self-management skills and a strong work ethic?

As a young person, don't just focus on getting an education. Also focus on developing your interpersonal skills. It can bring great dividends for you future. One of the great places to start improving these skills is in your home with your parents, brothers, and sisters. Be a willing helper around the home. Don't be a griper. Be a lover of people. Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Making Tough Choices

Everyone wants to live a life of success. But achieving success requires intelligent action. In my years I've seen many children become grown men and women. But as they grew up, they made choices, just like you have. Unfortunately, some have made devastating choices. They had high ideals, but sticking to them wasn't easy. One of the greatest hindrances to living a life of success is peer pressure.

Clayton M. Christensen is a professor at Harvard Business School. He wrote an article in *Harvard Business Review*, "How Will You Measure Your Life?" In it he states,

On the last day of class, I ask my students to turn those theoretical lenses on themselves, to find cogent answers to three questions: First, how can I be sure that I'll be happy in my career? Second, how can I be sure that my relationships with my spouse and my family become an enduring source of happiness? Third, how can I be sure I'll stay out of jail? Though the last question sounds lighthearted, it's not. Two of the 32 people in my Rhodes scholar class spent time in jail. Jeff Skilling of Enron fame was a classmate of mine at HBS. These were good guys—but something in their lives sent them off in the wrong direction....

Over the years I've watched the fates of my HBS classmates from 1979 unfold; I've seen more and more of them come to reunions unhappy, divorced, and alienated from their children. I can guarantee you that not a single one of them graduated with the deliberate strategy of getting divorced and raising children who

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would become estranged from them. And yet a shocking number of them implemented that strategy. The reason? They didn't keep the purpose of their lives front and center as they decided how to spend their time, talents, and energy.¹

Professor Christensen tells how at the age of 16 he made a commitment to God that he would never play ball on Sunday. Later he was on the basketball team at Oxford University. The team was undefeated, and they got to the final four of the British equivalent of the NCAA tournament. His teammates were his best friends. But Christensen faced a dilemma: they had a basketball game on Sunday. Every one of his teammates said, "You've got to play. Can't you break the rule just this one time?"

Listen to what Christensen says:

I'm a deeply religious man, so I went away and prayed about what I should do. I got a very clear feeling that I shouldn't break my commitment—so I didn't play in the championship game.

In many ways that was a small decision—involving one of several thousand Sundays in my life. In theory, surely I could have crossed over the line just that one time and then not done it again. But looking back on it, resisting the temptation whose logic was "In this extenuating circumstance, just this once, it's OK" has proven to be one of the most important decisions of my life. Why? My life has been one unending stream of extenuating circumstances. Had I crossed the line that one time, I would have done it over and over in the years that followed.

The lesson I learned from this is that it's easier to hold to your principles 100% of the time than it is to hold to them 98% of the time. If you give in to "just this once," based on a marginal cost analysis, as some of my former classmates have done, you'll regret where you end up. You've got to define for yourself what you stand for and draw the line in a safe place.²

Making Tough Choices
Cricketer and Pioneer

Charles T. Studd was a devoted missionary in China, India, and Africa. This was Studd's rationale for serving Christ,

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him."³

On another occasion he said, "Some wish to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a Rescue Shop within a yard of hell."⁴

C. T. Studd was born in England in 1860. When he was 16 years old he became an expert cricket player. At the age of 18 he accepted Christ, but the following six years he lived in a backslidden state. He heard D. L. Moody preach and rededicated his life to Christ. "I cannot tell you what joy it gave me to bring the first soul to the Lord Jesus Christ," Studd declared. "I have tasted almost all the pleasures that this world can give...but those pleasures were as nothing compared to the joy that the saving of that one soul gave me."⁴

The Lord led him to become a missionary to China. He inherited a large sum of money after his father's death, and he felt led to give most of it away. In *Missionary Biographies*, Stephen Ross wrote of Studd,

Three years after arriving in China, C. T. married a young Irish missionary from Ulster named Priscilla Livingstone Stewart. Just before the wedding he presented his bride with the remaining money from his inheritance. She, not to be outdone, said, "Charlie, what did the Lord tell the rich young man to do?" "Sell all." "Well then, we will start clear with the Lord at our wedding." And they proceeded to give the rest of the money away for the Lord's work....

In 1900 the Studd family went to South India where C. T. served as a pastor of a church in Ootacamund for six years. From the time of his conversion, C. T. had felt the responsibility upon their family to take the Gospel to India.

China, then India, and now the heart of Africa. After their return home to England in 1906, C. T. was stirred by the need

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for missionary pioneer work in Central Africa. But again the path was not without obstacles. Penniless, turned down by the doctor, dropped by a Committee of businessmen who had agreed to support him, yet told by God to go, once more C. T. staked all on obedience to God. As a young man he staked his career, in China he staked his fortune, now he staked his life. His answer to the Committee was; “Gentlemen, God has called me to go, and I will go. I will blaze the trail, though my grave may only become a stepping stone that younger men may follow.”⁵

Pleasing God was more important to C. T. Studd than pleasing man. He was willing to stand alone to do God’s will.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure occurs when a person or group wants you to change your attitude or behavior to conform to that person or group. People of character are purpose-driven and self-disciplined; they don’t yield to peer pressure. Let’s say you’re at a party, and someone pulls out a bottle of liquor. The bottle is passed around and all your friends take a sip. The bottle is passed to you. You don’t drink, and you don’t want to start. Do you stand by your convictions and pass the bottle and risk being ridiculed?

Maybe it’s another situation where your friends are urging you to smoke, do drugs, cheat on a test, watch porn, or engage in sexual activities. You don’t want to be isolated from friends, but you also don’t want to end up doing things that deep inside you know are wrong. It’s a battle everyone faces. Many take the spineless road and imitate those around them. They want to fit in. In reality, those yielding to peer pressure are weaklings, crowd-pleasers, without backbone. They lack the inner courage and strength to say, “No.”

The type of friends you choose can have a serious effect on your future. Intelligent individuals pick their friends wisely. One of the characteristics of great leaders is they are willing to be loners. They don’t yield to peer pressure. In *Bringing Out the Best in People*, Alan Loy McGinnis stated:

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In fact, one could make a case for the proposition that all great leaders are loners. Contrary to what some think, the outstanding motivators are not necessarily the gregarious, backslapping types at all. Rather, they often spend a great deal of time alone, thinking and planning.

In order to lead, it is simply imperative to have independence. Psychologist Nathaniel Branden has said:

Innovators and creators are persons who can to a higher degree than average accept the condition of aloneness. They are more willing to follow their own vision even when it takes them far from the mainland of the human community. Unexplored spaces do not frighten them—or as much as they frighten those around them. This is one of the secrets of their power. That which we call “genius” has a great deal to do with courage and daring, a great deal to do with *nerve*.

So it is a mistake to attempt to be “one of the boys” in order to lead. If we examine the personalities of people like Florence Nightingale, Churchill, Napoleon, de Gaulle, Martin Luther, and Mother Teresa, we cannot escape the conclusion that these people have been quite eccentric. And to some extent, this very eccentricity helps get them recognized as leaders.⁶

Eccentricity, the willingness to be different from others, is what makes great leaders. They aren't crowd pleasers; they don't do things just because others are doing them. These individuals have character; they're willing to stand up for their convictions.

Peter Cartwright, a nineteenth-century circuit riding preacher, was told President Andrew Jackson was in the meeting. He was warned by the elders to be careful what he said. When Cartwright stood to preach, he said, “I understand that Andrew Jackson is here. I have been requested to be guarded in my remarks. Andrew Jackson will go to hell if he doesn't repent.”

The congregation was shocked. When the service was over, President Jackson shook Cartwright's hand and said, "Sir, if I had a regiment of men like you, I could whip the world." ⁷

Sexual Peer Pressure

You're a teenager, and one of the biggest battles you'll face is sexual peer pressure. Many teens don't realize the severe risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease (STD). You're young, and I want to warn you that STDs can result in a lifetime of suffering and even lead to an early death. The intelligent decision is to be firmly committed to sexual abstinence until marriage. It can result in one of the greatest decisions of your life. Here's a quote from my book *Sex: If You're Scared of the Truth—Don't Read This!* The medical information in the book was reviewed for accuracy by the *Medical Institute for Sexual Health*:

Is it rational for an individual to choose a path of abstinence because he or she is afraid of getting an STD? Is a boy or girl who practices abstinence stupid because he or she realizes that there are over 25 STDs they can be infected with? And if they get HIV, it may be irreversible and last a lifetime. If a girl gets Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), she may develop cancer; if she gets chlamydia, she may become infertile. Her dreams for a happy future can be shattered with just one sexual encounter. If anyone cares about their future, it's a very intelligent decision to be fearful of getting an STD....

Millions of youth today understand the dangers of STDs and refuse to believe the lie that "Everyone's having sex." They are saying loud and clear, "NO!" to all premarital sex. Making this decision will allow these youth to reap a lifetime of rewards....

"But we live in a new age." We certainly do. But that's no excuse to follow the crowd. We need young people with backbones who will stand up and say, "Don't count me in when it comes to casual sex. My future is too important to be sacrificed for temporary pleasure."⁸

Making Tough Choices

When you go to college you'll be suddenly inundated with a totally new culture. In many secular colleges, partying, drinking, and random casual sexual encounters are commonplace. This is how many collegians become socially connected. You see them having all this fun. You know the Bible says, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Do you join this disrespectful hookup culture, or do you take the biblical stand that sex only belongs in marriage? Are you willing to join the counterculture of abstinence, to be bold, and not be ashamed of being a virgin, or recommitting to now being abstinent? Are you willing to forsake your goals for a temporary joy ride? The Apostle Paul warned Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22).

Don't Take the First Lick



Beware! Don't take that tempting lick of the Devil's lollipop. If you do, you'll want to take more licks. Why do people sin? They sin because it makes them feel good. A true believer will take a stand and not submit to these temptations. Sexual temptations will be some of the strongest temptations you'll ever encounter as a believer. As we mature, sexual passions become active. There's no question that sex feels good.

Sex isn't sin. Sex is good if it's done God's way. However, God strongly warns everyone to restrain from sex until marriage. The world mocks this. They're going to be free and have fun now! The world's message is: If it feels good, do it. Wear protection and have fun. Who will you obey, the God or the world?

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The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports this shocking statistic: “In the United States, about one out of every six people aged 14 to 49 years have genital herpes.” CDC says it’s an incurable disease, and “most people with the virus don’t have symptoms. It’s important to know, even without signs of the disease, it can still spread to sexual partners.” Even though sexually active people try to practice safe sex, CDC says, “Outbreaks can also occur in areas that are not covered by a condom so condoms may not fully protect you from getting herpes.”⁹

CDC also states, “STDs are a significant health challenge facing the United States. CDC estimates that nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in this country, half among young people ages 15–24. Each of these infections is a potential threat to an individual’s immediate and long-term health and well-being. In addition to increasing a person’s risk for HIV infection, STDs can lead to severe reproductive health complications, such as infertility and ectopic pregnancy.”¹⁰

Misconceptions, Myths, and Plain Lies About Sex

There’s another serious problem in our culture today about the many misconceptions, myths, and plain lies about sex. Donna Freitas, a visiting scholar of religion at Boston University and author of *Sex and the Soul* said,

Living in the context of hookup culture over an extended period of time tends to throw students into a life crisis. Most students experience hookups as self-emptying, exhausting, and unpleasant, making those involved feel ambivalent about sex. As a result, the average college student is eager to find a way out of the culture.

This is when talk about abstinence becomes interesting, even exciting, on just about every college campus I’ve visited.¹¹

Learn to pierce behind the facemask of fun. I know you’re not in college, but I’m preparing you so you’ll have a successful future. Yes, these individuals experience temporary fun, but many of those freewheeling college students are extremely miserable. In the article “More College Students Think About Suicide,” the *Houston Chronicle* reports:

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A new study found a dark side to those supposed carefree days of college, with more than half of students reporting suicidal thoughts.

Two researchers at the University of Texas surveyed 26,000 students across 70 colleges and universities. Fifty-five percent said they had at least one episode of suicidal thinking.

Fifteen percent reported they have seriously considered suicide, and more than 5 percent had attempted suicide.¹²

Do you want this to be your future? There are many dangers associated with the freewheeling hookup culture, such as STDs, a lifetime of infertility from STD, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, haunted memories, guilt, separation from God, and the fear that someone who has had numerous sexual encounters might not remain faithful when married. Those practicing abstinence avoid many of these terrifying issues. In addition, those managing to abstain from sex until marriage, are much more likely to remain faithful when sexual temptations occur after marriage.

Psychiatrist Fearful of Being Ostracized, Maligned, and Unemployed

Miriam Grossman, MD, has been a psychiatrist at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Student Psychological Services for over 10 years and has worked with students for over 20 years. She is the author of *Unprotected*.¹³ It's a book exposing the false and dangerous sexual advice students are provided in today's politically correct environment. She was so fearful that the professional establishment would perceive her as being intolerant and that she would be ostracized and unemployed that she first published her book as "Dr. Anonymous." What a sad indictment on our so-called "tolerant" educational system when a trained psychiatrist must fear exposing the detrimental teachings taking place in today's schools.

Why did Grossman write such a book exposing the false teaching of "safe" sex? It's the same reason I'm writing about the dangers of premarital sex. Today, the advocates of "safe" sex promote a message that can lead youth to a lifetime of failure and suffering. The central teaching of "safe"

sex is that behaviors once considered destructive and immoral should now be taught as normal and natural. They teach that casual sex is fine, even beneficial for mental health, so long as proper protection is used. However, Grossman reports, “On my campus, sexually active students are much more likely to seek counseling, and to rate their relationship as stressful.”

Grossman tells about Olivia, an 18-year-old freshman who was the valedictorian of her senior class with hopes of going to medical school. When Olivia came to Grossman, she vomited up to six times a day. Olivia told about a short-lived relationship that resulted in her first experience with intimacy. “When it ended, it hurt so much,” she said weeping. “I think about him all the time, and I haven’t been going to one of my classes.” Then she asked this piercing question, “Why do they tell you how to protect your body—from herpes and pregnancy—but they don’t tell you what it does to your *heart*?”¹⁴

Grossman tells about Heather, a 19-year-old freshman. Heather came to Grossman because of her moodiness and crying spells. She finally told Grossman about a friend she really liked. Heather wanted to build a relationship with him, doing things like going shopping or seeing a movie together, but he just wanted to be with her and get his sexual benefits without bothering with a relationship. This so upset this normally upbeat and social freshman that she became withdrawn and filled with self-hate.¹⁵

Women Given New Power

The *Time* magazine article, “Why Online Dating Is a Boon for Women,” by Jo Piazza, stated:

Not since the introduction of the birth control pill have we seen a tool as liberating for women as online dating.

When the Pill was first introduced to the market as a contraceptive in 1960, it gave women new power. It wasn’t just sexual freedom. The Pill gave them the power of choice. It allowed a woman to seriously date and experience intimacy with more than one man before she had to select him as a life partner.¹⁶

Results of Women Using This New Power

Notice premarital sex is praised as liberating to women. It's a means of finding if a prospective mate is compatible. Here's the real results of this freewheeling lifestyle. Grossman reports:

For those who trust academic journals more than Mom's wisdom, take a look at some recent research. In a study of 6,500 adolescents, sexually active teenage girls were more than three times more likely to be depressed, and nearly three times as likely to have had a suicide attempt, than girls who were not sexually active....

Sure, there are women on campus who are making wise choices in their relationships. But if you think Heather and Olivia are unusual, I have news for you: our schedules are overbooked with them. They're lining up for appointments and flooding our phone lines. I've seen so many students like these, they blur together in my mind, a pitiable crowd of confused, vulnerable young women, ill prepared for campus life, making poor choices, and paying high prices.

No amount of Prozac or Zoloft is going to solve this problem. These young women must, for their physical and emotional well-being, change their lifestyle."¹⁷

Are You Listening?

Are you listening to the voices of these "pitiable crowd of confused, vulnerable young women, ill prepared for campus life, making poor choices, and paying high prices"? Remember, this is from a psychiatrist reporting from her years of personal experiences what's happening to many women who have listened to the detrimental teaching that there's no harm in casual sex as long as proper precautions are used.

Many men have no intention of having a serious relationship with their girlfriends. They use their girlfriends as free prostitutes. Many foolish women throw away their convictions and yield to the sexual advances of their boyfriends in hopes of satisfying their longing for love.

But instead of finding loving relationship they crave, many reap diseased bodies and broken hearts.

The sexually active often believe they only need to fear getting pregnant or getting an STD, but they're greatly mistaken. They don't realize the psychological and emotional problems that can accompany casual sex, or the haunting sense of being used and abused. It's time educators stop trying to be politically correct and tell students the truth about the detrimental effects of casual sex. What we need today are many more individuals like Miriam Grossman to tell the truth regardless of the consequences.

A shocking report from *Time* magazine, "Porn and the Threat to Virility," states, "The first generation of men who grew up with unlimited online porn sound the alarm." The widespread free access to porn on the web is destroying normal sexual relations for many individuals. The article tells about a 26-year-old firefighter who at the age of nine found naked pictures on the web, and then learned to download explicit videos. This kind of sex lost its appeal, so he moved to find sex that was "more intense, and often more violent."

When it was time to have normal sex, his body would not cooperate. He reported, "There was a disconnect between what I wanted in my mind and how my body reacted."¹⁸

Abortion

Today we have a solution for unwanted pregnancies. Abort the child. Imagine a perfectly innocent full-term baby ready to be born. Our government lawfully permits doctors to perform the barbaric practice of puncturing a hole into unborn children's skulls and sucking out their brains. Yet one minute later, if those same children happened to be out of the womb, that same act would constitute murder! Ancient civilizations had another way of getting rid of children: they made it a religious practice. They threw their children into a fire to appease their gods.

Some today, through twisted logic, try to claim an unborn child becomes a baby only when it leaves the womb. It is rather interesting concerning the birth of Jesus Christ that the Bible says, "After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found

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with child of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18). The Virgin Mary had a child in her womb, not just a fetus. Common sense tells you the same thing. When my wife became pregnant, I never said, “We’re having a fetus.” I said, “We’re having a baby.” And when our children were born, there was great jubilation.

Benefits of Abstinence

The message from many today is, “Have whatever kind of sex you desire, only use protection.” Bible-believing Christians are strongly opposed to that message. The Bible clearly teaches we should abstain from sex until marriage. The biblical term is “fornication.” In 1 Corinthians 6:18 KJV it says, “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” Galatians 5:19 lists some of sinful works of the flesh, “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, [and] lewdness.”

But mention abstinence, and many want to attack it as an old-fashioned and unrealistic lifestyle for today. But how blessed are those who practice God’s plan. Abstinence until marriage produces healthy families, and those who have abstained from premarital sex are less prone to be unfaithful when married. If one day you want to have a happy healthy family, then save yourself for the person you’ll marry one day. Likewise, practicing abstinence until marriage, you’ll never have to worry about sexually transmitted diseases from previous sexual encounters. Following God’s formula for sex has tremendous benefits.

At the World Congress of Families, where 33,500 people from 65 countries examined ways to strengthen marriage, family, and children, Patrick Fagan, director of Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI), stated, “What undermines marriage most is the number of sexual partners one has. The percentage of first marriages that are still intact after five years of marriage, for men and women whose only sexual partner was each other, is 99% for men and 97% of women.

“However, for women who had one other sexual partner before marriage, the percentage of intact marriage drops to 62%, and if she has had two partners, it drops to 50%.”

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The Bible warns us to flee sexual immorality. What wisdom there is in that warning. At the age of 19, I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. A year and a half later I was drafted into the Marine Corps. I was determined that I was going to live for the Lord. After boot camp and training I went to Camp Pendleton, Southern California. I was far away from home and could have done anything I wanted. But the Bible was my guidebook. I remember visiting Tijuana, Mexico, and a cab driver drove by and said he had a clean girl for me. No way was I interested in this girl. There were also other encounters.

Dating the Unsaved

The Bible also commands us, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14). Because of this command, I wouldn’t date an unsaved girl. I insisted that I would only go out with a girl if she was a committed believer.

After I served my time in the Marine Corps, I discovered a girl in my church who truly loved the Lord. We dated for one and a half years. Did I have sexual feelings? Absolutely! What did I do? I obeyed the Word of God and suppressed them. No way was I going to violate what the Bible commanded me to do. Results? We got married, and now 61 years later we’re still happily married. My wife and I were virgins when we got married, so we never had to fear any sexual transmitted diseases. I urge you to obey God’s Word and live a holy life. I’m exceedingly glad I made that decision. Yes, through life I had to make many tough choices. But all those tough choices were worth it, for the Lord has abundantly blessed my life. And the Lord wants to do the same for you.

Part 4

Future Success

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How to Have a Successful Future

Shortly after I accepted Christ, I visualized myself in a coffin. I did this because I aimed as a teenager to have a successful future. I've heard people say, "If I had to live my life over, I would do things differently." So I determined that when I was older, I'd have no regrets for the way I lived.

Putting yourself into a coffin is a gruesome thing to do, but I wanted God's best for my life. I didn't want to look back at my life and be full of grief and say, "I wish I had...." Thankfully, I can say I have no regrets over how I lived my life. The reason I don't have any regrets is because I made the Bible my guide. I was determined to obey everything the Word of God said. What a great future awaits me and all those who likewise make Christ their Lord.

The Goodness of God

Psalm 34:8 had a great impact on my life, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him." Think about that verse very carefully. The verse says, "God is good." If God is good, then the wisest thing is to obey God in whatever he tells you. When I discovered God's goodness, I made the decision to obey God's instruction book, the Bible. I began reading the Bible every day and applied its teaching. I'm not saying I was perfect, but if I did something the Bible disapproved, I'd immediately ask God for forgiveness. I thank God that by his grace I never turned my back on him.

Here's a wonderful promise in Bible, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temp-

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tation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). God will not allow Satan to tempt us beyond our capacity to overcome. I’ve been a tool and die maker, minister, foreman, tool designer, operations manager, high school teacher, assistant dean of boys, owner of a publishing company, and owner of a business that is the largest of its kind in North America, father of five children, and grandparent to 20 grandchildren, and I can say out of all my experiences, “I’ve never been tempted beyond my capacity to resist sin.” How can I say this? The Bible promises in Romans 6:14, “For sin shall not have dominion over you.”

Here another promise: “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). When you repent of all your sins and accept Christ as Lord and Savior, you become born again. Christ dwells in your heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. So now it’s not just you battling sin, but you and the Holy Spirit. Walking in Spirit is a simple daily walk in obedience to God’s Word and trusting the Lord to fulfill his promises. Jesus taught us:

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples (John 15:1-8).

Notice God’s objective is that we bear much fruit. Again I want to stress, God is good. If you really believe that God is good, then welcome

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the times when God painfully prunes your branches so you can become fruitful. If Christ is really the Lord of your life, then you'll gladly accept being pruned by your loving Lord.

Lovers of Wisdom

King Solomon was the wisest king of Israel. The book of Proverbs contain many powerful statements that will revolutionize your life if you obey what it says. Here are the first seven verses of this book. I urge you to read them very slowly and meditate on these verses over and over again until they penetrate your heart.

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding,

To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity;

To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion—

A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

To understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:1-7).

Are you a lover of wisdom? Are you a listener? Do you seek godly counsel? Do you welcome correction? Or are you a fool and despise wisdom and instruction? It's your choice. So many teenagers are proud and stubborn. They are the source of wisdom. They're going to live their lives the way *they* want! And so many teenagers end up as total failures because of their defiant attitude.

I'm so grateful I made the choice to obey the Lord as a teenager. Has it been always easy? No! I remember when I was in Marine Corps boot camp and after reading my Bible I felt I should kneel down and pray. In the barracks where we lived, it was lined on two sides with double

bunk beds. One could see through all the bunks. Now in my youth I was very shy. I was never in a school play, and I hated speech. But now I was saved, and I didn't want to displease the Lord, so I knelt down and covered my eyes and prayed. From then on, I continued to read my Bible and pray in front of others in the Marine Corps.

To me pleasing God was more important than pleasing man. While working as operations manager of a large tool and die stamping shop, the phone rang. The secretary hadn't come to work yet, so I picked up the phone. It was a customer who wanted to speak to the president. He was standing there, and he waved to me to tell him he wasn't there. What should I do? God wants me to tell the truth, but the president wanted me to lie. There was no time to pray. I handed him the phone. I'd rather lose my job than displease my Lord. The president made an angry face at me and then spoke to the customer. I wasn't fired, but the president knew that I was a man of integrity who wouldn't lie.

Reaction to Persecution

Jesus said, "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12). Some may persecute you or ridicule you for your stand for the Lord, but the Bible says we are blessed when we are reviled and persecuted for the Lord. We're also told to rejoice and be exceeding glad. It seems that we would have a right to be sad, and here Jesus tells us not only to rejoice, but to be exceedingly glad. Why? We're to rejoice because we'll be greatly rewarded in heaven.

When I started a church in Woodside, Queens, I invited everyone to attend. The church was across the street from a New York City housing project. Our neighborhood was predominately white, and the housing project had all kinds of races. Since God loves everyone, I welcomed everyone. It became a predominately black church. On Halloween, kids threw eggs at me while I stood outside the church. On a number of occasions, they threw firecrackers in the back of the church. One time someone broke our front window. But that didn't stop me from ministering. These are small persecutions compared to what others have gone through.

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Jim Elliot was a missionary to Ecuador, and he was called to go to an uncivilized Indian tribe called the Aucas. Any outsiders coming near this tribe were killed. Elliot and four other missionaries planned to reach them. Nate Saint, a pilot, found a way to lower a bucket from an airplane loaded with supplies for the Aucas. They sent gifts to the Aucas, and the Aucas even sent a gift back. Their friendly contact was working, so the missionaries decided to go to them personally.

They found a strip of land by a river where they could land their airplane. One by one they were dropped off. They made some contact with the Aucas and things were looking good. Then a few days later some Auca men appeared with spears and killed all the missionaries. It seemed hopeless. But within two years, Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel Saint were able to go to the Aucas. Many of the Aucas became Christians, and today they are a friendly tribe. Jim Elliot, one of the missionaries who died, had this slogan:

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”¹

One of the missionaries had a gun for protection, but he wouldn't use it. He knew that if they killed an Auca, no one would be able to reach them. They were willing to die in order for Aucas to find salvation. Imagine the reward these missionaries will receive in heaven. That's why we who truly believe in God's Word are willing to be persecuted, for there's a glorious future awaiting us.

Living Forever

Think about it: you're going to live forever. You can't think of a number large enough for the years you'll spend in either heaven or hell: billion, trillion, octillion, zillion years, they're only a blink of an eye in contrast to eternity. That's why the Bible says, “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” (Psalm 14:1). Shortly after I went to an evangelical church, I reasoned, “If God is real, then nothing else is more important.” The thought that this short life span on earth determines my future destiny forever made me realize the only logical thing to do was to totally surrender myself to the Lordship of Christ. If Jesus doesn't return in my lifetime, I know one day I'll die. Do I fear death? Absolutely not! I

know there's a great place awaiting me because I have faithfully obeyed the Lord. I often say, "The best is yet to come."

Jesus told this parable:

The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?" So he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16-21).

Here was a wealthy man planning for his future. He had such an abundance of crops that he decided to tear down the old barns and increase his capacity for storage. Then he would eat, drink, and be merry. But he made one big mistake—he didn't put the Lord in his plans, and God called him a fool. He was a very prosperous man, but remember, when you die, you take nothing with you except what you did for the Lord. The Egyptian pharaohs made great efforts to load their burial pyramids with treasures for their afterlife. All the treasures are either still in the pyramids, museums, or stolen. Don't be a fool. Make Jesus the Lord of your life and obey God's Word. You'll never regret your decision.

Armor of God

You've made your decision to surrender your life to the Lord, now the Lord wants you to be a strong Christian. Here's God's instruction:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole

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armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Note: There's no protection for the back for a Christian warrior. Trust the Lord and face the enemy. The Bible promises, "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Also Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Rejoicing Always

With promises like this I'm not the least bit afraid to look the devil in the eye. I'm not afraid of anything that could destroy my faith because the Lord promises he'll always be with me. In the Great Commission, Jesus told his disciples what they should do and what he would do,

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

The disciples were to go into all the world bringing the message of salvation to the people, and Jesus promised he would always be with them. That's why we can always rejoice. Philippians 4:4-7 instructs us to:

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the

peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rejoicing all the time, not anxious for anything, having a peace that passes all understanding, are all promises for believers. Many Christians never attain this lifestyle because they don't know, and some don't believe, the promises of God. The Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Become a true believer in the promises of the Word of God. You'll have a blessed life.

Note carefully: I'm constantly backing my statements with the Bible. If anything I write doesn't agree with God's Word, don't accept it. But if the Bible says it, obey it. My goal is to get you to listen to and obey God's Word.

Great Shock

As I mentioned before, I attended a spiritually dead church. After being confirmed, I quit going to church. However, during those years I always had a desire for the Lord. At the age of 19, I visited a Bible-believing church that created a strong desire in me to know God. I often drove my car to a park to read my Bible. I read through the entire Bible in four to five months. I expected all young people who were believers would likewise have a hunger for God's Word. I remember speaking to a young person who was raised in church and he hadn't read through the Bible. I was shocked.

Disciplined Devotional Lifestyle

That's one of the great dilemmas with many Christian youth; they don't have a hunger and thirst for the knowledge of God. They're ignorant of God's Word. The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," (2 Timothy 2:15). God wants believers to defend God's Word intelligently.

The Apostle Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). To

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defend God's Word intelligently requires us to make time to diligently study the Bible so we can give a reason for our beliefs. Remember, the Bible is God's instruction book showing us how to live. Believers should have a daily devotion of reading the Bible and praying, and to be faithful in attending church.

I'm Too Busy

You may say, "I'm too busy." Remember, you'll spend eternity either in heaven or hell. Jesus tells us when he's coming back with all his holy angels he'll separate the sheep from the goats. To the sheep who obeyed, he'll say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). To the goats who disobeyed, he'll say, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

The thought that one day everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ makes me want to make absolutely certain that what I'm doing is pleasing the Lord. You need to make the reading of God's Word and taking time to pray a top priority of your life. As busy as I am, I always read my Bible every day and pray and attend church faithfully. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane he found his disciples asleep. He said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40). I encourage you to dedicate one hour every day to the Lord, a half an hour reading God's Word, and the other half hour in prayer. I would encourage you to start reading the New Testament with a strong desire to obey everything it teaches.

You can also take online Bible courses that earn college credits. or take courses without earning credit. There are some excellent Bible teachers for these courses. Ask your pastor where you can get these courses. Become a leader and get a group of kids taking these Bible courses.

Living Victoriously

You have committed your life to the Lord. You're determined to obey whatever God wants you to do. Don't fall into Satan's trap by neglecting the church. Jesus said to Peter, "On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Obey the biblical admonition not to forsake "the assembling

of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25). God wants us to be faithful. It grieves me greatly to see children attend Sunday school and youth services, but then drift from the church when they become teens, in direct violation of God’s Word.

You may say, “I would go to church, but most of my friends don’t go.” Don’t just be a follower. Be a leader. Even if you’re the only one of your friends attending church, be faithful. Be determined to follow the Lord regardless of what others do. It’s critical and biblical to maintain fellowship with believers. Church people, and even ministers, may disappoint you, but always remember that you’re serving the Lord, not people. Even Jesus had a disciple who was a thief and a murderer. It’s extremely important for your spiritual welfare to be faithful to the house of God and get your eyes off of people.

College: The First 72 Hours

What I’m going to say is critical for your living a successful Christian life in college. College is not a glorified high school. You’re completely independent. You’re in the driver’s seat. Make a wrong turn, and you can have a future with life-long regrets.

Leaving home, family, and friends and going to college for the first time can be very challenging. For some it will be a culture shock. You’ll quickly discover the partying kind of students. They come to college not only to learn, but to have fun. Now there’s nothing wrong with having fun, but this crowd believes, “You’re only young once, so be free and throw off restraints.”

They’re the drinking crowd, and they’re immersed in the sexual culture. They boast of the fabulous fun they’re having with their sexual encounters. But don’t believe them. Many of the women will be weeping in their rooms and visiting psychiatrists for their many problems because of their free-wheeling lifestyle. Many will contact venereal diseases that will remain with them the rest of their lives. Some will never be able to have children because of their foolish sexual behavior. What’s the solution?

Avoid making a wrong decision in the first 72 hours so you can have a great future.

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The first 72 hours at college can also be extremely lonely when you're surrounded by unknown students. The solution is to be committed to obey God's Word and stand up for what you believe. It's critical that you search for other students who are believers. The Bible says, "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26). Also speak to your pastor, as he may be able to help you find a Christian group. Do this before you go to college.

Be determined to obey the scriptural injunction to assemble with believers. The Bible says, "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20). It also says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). Walk with the wise and don't stand in the paths of sinners. Don't believe the deceptive lies of the partying crowd and all the fun they're boasting about. Have fun with other believers by doing things that won't bring disgrace to the Lord. Bonding with the wrong kind of people can have a devastating effect on your grades, health, lasting relationships, and your faith.

If you make the Word of God your delight, you'll become like the blessed man whose "Delight is in the law of the LORD, and 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 also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (Psalm 1:2-3).

Intelligent Faith

Many students become intimidated by atheistic professors ridiculing the Bible. Don't believe the lie that the Bible is just a man-made book. Great intellectual leaders have carefully examined the Christian faith and heartily endorse the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Let me say this very emphatically: those of us who believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures have an intelligent faith. I've written another book in conjunction with this one, *Success for College, Career, and Life*, where I go into great detail defending our faith and many other principles so college students may become successful in college, careers, and in life.

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What would you say if those around you said, “The Bible is a myth. Faith in God is a crutch for the weak. Evolution proves God didn’t create man. Miracles don’t exist. All miracles can be explained by natural laws. Jesus was a good man, but he died like anyone else. The story of Christmas and Easter is a fairy tale.” I could go on and on with questions like these.

There are intelligent answers for each of these statements. The Apostle Peter said, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). The Lord commands believers to provide intelligent reasons for our faith.

Unfortunately, many Christians entering college don’t have a well-grounded faith. Many sit in awe when their educated professors attack Christian beliefs. When questions arise because of your faith and you have no answer, make time to find answers. I graduated from Bible college with a BA in Bible. At the age of 40 I became a high school teacher and had to go back to college to become certified. I attended Oswego State University, City College of New York, and New York University (NYU). While taking a graduate course, Philosophy of Education, the professor ridiculed God’s Word. I defended it. Don’t believe the lie that the Bible isn’t for intelligent individuals. In my book for college students I go into great detail about evolution and other issues and prove, along with other learned individuals, the trustworthiness and wisdom of the Bible.

Twelve Principles for a Successful Future

Once a lawyer asked Jesus: “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:36-39).

The greatest commandment is to love God with our all, and the second greatest commandment is to love people. If you want to please the Lord, make these two commandments the guiding lights for your life. Let’s look at some principles so you may have a successful life. I urge you to carefully read and pray over these until they become part of your life. They’re all biblical principles.

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1. Aim to put the Lord first in everything you do.
2. Have a disciplined devotional lifestyle in which you read the Bible, pray every day, attend church faithfully, and get involved in the church.
3. Be determined to be a person of character—bold, courageous, honest, moral, respectful, responsible, open-minded, humble, fair, compassionate, friendly, cooperative, diligent, and self-disciplined.
4. Avoid drugs, smoking, and anything else that harms your body.
5. Keep yourself sexually pure. Avoid pornography and reading novels promoting immorality. (Remember temptation isn't sin, but lust is. The world is full of pornographic images; don't lust over them.)
6. Choose friends carefully. If you date, obey the Bible and choose only a true born-again believer.
7. Resist peer pressure and be firm in your values. Be a leader.
8. Be a diligent seeker of wisdom.
9. Welcome and seek correction, even from your parents. Be quick to admit your faults.
10. Endeavor to avoid debt. Don't be proud and try to impress others.
11. If you find a job, become a diligent worker. Do your work as unto the Lord. Become an employee that employers dream of hiring.
12. Live the Golden Rule by being a lover of people and always willing to share your faith.

Transformers

Too many Christians are silent. God is looking for young men and women who will boldly and unashamedly stand up for their faith. Apostle Paul gave this challenge: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to

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God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

God calls you to be a transformer. Go into your school and the world’s marketplace, not with a mask over our face, but with a vibrant faith and lifestyle that joyfully shares the gospel. Will you become a transformer?

Notes

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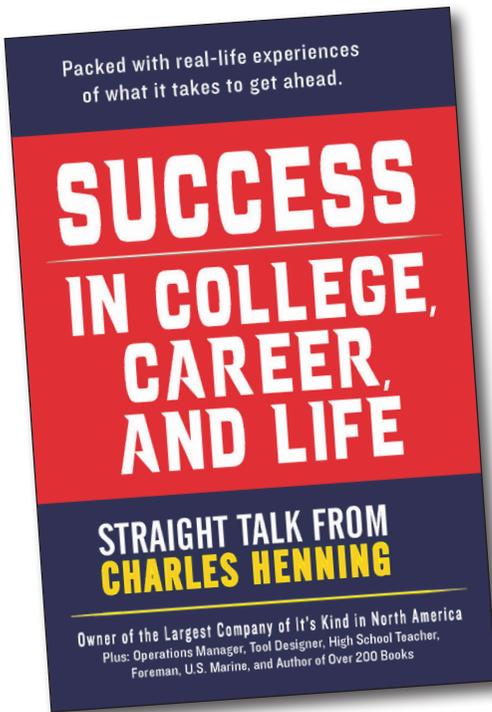
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