

Note: This is an excerpt from *Make Life Work in a Fast-Paced World: Turning Failure into Success* by Errol Beckford, edited and revised by Ken Walker. Published in October of 2015 by Errol Beckford Ministries.

Chapter 1

Ask God for Help

Make Life Work Principle: The Power of Two

“O Lord, God of my master, Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham.

--Genesis 24:12 (NLT)

Abraham’s oldest servant, Eliezer, has just assumed responsibility for a foreboding responsibility. His beloved master is growing old and assumes he is nearing the end of life (even though Abraham ultimately lives thirty-five more years). The great patriarch of Israel wants to see his lineage continue through his son, Isaac—but not as a result of a partnership with someone from the wicked Canaanites surrounding them. Thus, Abraham calls the man who had charge of everything in his household to his side. Then he asks Eliezer to swear (in a time when people treated an oath as sacred) by the God of heaven to travel to Abraham’s native land and find a wife for Isaac.

In this brief account of Eliezer’s life, the key lesson that emerges is how the servant asks God for help. If you study Genesis 24, you will see that Eliezer does this throughout his mission. In verse 12, Eliezer prays before he starts. In verse 15, he prays after arriving in Nahore, and in verse 52, he prays in front of the family of Rebekah, the woman Eliezer chooses as Isaac’s bride. Somehow, Eliezer came to the place in life where he recognized that he needed a source of greater help, something beyond human reasoning or power. Therefore, Eliezer turned to the One greater than all things, the ultimate Source of all power. Knowing God’s power in your life will bring real-life inspiration and demonstrations of the “power of two.”

Make Life Work Principle: Partner for Life

If you expect to live life—as the Amplified version of John 10:10 puts it—“to the full, till it overflows,” it is going to take more than you. It will take God empowering and guiding you as your lifelong partner. To see this unfold in your life, you will need the same kind of overarching

desire for God's guidance, direction, and wisdom as King David when he cried out: "Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you" (Ps. 25:4-5, NLT).

When God called Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, He told the successor to Moses to go forward with confidence because "every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you" (Josh. 1:3). God also promised Joshua His continuing presence: "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Josh. 1:5). Although these words would leave anyone brimming with confidence, they underscore the truth that if Joshua hoped to enjoy the same success as Moses, it would only happen when Joshua learned to operate in the power of two.

This same idea runs through the approach to life Jesus taught His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion: "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 you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:5, 7).

Those hoping to find success in life must first surrender to God. One of the dictionary definitions of "surrender" is to "yield to the power of another; to give or deliver up possession of (anything) upon compulsion or demand."¹ William Booth, the legendary founder of the Salvation Army, once said: "The greatness of a man's power is the measure of his surrender."² We must surrender our status of independence and thinking that we have all the answers. Instead, we must assume the position of a humble "seeker." An historian recalls how the great healing evangelist, Kathryn Kuhlman, found breakthrough when she adopted this outlook: "I surrendered unto Him all there was of me; everything! Then for the first time I realized what it meant to have real power."³

One of Satan's biggest deceptions is persuading us to believe that we can keep on doing the things the same old way and somehow produce different results. If we change the way we think, we will change the way we live our life. It is impossible to think that God will be the head of our life without our total surrender to Him. Or, as the wise king, Solomon, wrote: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones" (Prov. 3:5-8, NIV).

As we learn to live our lives day by day and moment by moment, trusting and relying upon the Lord for direction and help, we will experience the power of healthy living. As King David wrote: "I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1-2).

Make Life Work Principle: Acknowledge God

I believe one of the leading shortcomings of millions of people is failing to acknowledge their need for God's help. When we acknowledge that life without the Lord is empty and misdirected, then we will be willing to turn our life over to Him. As nineteenth century author and Holiness movement leader Hannah Whitall Smith once said, "No soul can be really at rest until it has given up all dependence on everything else and has been forced to depend on the Lord alone. As long as our expectation is from other things, nothing but disappointment awaits us."⁴

In other words, we must acknowledge that God is awesome! We must embrace the same

fervency for God that Paul expressed when he wrote his letter to the church at Ephesus, urging the Ephesians to accept the grace that represented their only hope of spending eternity in heaven with the Father: “Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—ininitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes” (Eph. 3:20, TLB).

Why wait for life to explode before admitting we can’t make it through on our own? We can avoid a lot of trouble if we take the first step and ask God for help. After all, God has the plan for making life work. When we fail to ask Him to show us His plan for our lives, we are destined to fail.

Make Life Work Principle: God has the Plan

The question is: why would we want to forge ahead on our own when we can turn to the Creator of the universe for direction? Why would we want to move ahead without His plan? His thoughts toward us are to fuel our lives with blessing and purpose. The prophet Jeremiah captured the essence of this truth in the words: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11). In other words, God’s plan is to make life work for us. His plan has a future, a hope, and a peace—not evil.

Bruce Wilkinson emphasized this truth in his best-selling book, *Prayer of Jabez*. After it soared in popularity, the book became quite controversial when some people took its teaching to extremes. Ignoring the author’s message that we should pray for God to increase our effectiveness in ministry and step out in faith, many turned Jabez’s request into a kind of “bless me” club. Sadly, those who twisted the intent of scripture missed the point of this legendary prayer: “Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ *And God granted his request*” (1 Chron. 4:10, NIV, emphasis added).

May we all be like Jabez! This briefest of accounts of one man’s life contains a key insight for all of us. Notice that Jabez asked God for four things:

- To bless him
- To enlarge his territory
- Not to leave him
- To protect him from evil

In applying the power of two when he cried out to God, Jabez saw his requests granted. Likewise, when we cry out to God for His help, we can expect Him to answer. Maybe not always in the way we think He should, but we can rest assured He will answer and guide us to greater heights. Not to enrich ourselves, but to be a blessing to a world that is desperately in need of examples of honesty, integrity, and faithfulness. When we seek God first, we can expect our lives to follow the right path. We can expect His blessing, His increase, His presence, and His protection.

The advice Jesus offered in his Sermon on the Mount further supports the idea of approaching life with the power of two: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). When we put God first in

our lives, we will find His plan for our lives. Life will become easier for us to live and enjoy. God's plan is not to hurt us; it is to give us a future, a hope, and peace.

Make Life Work Principle: Possess the Spirit of Humility

The defining moment of a person's life is when he (or she) comes to himself and recognizes the need for help from the One who is greater than anyone on this earth. The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 tells us that when we come to realize that we cannot make it on our own and seek help from the One that is greater than us, we will find help in the time of our need. I love the point of awareness that dawns in this young man's spirit, but only after he delivers the ultimate insult of demanding his portion of his father's inheritance while his dad is still living—then travels to a faraway land and literally wastes his fortune in a wanton, “party-hearty” kind of lifestyle. That foolish decision catches up with him when a severe famine strikes, leaving him so penniless that he takes a job slopping pigs for a resident of that country. Luke recalls how, in the parable, the prodigal would have even enjoyed a chance to eat the pods the swine ate, yet no one gave him a scrap of food.

Then the light goes off: “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’ And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son’” (Luke 15:16-21).

This is the kind of low point I had to reach before acknowledging my need for God's help. It happened in the 1990s, while I was living the “good life” on Long Island, New York. Married and the father of three children, I had earned my college degree and landed a management position with a well-known home improvement corporation. During these affluent years, I bought two homes, enrolled my kids in a prestigious private school, and mistakenly thought I had it made. I put God on the back burner of my life. After all, I didn't need His help; I was managing pretty well on my own. Yet the slippery conditions beneath my feet are best described in the passage from a book by the late Charles J. Givens that was released around this time:

“Imagine yourself standing on the bank of a fast-flowing river. The only safe way across is a series of slippery, moss-covered rocks protruding only slightly above the rushing water. As you start across, it becomes obvious that the best way to step onto the next rock is to first firmly plant both feet on the slippery rock beneath you. With both feet firmly planted, you have created maximum balance and stability with which to make your next move. Your only point of balance lies on the rock beneath you. At that moment you have no choice or chance of being somewhere else. Complaining about the circumstances that got you there will only distract your focus from the task at hand to get safely on the other side of the river. Feeling and thinking like a victim, ‘Why me, what did I do to deserve this?’ will only contribute to your ending up in the water, almost as if a way of proving to yourself that you truly are a victim and worthy of sympathy.

“Take your attention away from where you are and you dramatically increase your chances of missing your mark, of ending up in the very circumstances you sought to

avoid. Attempt to leap quickly from slippery rock to slippery rock and you will most likely, end up in the water, wet and struggling. But if you keep your focus on exactly where you are and stop to regain your balance after each step, slowly, consistently, and persistently, you can make your way from rock to rock no matter how slippery the path.”⁵

Out of Control

This passage from Givens’ *Super Self* best describes the treacherous conditions I faced when my world suddenly spun out of control. As hard as I fought to prevent it from happening, my marriage fell apart. When it ended in divorce, I lost my home, the opportunity to see my children every day, and my passion for life. Like the Prodigal Son, I felt ashamed over how I had let everything slip through my grasp as I ignored the riches of grace He had wanted me to have. Then I discovered that God is an ever-present, ever-ready source of help in life.

This discovery marked the defining moment in my life. In the same way God guided Eliezer, and the way He provided for and protected Jabez, He answered my cry for help. Specifically, He spoke through the words of Isaiah that I quoted at the start of the introduction: “Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go’” (Isa. 48:17).

Previously, I didn’t give God the glory for all that He had helped me to accomplish. But from that day forward, I decided to put God first in all my plans. Throughout this book, you will read how this decision worked and launched me on the road to success that I enjoy today. It came once I discovered that God is the Rock on which I must stand. From now on, whenever you feel overwhelmed by life’s circumstances or that the enemy of your soul is gaining a stronghold over your life, just remember that God is always there. Ask Him for help.

A Humble Prayer

Before you read on to the rest of the principles in this book, join me in praying this prayer: “God, I come to You just as I am. I need Your help and direction for my life. Oh God, please forgive me for thinking I can make it without You. Forgive me for thinking that I have the answers to life. I don’t, and I don’t know how to make life work in this hectic, fast-paced world. I now turn my life completely over to You. It’s none of me and all of You, from this day forward. Teach me how to trust You, to hear Your voice, and to lean not unto my own understanding. You know my future and I trust You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Notes

1. *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)*, <http://machaut.uchicago.edu/?resource=Webster%27s&word=surrender&use1913=on&use1828=on>.
2. “William Booth quotes,” ThinkExist.com. http://thinkexist.com/quotation/the_greatness_of_a_mans_power_is_the_measure_of/253640.html.
3. Jaimie Oliver Garande, *In Pursuit of Destiny* (Milton Keynes, United Kingdom:

AuthorHouse UK, 2010), 34.

4. Mrs. Pearsall Smith, *The God of All Comfort and the Secret of His Comforting*, (J. Nisbet, 1906), 247.

5. Charles J. Givens, *Super Self: Doubling Your Personal Effectiveness* (Collingdale, PA: Diane Publishing, 1993), 29-30.