

January 6-10, 2025 Edition

Following

# The Year<sup>(s)</sup> Of Jesus Part 157

## How To Make Lasting Changes

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January 4/5/1, 2025

When you read the Bible ask yourself if there's anything you're reading where God is speaking to you personally... anything that you need to start applying in your own life. Then try to reflect on what you read... what you heard from God throughout the day and we know you'll be blessed.

\*\*\* These are EXTREMELY rough drafts so if you see typos... well yuo knew the rest ;0) These are essentially the ramblings of thoughts running through Ed or Judy's mind the week before Ed teaches a lesson on these concepts. They are pretty much how Ed gets ready for the weekends. They are not necessarily coherent so if they don't make much sense... sorry about that.

\*\*\*\* Also these devotionals are the product of both Judy & Ed's experiences and education. Figuring out which are from Judy and which are from Ed (sometimes both are contained in a single day) is half the fun.

You can also get these devotionals on Riverside's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside](http://www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside)). You don't have to have a FB account to read them but if you do have an account if you "like" the Riverside page and click the box to get updates the devos will show up on your wall every weekday (along with other news and event updates).

## **Monday:**

The LORD says, "Forget what happened before, and do not think about the past. Look at the new thing I am going to do. It is already happening. Don't you see it? Isaiah 43:18-19 (NCV)

Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses... Oh, that you would choose life, so that you... might live! You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life. Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (NLT)

**Reflection:** Don't you just love Isaiah 43:18-19? Aren't you glad it's in the Bible? Aren't you glad God is only concerned with your past insofar as it can help you to live tomorrow better? I know I am. So forget 2024 and let's focus on 2025. If you want 2025 to be better than 2024 was then you need to focus your life. We talked about the importance of focus on Sunday. Focus is what gives anything power & intensity. So it's no mystery why the Bible talks about focusing your life... Deuteronomy 30 asks us to make a choice. Not to just live by letting the winds of our culture and society and desires blow us whichever direction they are currently blowing. God says the key to your life is choice. Without focus your life will be about as powerful as the sun in Alaska these days... not much power... not much intensity. But with focus your life will make a difference.

If you want your life to count, you must focus it. Rick Warren

So how do I focus my life? I'm glad you asked! About 12 years ago Judy and I attended a Franklin-Covey seminar (she had to bribe me to get me to go) called "What Matters Most". At the time I was a youth minister at a church that I didn't really fit into (the people were great... but I just frustrated most of the leadership because I had ideas about how to do church "different" in a church that liked things the way they had always been). The seminar taught me the importance of focus. I had been living my life without much real direction (you may be thinking to yourself, "self... he seems to live his life without much direction now"! Compared to others that may be true but you should have seen me then! ;o). The leader walked us through the exercises we'll be doing in the next week or so and it changed my life. One of the exercises was to write down (don't forget to actually write this down... the writing of it is very important) our biggest dream. He said, "if you could do anything you wanted to do what would it be? Don't think about money, time, or any other constraint... dream big!"

I was struggling at the church I was currently working at and my main frustration was that I felt the people who needed God the most were being prevented from getting to Him by "churchy" people who already knew Him. So this is what I wrote on my 3X5 card:

I would start a church that accepted everyone exactly where they were & loved them the way Jesus loves us, no matter their age, race, and culture. No matter how they looked or what problems they had.

I didn't know why he had us write it on a 3X5 card but after lunch we had to hand them in. I got really nervous when he started reading the cards out loud! It was NOT in a church seminar... I was in a Franklin-Covey seminar with business professionals in southern

California. I expected audible snickers when he got to mine. But instead, when he finished reading mine people just kind of sighed (as though they were thinking, "that kind of place would be great... but creating that kind of place would just be impossible, wouldn't it?") Turns out God can do anything... even (maybe I should say especially) the impossible. It wasn't until about 5 years later as Judy was going through our old planning stuff that she remembered what I had written that day. She looked up at me and asked if I remembered what I had dreamed of? After we talked about it for a couple of minutes she said, "you got exactly what you wrote down... I hate you!" (she doesn't really hate me... in fact she adores me... I'm the light of her life... but don't tell her I said that, ok?) I don't know what makes writing this stuff down so powerful... but it is. So today I want you to write down YOUR dream. Don't think about all the reasons you could never do it (and don't let anyone else tell you why it could never happen). Just dream and while you're at it dream big! One of my favorite verses in the Bible is from Ephesians 3:20... remember this while you're dreaming big...

*God can do anything, you know- far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us. Ephesians 3:16-19 (MES)*

For today write down your dream... then we'll start tomorrow working on the tools that will help you to move toward your dreams with God's help. Just remember... focus can be dangerous. It can lead you places you never dreamed of... but I guarantee they'll be places you won't trade for anything. Don't have a big juicy dream? Then ask God for one. Judy and I were talking this week and she wondered if maybe God had given me my dream but let me think it was mine. What do you think of that, she asked me. I'm fine with it. Either way I ended up in a place far beyond what I could have ever imagined or guessed or requested in my wildest dreams.

**Prayer:** Father, I am so thankful that my past is forgiven. Today focus my eyes so I can clearly see the new thing you are already at work doing in my life. Take my dreams and my plans and blend them into Your plan. And where my dreams get in the way of Your dreams... show me the way to Your dream for my life. Because I know that only when I follow Your dream for my life will I find meaning, joy & satisfaction. In Jesus' Name, amen.

### **My Big Dream:**

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## **Tuesday:**

I ask God... to make your eyes focused and clear, so you can see exactly what it is God is calling you to do. Ephesians 1:18 (MES)

**Reflection:** Ok... so you've got your big dream. One question I got was, "what if I don't know what to dream of?" What if you don't have a big dream? Then just keep walking with God... eventually He will open your eyes to what will lead to the most joy, meaning & satisfaction in your life. For today let's follow the next step in this focusing program which is to define...

### **Who Is God Asking Me To Be? Or... what roles do I play in my life?**

I don't always spend a lot of time thinking about what roles (relationships) God has entrusted me with in my life. Often I take the roles I have for granted while I wish I had other, more meaningful roles. But God asks us to faithfully perform the tasks he has already entrusted to us.

Live creatively, friends... Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that... Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life. Galatians 6:15 (MES)

But how do we do that? How do we make a careful exploration of who we are and the work we've been given? How can we do the creative best we can with the life God has given us? I'm glad you asked (you're always so helpful to ask the questions that will lead me to my next point). This is where the "Roles Exercise" comes in. Get out a piece of paper and write down (remember how powerful writing things is) all of your roles. Be exhaustive! Speaking for myself, I have many roles that God has assigned me:

Child of God; Husband; Dad; Self (I have to take care of myself or I won't have what I need to take care of anyone else); Pastor; Family Member; Friend; Community Member; American Citizen; Neighbor; Pet Owner (I have a dog); Small Business Owner; Facebook Blogger Extraordinaire (ok... that one's a stretch)...

I could probably think of more but you get the point. If you look closely at that list you'll see that all my roles are not of equal importance. I consider my relationship with God to be the most important role in my inventory of relationships. Sometimes people will take issue with that and ask why my family isn't number one. I may not know it all, but one thing I have learned is that if I put anything or anyone ahead of my relationship with God everything is going to suffer. No human being/relationship can take the kind of pressure as being the thing that makes everything else in your life ok... only God can take that kind of weight. But if I make God my priority my family never suffers for it... quite the opposite in fact. That's not to say that in the past some people haven't hurt their families and put the blame on God... but please, don't blame God for something somebody did or said in His name.

Anyways... back to my list. For me God is on top, then I have to make sure I take care of myself or I can't care for Judy & Jonathan the way they need. This sounds like selfishness sometimes but I'm not talking about getting everything I want at their expense (although



there have been days when that's exactly what I've tried to do)... I'm talking about lovingly caring for myself so I will have the wherewithal to take care of them. Jesus said in Matthew 22:39 that the second most important command was to "love your neighbor as you love yourself". We often think of this as only one command (to love others) but I heard Judy say once (I wish I had thought of it but I'm stealing it from her) that there is an implicit third command in that verse. The command to love yourself. If you don't you can't really love others.

Ok... back to the list (I'm all over the place tonight). First God, then myself and I guess I'd put Judy (my wife) and Jonathan (my son) as 2-a & 2-b. After that my job/calling as the Pastor of Riverside Community Church. My family, friends, and on it goes. So that's my list... now you make yours. Figure out all the roles you play in your life and write them down. Then rank them in order of importance. Once you're done then we'll spend tomorrow putting some real focus into them that will help you decide how (and with whom) you will spend your time... which is another very important part of focusing your life.

**Prayer:** Father, Focus my eyes to define the roles you have given me in my life. Thank You for the relationships you have entrusted to me. I want to do my best to be faithful in those relationships. In Jesus' Name, amen.

**Sample Roles:** Follower/Child Of God; Husband/Wife; Parent; Child; Sibling; Friend; Employee; Employer; Co-Worker; ????

My Roles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

## **Wednesday:**

An intelligent person aims at wise actions, but a fool starts off in many directions.  
Proverbs 17:24 (GN)

**Reflection:** After you've asked yourself the question, Who Am I? (remember, yesterday I had you define the roles/relationships God has entrusted to you and rank them in importance) you need to ask yourself, "who do i want to be"? Think about how you would like to perform in those roles/relationships. Billy Dean had a couple of songs out a couple of years ago (ok... maybe it was like 15 but it seems like just a couple to me) called Young Man & Only Here For A Little While. They were all about thinking about the decisions we make on a daily basis. One is about a guy who went to a funeral for a man who died awfully young and spent all his time "working hard and chasing dollars... putting off until tomorrow... things he should have done".

So Billy Dean says, I'm going to change my life because we're only here for a little while. There was another song called Young Man- the chorus of that song really spoke to me.

When I'm just an old man on the front porch in a chair Rocking with the memories from my past The lines you see on my face will tell a tale of no regrets I want to look forward, to looking back On the race I ran... when I was a young man.

I started thinking about how I'd feel about the choices I was making now when I was just an old man on the front porch in a chair, rocking with the memories from my past. I realized I had better get going if I was going to be proud of what I had done with my life... if I was going to become a person I could admire... if I was going to look forward to looking back. I did my best but it wasn't until I took that Franklin-Covey class that I talked about on Monday that I got the tools to really add focus to that decision. One of the best things I ever did was write what Steven Covey calls, Tribute Statements for each of my most important roles. The idea is to picture yourself at your 90th birthday celebration with all your friends and family there to pay tribute to your life and then think about what you would hope that they would say about your life. Then start living today in a way that will make that tribute statement a reality. It will focus all of your choices and interactions with the people who will ultimately decide what kind of friend, spouse, parent, employee, etc... you were/are. One of the verses that really drives me as I go through this life is from a story Jesus told to His friends... basically the gist of the story is, that those who faithfully do what they think God wants them to will one day stand face to face with their creator and hear Him say:

*Well done, my good and faithful servant. Matthew 25:21 (NLT)*

That's part of my tribute statement from God to me (at least I hope that's what He'll say to me...). Now write yours. Take your most important roles that God has entrusted to you and write out a tribute statement for each one. Picture your 90th birthday and think about what you hope they will say to you. It's just one more step in adding some incredible focus (and therefore power) to your life... and will take you one step closer to hearing the words, "well done!" from your Creator. Have questions about any of this? Add them to the comments section on the Riverside FB page ([www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside](http://www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside)) and I'll do my best to answer them... below I've attached my tribute statement that I've written for God (what I hope He'll say to me when I stand before Him- hopefully in a LONG, LONG time).

Role: Child Of God---Key Person: God---Tribute Statement: Well done good & faithful servant! You have discovered and lived out what & who I created you to be. You enjoyed your life and helped your family and church to enjoy life as well. And you helped me make Riverside into a place where people who were afraid of me or unsure of me could come and find out who I really am and discover how much I love them. I am so proud of you. Let's celebrate together!

**Prayer:** Father, I want to be faithful in the relationships You have entrusted to me. I want to treat the people I love in a way that will bond us forever... in a way that will lead them to love me and admire me more and more... in a way that will make You proud that You're my Father. Give me the focus and strength to live my life in such a way that starting now, I can look forward to looking back on my life when I'm in the twilight of my days. In Jesus' Name, amen.

## Roles Exercise

Ok... you've already figured out your roles... now spend some time figuring out who you want to be in each of those relationships.

	<u>Role</u>	<u>Key Person</u>	<u>Tribute Statement</u>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

### **Thursday:**

To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who are unfaithful, even what little they have will be taken away. Matthew 25:29-30 (NLT)

**Reflection:** Ok... now that you have your Big Dream written out, your roles/relationships defined and your tribute statements for each role clearly stated you are ready to chart your course. You need to choose some directions (very similar to goals but with the focus and power of your dream & roles behind them) that will give 2025 something to aim at. These directions will help you make decisions about what to do and what not to do in any given moment/day/week/month/year. Remember the verse from one of our earlier lessons:

An intelligent person aims at wise actions, but a fool starts off in many directions.  
Proverbs 17:24 (GN)

Don't be foolish- using your dream & roles as a guide CHOOSE some directions to take your life in 2013. What will help you make your dream a reality? What will lead you closer to

making the tribute statements you dream of come true? When you use your dreams and roles as targets that you aim at while choosing your directions you can really add some focus to your life... which will bring the power & intensity that will make your life the kind of life you've dreamed of.

When I was 31 I was drifting. I had gone to college and gotten my degree in Biblical studies but I had run from the idea of working for a church. I wanted to trust God but I had seen what trusting his people could lead to (sometimes churches can hurt the people who work for them). I didn't want any part of it. So I was delivering pizzas and looking for a way to make my life a success. It wasn't working out very well. I tried to become a cop... it didn't work out. I tried to become a firefighter... it didn't work out. I tried to go to medical school... it didn't work out. I tried to become an emergency medical technician (everyone together now)... it didn't work out.

My problem wasn't that there was anything wrong with doing any of the things I was trying to do (there are plenty of cops, firefighters, doctors & emts who are exactly where God wants them to be)... it was that I really wasn't trusting God and designing my life around & upon His kingdom. Nothing was working out for me (I had an awesome wife and a 1 ½ year old son but I was still dissatisfied with my life). So I decided to start building my life on God's kingdom. We talked yesterday about building our lives on what matters most. Jesus talked about this when He said:

*So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33 (NIV)*

I was letting something other than His kingdom dominate my thoughts. I was seeking my own little kingdom first and then hoping He would add His kingdom to my life as well. The problem was that my thinking was completely backwards (which if you know me isn't all that unusual ;o). So I made a tough decision. I decided to base my life on God's kingdom FIRST and then let Him add everything else like He promised in the scripture above. It was scary and there was more than a little grieving over letting go of the "successful" life I dreamed of (I wanted to have LOTS of money and stuff). The grieving seems silly now because it's not like I was really in any danger of ever making LOTS of money anyways (but some of my toughest battles are with my unique brand of fantasy). I started volunteering at church (the same one I work at now), I tried to add God into my everyday life the best I knew how, and I did my best to listen for His guidance and direction. God didn't change everything about my life right away though. It took time for me to get myself to the place I was in... it took time for Him to get me closer to where He wanted me to be. I wish I could tell you I'm perfect at this "following God thing" now, but I'm a long ways away from that. What I find absolutely amazing is how God can do miracles even with my meager efforts. But He can. He did miracles with my meager efforts, and if you let Him, he'll do miracles with your meager efforts.



So take another look at your dreams, your roles and your tribute statements. Choose some directions (goals) to start heading (read that as “aiming at”) in your life. In fact, every time you sit down and plan out your week look over your dreams, roles & tribute statements. It will give you the direction you need to add the focus to your life that will allow you begin building your life on God’s kingdom, rather than your own.

ps: maybe you’re afraid that if you build your life on God’s kingdom then you will end up in some foreign country working with people you don’t understand and that your life will become a living hell. It’s ok if that’s what you’re afraid of... so was I. If that’s your fear let me reassure you. Most of us will spend the rest of our lives right where we are when we begin building our lives on the foundation of God’s kingdom. And if He does move you, or change your career... I guarantee you won’t regret it. I would never have dreamed that this is where God would eventually lead me... and if you had told me that this is where I’d be in 15 years I’m not sure I would have taken the first step 15 years ago (that’s why God doesn’t tell us where we’ll end up). But I can tell you this... God knows SO much better than I do (the understatement of the century). I wouldn’t trade where I am now for anything. God can be trusted.

**Prayer:** Father, thank You that you have plans for my life. Thank You that You created me uniquely to fulfill those plans. Forgive me for times I have wandered away from Your plans and instead wandered after what I thought would make me happy. Show me what goals or actions I should aim at in each of my roles this year. In Jesus Name, amen.

### Goals Exercise:

Based on your roles that you defined in the previous exercise, make some goals that will make it possible for you to take steps towards fulfilling the roles that are most important to you. These goals should support the tribute statements you created bringing them closer to becoming a reality.

#### Role- Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Friday:**

We can choose the sounds we want to listen to; we can choose the taste we want in food, and we should choose to follow what is right. But first of all we must define... what is good. Job 34:3-4 (TLB)

**Reflection:** Values. Your values are your internal compass that will impact every decision you ever make. The question for today is, where did I get my values that shape everything I do & say? You can get them from God or you can let the culture give them to you. Jesus suggests you adopt God's values:

In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're Kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you. Matthew 5:48 (MES)

OK everyone... theoretically you have come up with a dream, clearly defined your roles/relationships & written out some tribute statements that reflect how you'd like to perform in those relationships (if not go back to the beginning of these blog entries and WRITE THEM DOWN!). Finally you chose some directions to head towards or aim at in 2025 to make your dreams & tribute statements come true. What's next you ask?

You need to decide what VALUES are going to guide you as you follow your dreams, fulfill your roles & travel in your chosen directions. Values are the internal compass that points us in the direction we need to go whatever we may be doing. If your values are godly and built upon God's kingdom, then you will always make decisions based upon those values & our culture will lead you farther and farther away from your God given identity. So choose your values wisely...

We don't often speak in those kinds of terms... often we believe we are enslaved by our values and have no control over them but people choose their values every day... and most of them you don't even think about. For instance, I don't have to work hard to keep myself from jumping off a 10 story building. That's a pretty easy choice for me. I don't argue with myself over the wisdom of not jumping... I just avoid getting myself anywhere near a place where I might fall. That's because a healthy respect for gravity is one of my strongest held values. I believe deeply that choosing to ignore the law of gravity would be detrimental to my well being. I am free to embrace the value of flying with my two arms flapping as fast as they can go, but you probably wouldn't recommend it.

I see the values of God's kingdom the same way. God invites us to choose His values over the values of this world and its cultures. You can decide to reject God's invitation... you're free to go any direction you want. I just wouldn't recommend it:

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. Romans 12:2 (MES)

When you choose to “fix your attention on God” and “readily recognize what he wants and quickly respond to it” you will be developing within you the internal compass that will guide your every choice. Will you always make the right decisions? Not even close... but at least you’ll be on the right road. God doesn’t expect perfection, but He is looking for people who are willing to travel with Him and do their best. If you can do that then He can and will bring out the best in you.

So back to our values. What do you value? Here’s a list of my top values:

1. Faith
2. Family
3. Enjoyment
4. Calling/Career
5. Integrity

Those are my top 5. What are yours? Need some help? Here’s a list of some common values. Look it over and figure out what values God is calling you to adopt. Write them down and ask God to start making them a reality in your life today. Then next time we’ll look at clarifying these values so that we can begin the process of changing or focusing our internal compass.

**Prayer:** Father, I want to adopt Your values in my life and in my relationships. Teach me to become more like Your Son in every area of my life so that Your power and presence can flow into and through my life. In Jesus’ Name, amen.

## **My Top 5 Values:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## **Sample Values:**

Abundance; Acceptance; Action; Adventure; Affirmation; Appreciation; Authenticity; Balance; Beauty; Bliss ; Bravery; Camaraderie; Celebration; Character; Clarity; Community; Compassion; Composure; Confidence; Connection; Contribution; Courage; Creativity; Curiosity; Design; Direction; Discernment; Education; Empowerment; Encouragement; Endurance; Energy; Enjoyment; Enlightenment; Enthusiasm; Excellence; Fairness; Faith; Faithfulness; Family; Fitness; Flexibility; Focus; Forgiveness; Freedom; Friendship; Fulfillment; Fun; Generosity; Gentleness; Godliness; Good Judgment; Goodness; Grace; Gracefulness; Gratitude; Growth; Harmony; Healing; Health; Holiness; Honesty; Honor; Hope; Hospitality; Humility; Humor; Independence; Innovation; Integrity; Intelligence; Interdependence; Joy; Kindness; Knowledge; Leadership; Learning; Legacy; Love; Loyalty; Mastery; Meaning; Mercy; Motivation; Nobility; Nurturing; Openness; Optimism; Organization; Patience; Peace; Perseverance; Playfulness; Productivity; Progress; Prosperity; Prudence; Purpose; Purity; Quality; Respect; Responsibility; Results; Self-control;

Significance; Simplicity; Sincerity; Spirituality; Strength; Style; Success; Teamwork; Temperance; Tolerance; Transcendence; Trust; Truth; Truthfulness; Unconditional love; Understanding; Unity; Usefulness; Vision; Willingness; Wisdom; Wonder; Zeal; Zest

## **Saturday:**

This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you... For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NLT)

**Reflection:** I know... I don't ordinarily do a Saturday devotional but this week we couldn't get everything done in 5 days (God took 6 days to create the universe so what chance do I have of helping you change the direction of your life in 5 days?) so we're doing 6. Alright... almost done with the whole "focusing your life" thing. The last task in focusing your life is to clarify your values. In other words... create some statements that will shed some light on what those values (you know, the ones you WROTE DOWN after the last blog entry) really mean to you in relation to your dreams, roles/relationships & directions. For instance... one of my most important values is faith. A clarifying statement for faith might be:

Value: Faith----Clarifying Statement: "I am listening for God's direction and following that direction as best I can."

This clarifying statement might seem like it's no big deal. You may be wondering why you even need to clarify your values. All I can say is, it adds focus to your values. And focus, as we have already noticed is what brings intensity and power to your life. Clarifying your values makes it more likely you will follow those values when times get tough. And following your values (or more specifically, adopting and then following God's values) leads to a lot more than just intensity and power... it leads to success. And I don't know about you, but I LOVE success. After Moses had died, God promoted Joshua. Joshua had been second in command for 40 years. He was good at following orders. But now he was going to be leading all of Israel as they entered the promised land. You might think Joshua had been chomping at the bit to take his turn at being top dog, but I think you'd be wrong. I think Joshua was more scared than anything else. Why do I think that? Read Joshua chapter 1. It is mostly a pep talk from God encouraging Joshua and telling him how to be a great leader:

After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you- from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. "Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning

either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. This is my command-be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Did you notice what God had to do? 3 different times He tells Joshua to be strong & courageous. I don't think it was working because finally in verse 9 God appeals to Joshua's military side... He commands Joshua to be strong & courageous. But that's not what really gets me... what gets me is what God promises Joshua in verses 7-8. He tells Joshua that if he obeys the instructions from Moses, if studies them and meditates on them, then there will be a certain outcome. Did you notice what it was? Success!

Adopting God's values is the key to success in your life.

According to God, when we adopt His values then the natural result is success. Are you still wondering why it's important we clarify our values? If you want your life to be a success then you must know what God's values are. You must study and meditate on those values. And you must adopt & follow through on those values. Doing that will give you the kind of life that will make a difference in this world. It will lead to the same promise that God gave Joshua:

Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. This is my command-be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

I have no idea what 2025 has in store for you (or for me!)... but if you want to prosper and succeed in everything you do, then clarify your values. And do it now. Come on... what are you waiting for? Get out some paper and clarify your values. Yes you... who did you think I was talking to? Get to work ;o)

**Prayer:** Father, Today I want to clarify my values so I can use that clarity to plan my days, weeks, months, years and life. Show me how to live my life in a way that will lead me to the greatest success not just in 2025 but for the rest of my life. In Jesus' Name, amen.

### **Clarifying My Top 5 Values:**

	<u>Value</u>	<u>Clarifying Statement</u>
1.		
2.		
3.		

4.

5.