Roger F. Campbell

YOU
CAN
WIN

No Losers in God’s Family

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Preface

One statement by a minister changed my outlook on tough times in the Christian life: “Christians are either problem conscious or power conscious,” he said. With that simple observation, he gave me an effective approach to the difficult periods of life. Since I am a child of God, I can expect God’s power to make a difference in every problem I face.

Too many of us are problem conscious.

Witness the busy schedules of Christian counselors and the steady flow of telephone calls to Christian radio programs that allow callers to air their troubles.

This constant focusing upon difficulties has fostered a defeatist attitude among believers. While it is true that these are days if immense pressure for many of us, we must remember that we are never alone; never forsaken. And nothing can separate us from God’s love.

Great faith is built on the conviction that God can do anything. Most Christians believe this, but few act upon their belief. They accept omnipotence intellectually, but it makes little difference in their lives. Consequently, problems loom large, burdens become too heavy to bear, and the future is faced with fear.

In YOU CAN WIN, I call for believers to use the limitless resources our Lord has provided for coping and overcoming in any age. We do not have to be victims of the times, nor of our problems. Nothing takes God by surprise. He has given us all we need for daily victory whatever our circumstances may be.

It is my prayer that some of the thoughts and experiences I share in the following pages will lead discouraged believers on to higher ground.

Waterford, Michigan

ROGER F. CAMPBELL
An opportunity has just come your way. All you have to do is accept and the position is yours. One phone call and a whole new world of work or service will open to you. The ball is in your court.

You’re thrilled, but apprehensive.
Not that you wouldn’t enjoy the challenge. You’ve been praying for some kind of breakthrough that would allow you to make full use of your gifts and abilities. But right now you’re paralyzed by negatives; unwanted questions are surfacing.
Can you handle the responsibility?
Will others accept your leadership or approve of your work?
Will you come through or be a disappointment?
Might you cave in under pressure?
Do you really have what it takes to do the job?

**JOSHUA’S CHALLENGE**

Long ago, Joshua, of wall-falling fame, must have felt much as you do. Born a slave, he had been appointed leader of his people. They had arrived at the border of Canaan, the land they had longed to enter for more than a generation. The greater part of that time had been given to wandering about in the desert as a result of their unbelief and unwillingness to occupy the land forty years earlier. Now it was time for them to move forward and claim what God had promised them so many years before.

Moses, their great deliverer and leader, was dead. Before his death, he had revealed that Joshua, his minister, was to succeed him and lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land (Deut.
But conquering Canaan would not be an easy task. The Canaanites were numerous and powerful. The very sight of them had frightened most of the spies sent out by Moses a generation earlier, and as a result they brought back a negative report, advising the people not to advance as had been planned. Only Caleb and Joshua had urged the Israelites to move ahead in faith expecting victory, but they were overruled by the doubters who were in the majority (Num. 13:27-33).

In addition to the obstacles before him, Joshua must have considered the military potential of the company he was to lead. Their record was poor. Over and over again they had acted faithlessly and had been chronic complainers against Moses. Could he, as their new leader, expect better treatment? Probably not.

The first nine verses of the Book of Joshua record the Lord’s commission to this prospective new leader concerning his position and responsibilities. This divine commission demands courage, faith, and action and promises success. It contains principles that will be helpful to anyone needing encouragement to face a new challenge.

**GETTING ON THE MOVE**

God’s first instruction to Joshua called for him to be decisive and get on the move: “Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordon, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Josh. 1:2).

The loss of Moses had been traumatic both for Joshua and his people. Meek but mighty through God’s power, Moses had interceded for these erring people time and again, bringing water from a rock when they were thirsty and praying down manna when they ran out of food. He had been with God on Mount Sinai and had received the Law that was to be their standard of righteousness. Though they had rebelled against him many times, they were in awe of him and at his death went into mourning for
thirty days.
  Now Joshua had been called to replace him.
  Some order.
  Nevertheless, it was God’s order. Servants of God may move or
die but His work must go on.
  Joshua may have struggled with this aspect of his call. How
could he replace Moses?
  He was not like Moses.
  No matter.
  God would use him in a different way.
  If Moses had been the only person capable of leading Israel
into Canaan, he would doubtless have been spared. An outburst of
temper causing disobedience had cost him the privilege of leading
his people into the Promised Land. And Joshua was now God’s
man for the occasion. He was not to fill the shoes of Moses. His
was a new call. He would not be expected to do things just as
Moses had done them, but he must expect God to use him in a
unique way to accomplish the task at hand.
  “Go over this Jordan,” was the command.
  Inadequate as Joshua felt, he must get moving. In spite of the
dangers ahead, he must move. Unless he moves forward, he will
never receive the blessings that await him. If he sits and broods
over the possibility of failure, he will never conquer Canaan--never
enter the Promised Land.

**HEADING TOWARD GOALS**

Christian Powell had longed to become an attorney. He had set this
ambitious goal early in life but was afflicted by two dreaded
diseases: tuberculosis and polio. Both diseases hospitalized him for
long periods of time, and the latter paralyzed most of the major
muscles in the lower part of his body. When he was discharged
from the hospital after his bout with polio at the age of nineteen,
there seemed little hope that he could catch up academically or
even go to college, let alone tackle the rigorous and expensive
course leading to a law degree.

But Christian Powell wouldn’t concede defeat. He had a dream and was unwilling to settle for a nightmare. Spending many hours each day building up his upper body and studying, he kept pressing toward his goal. One year later, he enrolled in a special college prep course that allowed him to get his high school diploma, and ten years after that walked across a graduation platform to receive his law degree. By that time he was married, the father of four sons, and already successful in the field of accounting.

Within a few years after receiving his law degree, Powell was the managing partner in a growing law firm and was active politically and as a land developer. Today, in addition to being involved in several business ventures, he is teaching in a Christian school.

Why has he been successful?

One of the most important reasons has been his practice of starting toward the high goals he has set for himself.

Success begins in beginning.

**GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

Joshua had to start moving and expect to conquer; he had to think big. Note this thrilling promise that would be activated as soon as he started advancing: “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses” (Josh 1:3). This promise does not apply to sitters--only those on the move. A speaker at a church building dedication service challenged the congregation with the above text. The title of his sermon was, “How Big Are Your Feet?”

Most of us do not accomplish much because we do not expect to accomplish very much. A.B. Simpson indicted the majority of us when he said, “Our God has boundless resources. The only limit is in us. Our asking, our thinking, our praying are too small. Our expectations are too limited.” J. Hudson Taylor observed, “Many Christians estimate difficulties in the light of their own resources, and thus attempt little and often fail in the little they attempt.”
Marching into the Promised Land would mean danger. Canaan would not be conquered quickly. There would be long marches and protracted campaigns. Some days would not be long enough for the battles…. One would have to be lengthened. There would be some defeats along the way to ultimate victory. But life is like that, especially the Christian life. And any challenge worth taking involves giving every ounce of strength to win. In her book Ms. Means Myself, Gladys Hunt Writes:

Adventure or creativity- whichever word you like best- always involves risks. It involves a decision; it is purposive; it is an expression of yourself. Usually, it involves others. It stretches you, so that you end up being more than you ever thought you could be. It adds the special flavor to life that makes you feel that you have a secret with God.”

GOD GOES WITH US
By this time, Joshua was probably trembling; he was feeling small. Moses might have been up to this task but not Joshua. He was comparing himself to his human ideal and felt he didn’t measure up. So God encouraged him; He let him know that he would not be expected to fight these battles in his own strength. “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Josh. 1:5). God is the great equalizer. His presence makes the difference.

A shepherd boy named David can face the huge hero of the Philistines because God is with him. Daniel is safe among the lions because God is with him. Three young Hebrew captives in Babylon survive the fiery furnace of the king because God goes through the fire with them. A handful of uneducated disciples reach thousands for Christ in the hostile city of Jerusalem and ultimately become known as world-upsetters because God is with them.
God seems to delight in taking those who are ill equipped by the world’s standards and making them eminently successful. Peter and John were called unlearned and ignorant, but even their enemies knew they had been with Jesus and that His power was operative in their lives (Acts 4:13).

A.W. Neale had to leave school in the seventh grade to help support his family. He worked in a lumber yard twelve hours a day, six days a week. An alert insurance salesman noted his cheerfulness even on tough assignments and offered him a position in his office. In his twenties, Neale received Christ as his Savior and applied himself both to developing in the Christian life and to his work. Before long, he was able to buy the insurance agency and was so successful that even the Great Depression couldn’t wipe him out. Missionaries found a ready listener in A.W. Neale as well as a ready check-writer. God had found a diligent man whom He could trust, and he blessed him in spite of his lack of formal education.

**STRENGTH FOR WEAKNESS**

Contemplating the responsibilities of his new position, Joshua evidently felt weak and afraid. Three times during his commissioning he was told to be strong and courageous:

Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest….Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Josh 1:6-7, 9).

Most of us can identify with weakness and fear. Few escape
trembling times. But we should remember that God has tipped the scales in favor of many a weak one and made him or her a success.

George Frederick Handel lost his health; his right side was paralyzed; his money was gone, and his creditors threatened to imprison him. Handel was so disheartened by his situation that he almost despaired. But faith prevailed. In his affliction, he composed his greatest work, “The Hallelujah Chorus,” which is part of his great “Messiah.”

The list is long of those who have overcome handicaps and gone on to achievement and success through trust in the Lord. Annie Johnson Flint, afflicted with pain and suffering, wrote the much used “He Giveth More Grace” and many other wonderful poems. Fanny Crosby was blind but composed 8,000 published hymns. Helen Keller, shortly before her sixtieth birthday, expressed pity for the real unseeing, for those who have eyes still often do not see. She said, “If the blind put their hand in God’s, they find their way more surely than those who see but have not faith or purpose.”

Joshua needed to understand that his strength would come from his Lord who is never weary or faint. “Be strong” is an impossible command to obey unless our God imparts His strength to us. And He does.

He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; They shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint (Isa. 40:29-31).

**GOD IS ABLE**

Life teaches us our limits. There are problems too complicated for us to solve, burdens too heavy for us to bear, work too difficult for us to do. But God is able to do all things. And he can pour his
strength into us. That is why Paul could write, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phi. 4:13).

Weakness and fear are troublesome twins.

Fear is a monster that stalks us all. It brings depression, stifles ability, and robs life of its adventure. No wonder God kept repeating His call for Joshua to be courageous.

But, humanly speaking, Joshua had reason to fear.

He was being called to a task that seemed far beyond his ability. He was about to embark on the fulfilling of a former dream that had once appeared to be within his grasp and then had escaped. He was not young anymore. And thousands of others would be depending on him.

The Jordan River must be crossed and that was only the beginning. After crossing the Jordan, the children of Israel would encounter Jericho, the great walled city that had withstood attacks by forces far more powerful than any Israel could muster. Beyond Jericho were other cities and areas defended by strong and warlike people whose very appearance had caused ten of the original spies sent by Moses to cringe with fear and feel as small as grasshoppers (Num. 13:33).

How could he acquire the courage needed for this assignment?

**DRAWING ON PAST VICTORIES**

One source might have been remembering a spiritual mountain peak in his past; a time when he was able to trust God completely while others doubted.

Forty years earlier, when he had been one of the spies chosen by Moses to scout the Promised Land, his faith had soared at seeing the bounty there. The land was all that God had said it would be. Out of the twelve sent, however, only he and Caleb had urged Israel to advance. When the doubters were calling upon the people to retreat, he had joined Caleb in calling for faith.

He had dared to trust while the majority trembled.

Now he could look back to that high day and summon
great faith again. You can almost see the fire in his eyes as he spans forty years and feels the decades drop away. For a moment he is a young man, challenging his people to march forward and claim the land (Num. 14:8-9).

Others have had places to which they returned in person or memory to rehearse God’s blessings and refresh their faith. Jacob returned to Bethel, a place where he had met God in a special way and made commitments to Him. John Wesley preached a powerful sermon from his father’s gravestone while an angry crowd bloodied his face with flying objects.

Often, in thought, I kneel near the creek that flows through the pasture of the farm where I lived as a boy and there I pour out my heart to God. Sometimes when I hear a congregation sing, “Where He Leads Me,” I feel again the burning of hot tears that welled up in my eyes as I walked down a church aisle to publicly acknowledge my surrender to Christ. Remembering these special times builds my faith and sends me on to serve the lord with renewed vigor.

**GOD’S FAITHFULNESS**

Joshua may also have nourished courage by turning his thoughts from the dangers ahead to God’s faithfulness in the past. He had survived forty years of wandering in the wilderness while nearly all the others of his generation had died. God had been true to His promise. He could expect the same consistency of divine care in the future.

Near the end of his life, J. Hudson Taylor wrote to a friend saying that he was so feeble that he could not work, read his Bible, or even pray. He said he could only lie still in God’s arms like a little child and trust. But in his childlike faith Taylor was free from fear in spite of his weakness.

**THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD**

Another source of courage for Joshua was to be the Word of God.
Strategically located between two calls for courage is this vital verse: “This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Josh. 1:8).

Faith grows through exposure to the Bible. This was true in Joshua’s day and it is true now: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

God’s promises encourage faith. As you take time to study the Bible, you will find guarantees of strength, peace, courage, salvation, power, victory, and answered prayer. You will read of exploits of others who have conquered through faith. As you identify with these promises and personal triumphs, your faith will increase. Depression will depart. Expectation will emerge. Courage for tough tasks will grow.

To whatever degree Joshua was able to rest on God’s promises and in his love, he overcame the fears he harbored about leading his people into Canaan. And that will always be true for each of us as we seek to conquer our anxieties. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).

**DON’T MISS YOUR GREATEST HOUR**

Had Joshua refused his commission because of fear or feelings of inadequacy, he would have made a terrible mistake. Turning down this opportunity would have robbed him of the greatest adventure of his life. Out of fear, he might have missed out on the fulfilling of his life’s dream. Frightening as it may sound, he could have bypassed the purpose for which he was born.

Take care that you don’t bypass yours.

Joshua would have missed crossing the Jordan at floodtide, seeing this mighty river open before him. Be sure you don’t miss the greatest spiritual breakthrough of your life.

Joshua would have missed seeing the walls of Jericho fall
down. Don’t miss the tumbling of barriers that keep you and your family from God’s best.

Joshua would have missed leading his people to multiplied triumphs and watching them possess what God had promised them. Make sure you don’t miss bringing other people to Christ and watching them grow to spiritual maturity.

Joshua would never have discovered that in the time of need God could actually supply him with the courage and strength needed for conflict with his foes. You don’t want to miss the thrill of sensing you are in the perfect will of God and that He is doing through you what you never would have been able to do alone.

Joshua did not miss out.

He accepted the challenge and won.

So can you.

Really. You can.