



## Soldiering: A Biblical Perspective

### Lesson 6

#### Godly Responses (How to Handle Success and Failure)

1. Successes and Failure. The Bible provides guidance to the military professional on how to deal with success and failure. Success can be defined simply as the attainment of a goal, while failure can be defined as not attaining a goal. Areas in which we frequently set goals for ourselves can be professional contribution (*NOTE*: this is much different than professional attainment), family relationships, financial management, time allocation, physical development, and spiritual maturity. In each of these areas, it is vital that we seek the Lord's will when setting our objectives. Remember -- "What you want out of life is probably what you are going to get!" If there are two perspectives on goal-setting, worldly and spiritual, and there are two possible outcomes in each, success and failure, then the matrix below outlines the four possible outcomes.

	Worldly	Spiritual	Result	Examples
a.	Success	Success	Victory	
b.	Success	Failure	Defeat	
c.	Failure	Failure	Defeat	
d.	Failure	Success	Victory	

What are the implications of the success and failure matrix as expressed in the result column?

2. Joseph's handling of Success and Failure (Genesis chapters 37-45).

- What was Joseph's position in his father's house (Gen 37:2-3)?
- How did his brothers react to Joseph's position (Gen 37:4)?
- Did Joseph initially help the situation (Gen 37:5-7, 9-11)?
- How did Joseph react to his captivity in Egypt (Gen 39:1-4)?
- What did he do when enticed by Potiphar's wife? What happened as a result (Gen 39:7-20)?
- How did Joseph react to his unjust imprisonment (Gen 39:21-23)?
- The butler promised to remember Joseph when he (the butler) was restored. How did Joseph react when forgotten by the butler (Gen 40)?
- How did God intervene in Joseph's behalf (Gen 41:9-13)?
- To whom did Joseph give credit for interpreting Pharaoh's dream (Gen 41:16)?
- How did Pharaoh reward Joseph (Gen 41:37-44)?
- When Joseph ultimately revealed himself to his brothers who came to Egypt for grain, what attitude did he display toward them? Who does he see as responsible for sending him to Egypt? How has this realization influenced the performance of his duties (Gen 45:1-15)?

3. Application.

- Joseph's faithfulness and loyalty to the Lord set an example of spiritual constancy despite alternating ups and downs in his worldly or professional situation.

- (1) What principles can you derive from Joseph's actions in the good times?
  - (2) What principles can you derive from Joseph's actions in the not so good times?
  - b. What specific things can you do to put the above principles into action?
4. Basic Truths. What do the following scripture verses teach concerning what constitutes success and failure and how to deal with them?
- a. Mark 8:36
  - b. Romans 8:18
  - c. Romans 8:28
5. Notable Quotes on Success.
- a. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson: "Duty is man's, results are God's." Jackson died after the Battle of Chancellorsville from a wound in the left arm; he was shot by a Confederate sentry when returning to his own lines from a forward reconnaissance. When Lee learned that Jackson's arm had been amputated, he said, "General Jackson has lost his left arm, I my right."
  - b. Jim Elliot (Missionary to the Auca Indians in Columbia): "A man is no fool who gives up what he cannot hope to keep to obtain that which he cannot possibly lose." Jim was killed by the Aucas while attempting to establish his ministry. His wife, Elizabeth Elliot, successfully carried on his work, living with the Aucas and winning many to Christ.