

Success in Life as a Christian



Live enthusiastically and victoriously through Jesus

*Dear Andrew,**

Do you want to be successful in life? How can anyone even ask that?! Everyone wants to be successful. How can we do that?

What does the Bible have to say about that? After that, I will share a few of my experiences from my time as a business man.

What is success in life?

Each person has their own definition of success. Most people think about money, influence, power, and fame. These things can certainly be called a type of success. But in a deeper sense, is this success in life?

In 1923 there was a special meeting in a luxurious hotel in Chicago. **Nine of the richest men in the world met for a secret conference.** And how were they doing 25 years later?

Charles Schwab, owner of the largest steel company, had gone bankrupt and lived on borrowed money for the last five years of his life.

Samuel Insull, owner of an electricity company, was abroad without a penny and was fleeing from justice.

Howard Hopson, owner of the largest gas company, died in a state of mental derangement.

Arthur Cotton, a great wheat speculator, died bankrupt abroad.

Richard Whitney, president of the New York stock market, was in a penitentiary.

Albert Fall, a member of the U.S. government, was pardoned and died at home.

Jesse Livermore, known as the bear on Wall-street,

Ivar Krüger, the owner of a match monopoly, and

Leon Fraser, president of an international bank these last three committed suicide.

Were these men successful? They had had lots of money, great influence and power. But they weren't successful in life. They didn't even have lasting economic success.

*Andrew according to the biblical Andrew in John 1:41-42.

They overlooked something very crucial: JESUS.

Let me put it this way: They neglected to enter a personal relationship with God. God's Word says:

"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."
(1 John 5:12 NKJV)

Jesus Himself said why He had come:

"... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."
(John 10:10 NKJV)

I am glad that there are more and more churches that offer Bible study groups on the general topic of a **personal relationship with God** and study it at length over several weeks. They use the booklet Steps to Personal Revival. (See the attachment)

God promises us success, **namely success in life**. He accompanies us on our life's journey. He takes the responsibility, when we are completely connected with Him. For this purpose, He gives us His wonderful spiritual blessings and eternal life.

God's promises for success

We have a wonderful and brilliant God. I repeat: Jesus said to us that He came so that He could give us an abundant life (John 10:10).

Do you know the Bible texts, where our wonderful God promises us a successful life?

When God said the following to Joshua, he stood before the immense task of conquering the land of Canaan. God gave him a wonderful promise. And do you know what is the most amazing about this promise?

It also applies to us. The same effects will come in our lives, when we act accordingly.

Joshua 1:8 NKJV:

*"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that **you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**"*

2 Chronicles 20:20b NKJV: *"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and **you shall prosper.**"*

Psalms 1:1-3 NKJV: *"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; but his 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.**"*

Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV: *"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.**"*

And lastly, a word from Jesus on success in John 15:5 NKJV:

“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.”

These words from Jesus contain everything. Success in life comes from divine-human collaboration. Jesus calls success fruit. Fruit develops from the mutual efforts of humans and God. Man works the fields. God gives the seeds and growth. And he clearly says: Without mutual collaboration with Him, success is a merely human matter. As a result, it is subjected to all human limits and faults.

You can have an all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present leader. And above all else – He loves you.

Example of occupational success

We want to take a look at a practical example, which greatly impressed me as a nineteen-year-old. It has to do with Daniel. Daniel chapter one played a great role in my life. As a prisoner of war, Daniel became a great statesman in two world empires and a prophet of God. Today, he is still highly honored by Christians, Muslims and Jews.

After that I want share an experience from my occupational life. The first 22 years I worked in business for an international trucking company. After that I worked 16 years as a pastor and then I managed our retirement center in Bad Aibling with 80 employees for 10 years. So, I worked as a businessman for 32 years and including active retirement worked 44 years in pastoral and mission work.

Daniel begins his occupational life

Let's open Daniel chapter 1 (NKJV): What kind of young people were Daniel and his fellow prisoners?

Verse 4: they were young, healthy, good looking, wise and knowledgeable and came from devout homes. They came from Judea. They were prisoners.

Verse 5: The great King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to win these young people over. He wanted to particularly foster them. He commanded that they should be provided for with his food and wine.

As a result, they suddenly had a small problem. The delectable foods offered completely didn't meet or only partially met the biblical dietary ordinances. What should Daniel and his friends do? They were completely dependent on the favor of the king. They were prisoners. They definitely contemplated and prayed about what they should do. They had to make a decision: Either they would silently eat the food going against their conscience or they would have to undertake something.

Verse 8a: *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank ...”*

Daniel made a decision. He decided to be faithful to God and not to eat any unclean foods. In other words, Daniel decided not to accept the offer, but rather to act according to biblical ordinances.

We can already see that Daniel was living in complete surrender to God. **We have already found the key point for success in life.** It is a matter of continually making decisions according to God's will and not according to the will of any other authority, no matter what the consequences are. (See the lion's den – God was with him.)

What importance does decision making play in our life? The ability to make decisions is the steering wheel of our life. There was a luxury passenger ship by the name of "Queen Elizabeth". The huge ship was 1,300 times heavier than the rudder that steered the ship.

The steering rudder parallels our ability to make decisions in our life. When we decide to do God's will and take the steps we can, then God provides us with the necessary help. Then He accompanies us. It is a matter of divine-human collaboration in our life. God assumes responsibility. God gives us strength and joy on this path. (More on this topic in the book: *Abide in Jesus*, chapter "Obedience through Jesus".)

Daniel and his friends had made a decision now. How did they proceed? They took the steps they could and God gave the solution.

What is the best way to implement difficult decisions?

Verse 8b: "... therefore he [Daniel] *requested* of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

How did they proceed? **They took the route of a request.** There is a big difference if we express our concern as a request or if we say: "I won't do that" or "I don't want to do that" or "That is out of the question for me".

A request expresses trust in a person. When you make a request, it is normal for the other person to try to help you. But if we should say for example that it is out of the question for us, then the other person will be against us and show us who is in charge.

I learned about this important aspect as a 19-year-old at a retreat. I never forgot it. My whole life I acted accordingly. I can only say: it is a good and the right way.

Daniel also did something else. At the same time, he showed that it had to do with a matter of conscience. When we share that it has to do with a matter of conscience, then it might deepen their understanding of our request even more.

Verse 9: "**Now God had brought** Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs."

What do you notice here? Since Daniel had decided to do God's will and did what he could with wisdom and politeness, God intervened. God moved the heart of this superior. **God did it.**

Verse 10 shows us that this superior had some misgivings, because if he granted this request then he himself would be going against the king's wishes.

Verse 12 reveals Daniel's next step:

He **asks** the steward, who was directly responsible for them: "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables (seed food)¹ to eat and water to drink."

How did Daniel get the idea to ask for "seed food"? Where did he get this term from? In Genesis 1:29 (NKJV) it says: *"And God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.'"* We see once again that Daniel was familiar with God's Word. Daniel asked for the best kind of food there is.

Daniel continues the method of making requests and proposes a solution to the problem. He had had time to think. The steward hadn't had any time to think about a solution for this problem. Daniel proceeds very politely with his proposed solution.

He said to the steward: please try it for 10 days with us. Again, he made a request, which expressed trust in his superior. It is clear that Daniel wasn't planning on eating unclean food after the 10 days, but rather he trusted that God would intervene.

Once again God caused the steward to listen to his request. The request was made and what God **did** is in verse 15:

"And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies."

As a result, the matter was resolved. And we can read the outcome in verse 17:

*"As for these four young men, God **gave** them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams."*

God gave good looks, strength and high intelligence. God gave. When we commit ourselves completely to God, then He can turn His whole love towards us.

How were things after they completed their training? Verse 20: *"And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them **ten times** better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm."* Can you do something like that yourself – make yourself 5 times or ten times more intelligent? This is something that only God can give. God can give gifts, which we cannot achieve by ourselves.

Now, we have talked about the basic way we can proceed in life. So, when something is not in accordance with God's will, make a decision according to God's will, go the route of making requests together with great politeness and if possible propose an appropriate solution according to God's will. Then God is with us. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 NKJV:

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Now I want to share a few personal experiences from my time as a business man. Many think that in the business world you have to conform to what everyone else does.

¹ William H. Shea, *Das Buch Daniel, Teil 1*, Advent-Verlag Lüneburg 1998, p. 52 – explanation from the Hebrew text.

Teenage years during the war

During the war I lived with my mother and my dear sister in our grandfather's house by Bodensee. My mother kept house for my grandfather and her two unmarried brothers. It was a business household: bakery, grocery store and dairy. As soon as we completed our homework, then we had to help. During the war there was a lot of work and only few people.

One uncle war mentally ill. When he gave us a job to do, then we didn't dare make a face, we had to immediately repeat what we were to do, we had to immediately complete the job meticulously and then return and report that we had completed the job. If we hadn't done that, then he would have gone into a rage. As a result, my sister and I became very shy. But we also learned some good habits and I continued to work this way during my apprenticeship. I will recount an example later.

Apprenticeship

Now, I want to share how I advanced in my job. I especially want to show how God repeatedly **"gave"**.

In 1946 I started as an unknown apprentice in an unfamiliar city at a transport company. I had almost no knowledge about the job of a logistics manager. But after the war, I was glad to find any position as an apprentice.

I was almost 17 years-old. An Adventist family let me live with them. They had four children about the same age as me. Shortly after I started my apprenticeship, I decided to be baptized. I was convinced that God's way was the right way. While living with this family, I learned to have personal worship and we had family worship. During the winter months, we met together with 2 or 3 families on Friday evening to sing together and share experiences.

First Experiences

Amongst other things, all the apprentices had to start a half hour earlier. We had to heat the offices, dust the desks and other things. After a while, only I was allowed to dust the boss's desk. He always had his whole desk piled high with papers. How do you clean a desk that is completely covered? I cleaned one portion after another. I laid the things from a portion of the desk on another table in the exact same order. When I finished cleaning that portion, then I would put the things back in the exact same order and then continue on to the next portion. Since I did this job so well, only I was allowed to dust the boss's desk. There were always interesting things laying on his desk that could be stolen with your eyes.

One of the first things that I can remember is the following: During my lunchbreak I had read a book about business. About two or three hours later, the owner and chief executive were standing next to me and were discussing a legal dispute with a client. There weren't sure what the right solution was. I asked if I could say

something. I explained the solution to them and also named the corresponding paragraphs in the business regulations. God gave it.

Another time, I answered the telephone. Someone asked for the chief executive. He told me to say that he wasn't there. I told him quietly: "Please forgive me, but I can't do that." He then gave the receiver to another employee and they took care of it. In the future, every time he "wasn't there", he would simply give the receiver to that employee.

Every month we had a freight train with 42 boxcars of cheese to dispatch from Allgäu to Rheinland. I had to pick up the documents from a government agency about which cheese factory in Allgäu was delivering how many cheeses to which recipient. I received the documents in duplicate. I asked my boss if I could take a copy home with me, because I would like to make the loading plan. When I arrived the next morning, he asked: "Did you make the loading plan?" "Yes." "Then show it to me." He looked over the plan and then said: "You planned for two boxcars for Duisburg and each of them is only half full." I responded: "One of the boxcars is for the left side of the Rhein river and the other for the right side. In Duisburg the bridge over the Rhein is still broken." He had overlooked that in his plan. So, the freight train drove according to the plan of the apprentice.

Time and again, God created situations where I favorably stood out. In other words, God gave.

My salary in my second year of apprenticeship was 45 Reichsmark. But my living expenses for a month were about 100 Reichsmark. My family had savings and so my dear mother would

give me the missing amount each month. But suddenly on a Sunday an announcement was made over the radio: Our money was immediately invalid and all bank accounts were frozen. Starting the next day, everyone could pick up 40 new Deutsche Mark at the city administration. My mother could now no longer give me any money.

Starting that month my company gave me more than 100 Deutsche Mark without even telling me so that I could financially support myself. This was my first tithing experience. God gave.

Young Businessman

After two years in apprenticeship I was asked to move to Frankfurt am Main to open a branch together with another man. They gifted me with the remaining apprenticeship time. In my apprenticeship certificate it said that I was the best apprentice that they had trained to date in their company. In Frankfurt I immediately received 320 Deutsche Mark a month. Many fathers of families didn't earn this much. I was now able to send 100 Mark to my dear mother every month. God gave.

It was difficult to find a room to rent in Frankfurt, because the city was still extensively destroyed by the war. My attic room was relatively primitive and without heat until I was able to find something else. Sometimes my water for washing would freeze overnight. It was the post-war era!

We soon had won a large company as our client. The logistics manager of this company called me one day and asked if we could ship 600 kg of printing ink to Stuttgart so that it would arrive the next day by 6 p.m. so that they could use it for printing during the night.

I agreed, since we were already sending a truck in that direction. But unfortunately, the shipment remained in the warehouse that day. Why, I don't know anymore. In any case, the next day the logistics manager of the company called me again and said that he had just had a phone call from Stuttgart and that the shipment hadn't arrived. I answered: What, they aren't there yet? That was a so-called white lie that popped into my head. But the client asked further questions. So, I continued to lie. I immediately sent a truck with the shipment and told the driver not to stop until he was at the Stuttgart newspaper. I telephoned with the newspaper the next morning. The shipment had arrived at 10 p.m. They had printed during the night. No problems had arisen. I immediately called the company in Frankfurt and told them that the shipment had arrived with a delay and that they had been able to print during the night. With that said, everything seemed to be taken care of. BUT!

I suffered from a very guilty conscience. Later, I called the client and asked him if I could visit him privately in the evening. He gave me his address. When I arrived, I immediately said: "I have come to ask for forgiveness. Yesterday I lied to you." He laid his hand on my shoulder and said: "Everything you said sounded very

logical, but I had the feeling that something wasn't right. Now everything is in order again."

What was the consequence? From that day on, this man had unlimited trust in me. No other competition was able to lure them away. I worked together with him for eight years. But from then on, I guarded myself against ever telling a lie to a client again. It is very humbling when you have to ask someone for forgiveness, but at the same time it is a great help not to do it again.

To further my education, I took a correspondence course on rationally working and planning with personal support from an institute in Munich. This was very helpful in doing my job well and step by step building up the company.

When I was about 24 years-old, I asked my boss in Frankfurt if I could do field work once or twice a week. I wanted to learn how to take care of clients and how to win over new companies. In other words, providing logistic services. He told me, and he was an experienced salesman, that I absolutely had to give the people I was visiting a pack of cigarettes, otherwise it wouldn't be well received. I did it two times. But then I had a guilty conscience. I decided not to do it again and prayed: "Father in heaven, please show me the way to win clients." I had already informed my correspondence course that I was planning on learning how to sell logistic services. Shortly after praying, the institute recommended a book in preparation for my field work.

Lebe begeistert und gewinne (Live enthusiastically and win) by Frank Bettger. This man sold insurance. And in this book, I learned how to correctly sell logistic services.

In those days when you visited a company and the receptionist called the logistics department, you usually received the answer: We don't have any time or we already have our connections. We are not switching companies. However, in this way I found out the name of the responsible person and I called him the next day. I said: I have a request: Please meet with me just once, so that we can ascertain if we can offer you advantages, which you don't have yet. And if so, then you will certainly be interested in us, if not, then I promise not to come again. After hearing this, they were all willing to meet with me. During my visit, I asked detailed questions about their shipping. In conclusion, I would tell them that I would examine everything and that I would get in touch with them again. Soon, I had some kind of advantage for every company. Thus, we usually started small in the area where we could offer an advantage. Due to excellent work, the amount of work we did for them soon grew. Sometimes we were able to immediately take over all the shipping. I had very good results.

Much later, I realized that it was an adjustment from worldly methods (counsel of the ungodly, Psalms 1, giving cigarettes, etc.) to biblical principles. The Lord wants us to seek the best for the people around us.

At the age of 26 I already received procurator (general commercial power of representation).

I became director of the complete logistics department. I earned good money. When I was 27, the government issued new regulations for truck drivers. On two of our regular runs the drivers were at the wheel longer than was now allowed. I found the following solution: When a truck delivery arrived in Frankfurt, I immediately let the driver go home and provided the other driver with a warehouse worker to help him unload the truck. The next day, when they had to drive back to Munich or somewhere else, then the second driver, who had unloaded the truck, stayed home until it was time to leave. He didn't have to help loading the truck. The warehouse worker helped by loading. Naturally, our profit was somewhat smaller, since we had the added costs of a warehouse worker. When the director noticed this, he came to me and demanded that I manipulate the logbook and not have the warehouse worker help. I politely turned him down and he became angry and yelled at me for the first time in eight years and slammed the door behind him as he left. Consequently, I looked for another position in Karlsruhe and resigned my job. The director was taken completely by surprise. He desperately wanted to keep me and now would do everything that I suggested. But I had already accepted the other position and left.

A half a year later I called the director and told him that my new position was not satisfactory in the long-term. If the company – they had 12 to 15 branch offices – offered me a suitable position, then I would come back, however not to Frankfurt. Two days later, he offered me executive positions in four different branch offices.

I chose the position in the branch office near Bodensee. This was in the beautiful area around the Bodensee, in which I had grown up. Here again, the Lord gave me great successes at the organization, in winning new clients, in starting classes for apprentices, in launching written advertisements, and in establishing certain national and international transportation.

When I was 37 years-old they offered to make me director with a very good salary and at the same time with an agreement that five years later, when the chief executive retired, I would be his successor. At that time, the company had 2,000 employees.

But the Lord had other plans and during this time He called me to leave my job and to serve as a pastor.

Looking back, I can only praise and thank God for His grace and guidance in business as well as the following years as a pastor and up until this day. Everything depends on one thing: Living in a personal relationship with God.

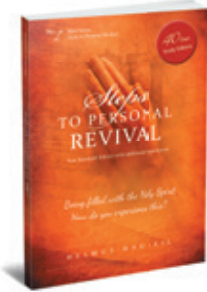
It is a matter of trusting God and following Him. He wants to give us fullness of life. And another thing: Our personal relationship with Jesus Christ influences the quality and type of relationships we have with other people. It may be that our influence will be significantly greater.

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:57 NKJV)

Best wishes and success, dear Andrew.

Helmut

Read
more



BOOK 1: STEPS TO PERSONAL REVIVAL

Being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Our lord himself has given the command:¹ Let yourselves be consistently and repeatedly filled anew with the spirit!²

- 1 Ellen G. White, *Mount of Blessing*, MB 20.3 (egw writings.org)
- 2 Johannes Mager, *Auf den Spuren des Heiligen Geistes* (Lüneburg, 1999), p. 101

www.steps-to-personal-revival.info

FOREWORD FOR LEADERS AND FUTURE LEADERS MULTIPLYING THE RESULTS

CHAPTER 1: JESUS' MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

*What did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit?
Are you acquainted with Jesus' most powerful message?*

CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS THE CENTER OF OUR PROBLEMS?

*Is there a spiritual cause to our problems? Is the cause a lack of the Holy Spirit?
What is the main problem with being a carnal Christian?*

CHAPTER 3: OUR PROBLEMS ARE SOLVABLE

*What is God's solution for our problems? How can we grow to be happy
and strong Christians? What is the relationship between baptism and the Holy Spirit?*

CHAPTER 4: WHAT DIFFERENCES CAN WE EXPECT?

*What advantage do we have with a life filled with the Holy Spirit
What do we lose when we don't pray for the Holy Spirit?*

CHAPTER 5: THE KEY TO PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

*How can I implement and experience God's solution for me?
How should I pray so that I am sure of being filled with the Holy Spirit?*

CHAPTER 6: WHAT EXPERIENCES LIE AHEAD OF US?

Personal experiences, as well as experiences from churches, a conference and a union

CHAPTER 7: INTEREST AND SHARING

*The Joy that we give returns to our own hearts. (German Proverb)
How can I help others to experience "Life in Abundance"?
How do we pass on the message? Which ways are there?*

