



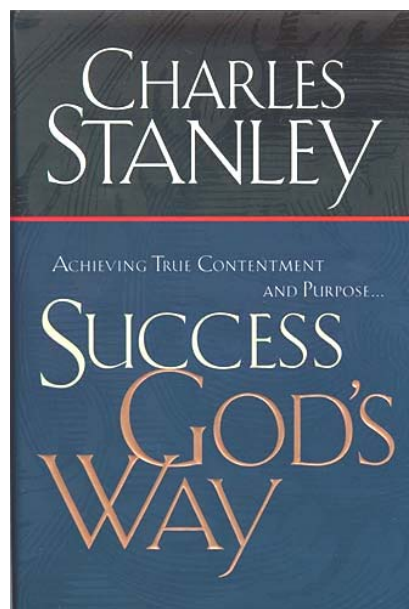
DEAN WELCH - TEACHER

WE JUST DON'T LIKE ROADBLOCKS!
[OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS]

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

OCTOBER 29, 2006

FROM THE *MASTER WORKS* SERIES STUDY OF:



WE JUST DON'T LIKE ROADBLOCKS!

[OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS]

Bette Nesmith had a good secretarial job in a Dallas bank when she ran across a problem that interested her. Her thought was, there must be a better way to correct typewriter errors? Having had some art experience, she knew that artists who worked in oils just painted over their errors. So she began to think that maybe that would work for her too. So she concocted a fluid to paint over her typing errors. Before long, all the secretaries in her building were using what she then called "MistakeOut." She attempted to sell the product idea to marketing agencies and various companies (including IBM), but they all turned her down.

However, secretaries continued to like her product, so Bette Nesmith's kitchen became her first manufacturing facility and she started selling it on her own. When she eventually sold the enterprise, the tiny white bottles were earning \$3.5 million annually on sales of \$38 million. The buyer was the Gillette Company and the sale price was \$47.5 million. Today we call Bette's product WhiteOut®.

Success stories like this one are as numerous as the stars in the sky and it seems that every one involves overcoming obstacles in order to reach the goal. In Bette Nesmith's story, the obstacle she had to overcome was the fact that no one believed in her product ... no one that is, but she and a few office secretaries in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Yet Bette Nesmith did not let that stop her from accomplishing what she had set out to do.

Today, as we continue with our study of Dr. Stanley's Success God's Way, we're looking at obstacles or roadblocks that stop us from achieving success. "Why do some people fail to reach their God-given goals and others always seem to be able to succeed in life?" [DIFFICULTY FAMILY BACKGROUND; NO REAL TRAINING, HELP OR

ENCOURAGEMENT; LACK OF EDUCATION; PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY] Now, let me go a step further and ask does the real reason for success or failure lie in outer circumstances or inside a person? Yes, the root reasons that people fail to succeed lie inside them. Before we look at roadblocks that stop many of us from success, let's recap the past four weeks a little.

You will recall in WEEK TWO (Oct 8th) that we said the key to our success is the setting and stating of godly goals. But, do you remember our priority goal? The goal that every other goal must be placed under. Open your Bible to **Romans 8:29 (NKJV)** and let's refresh our memories of God's priority goal for us: *²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.* So, what's to be our #1 goal according to this? TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO BE CONFORMED TO HIS LIKENESS. And, as Dr. Stanley told us, if you have not set for yourself a goal that is in line with this priority goal, God will not help you accomplish it because He did not encourage you to set it.

Does everyone here believe and know deep down in his or her heart that God has a specific plan and a will for you? Absolutely! We trust this book without question and therefore need to rest on its words, like those in **Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)**. Do you remember what it says about God's plans for us? *¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.* Wow! Did you hear that? God lays before each of us a direction, a set of goals, a purpose for living. No one needs to flounder though life wondering, *Why am I here? Where am I headed?* God's Word makes it very clear why we are here and where we are going. Don't ever forget we are here to know Jesus Christ as our Savior and to serve Him as our Lord, wherever He leads us. We are destined for conformity to the character of Christ and to an eternal home with our heavenly Father. All other purposes for living fall under this broad, general purpose that God has for all of us as His children.

So, why do we flounder at times and fail to succeed in the specific purpose to which God has called us? Turn to **Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)** and listen to these words of insight into the reason:

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every WEIGHT that slows us down, especially the SIN that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ²We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

So, what's our problem, according to those words? There are two specific things cited as being detrimental and roadblocks to our pursuit of success:

(¹) WEIGHTS → things that trouble you, weigh heavily on your mind, cause you to be worried and frustrated and discouraged. Has anyone ever been in a race with a bag of, say, potatoes or some similar heavy items, strapped to your back? Have you ever tried to run with your ankles tied together? All I can think of is being a contestant in a 3-legged race at a fair or carnival. What effect does it have on your ability? I think this is the picture that the writer of Hebrews paints for us in describing the hindrances that can keep us from running a race successfully.

What's the second thing that is an obstacle for us? (²) SINS → things that entangle you and cause you to miss out on God's blessings and opportunities. You must put down BOTH things. Nobody else can strip these things from your life. **YOU** must take charge and lay the things that hold you back from the pursuit of godly goals. That's the only way you can run God's race with the endurance that it will take.

In our Bible study this week, Dr. Stanley outlined seven specific roadblocks that the Bible describes to achieving our success. All of

us must deal with them, no exceptions. God will help us deal with them, but He will NOT remove them from our lives apart from an active choice of the will to act against these things that hold us back and press us down. One verse you need to remember with all of these is **Hebrews 13:5**, which says, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

Since we'll never get through all seven roadblocks this morning, I pray that you got to review, study and meditate on each of them this week in your daily Bible study and that you allowed the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart as you sought God's face. I want to run down the entire list as we start, so you won't miss any: ⁽¹⁾FEAR, ⁽²⁾DOUBT, ⁽³⁾EXCUSE-IT IS, ⁽⁴⁾PROCRASTINATION, ⁽⁵⁾GREED, ⁽⁶⁾SIN, and ⁽⁷⁾SLOTHFULNESS.

The first and perhaps most common success roadblock is FEAR, that uneasy feeling that we are inadequate. It's an alarm that goes off when we feel threatened or suddenly incapable. If you recall, several weeks ago we looked at FEAR as a major force that keeps many of us from setting goals in the first place. Just to be clear, Dr. Stanley is not talking about normal, natural fears, like the fear of falling or maybe a child would have about crossing a busy highway. No, this is a gripping, paralyzing fear that truly is a spirit of fear. Listen to these words that Paul wrote to Timothy from **2 TIM 1:7 (NLT)**: *⁷For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*

Anyone ever experienced this gripping, paralyzing fear? I have. I remember the first case I ever tried. It was an automobile accident case that I thought my boss would handle. I had helped him outline everything and gave him my notes on the morning of trial. He then turned to me and said he couldn't go that something had come up and I'd have to do it. I panicked! I shook with fear. My knees knocked. I stuttered. I made every excuse I could—but to no avail. Never having actually picked a jury, I didn't know what to do. I thought I didn't know enough about law or even the case.

A huge mountain of unknowns rose up before me. I had more questions than answers. I didn't know which way to turn. So, how should I have handled that—or more importantly, how do you handle that kind of fear today? Dr. Stanley says that when fear strikes, face the fear head-on. Ask yourself, *“What am I afraid of?”* Break down the nature of your fear. Are you afraid of failure that will lead to criticism? Are you afraid of failure that will lead to rejection from someone you love or admire? Admit the fears to yourself and to God. THEN TURN IMMEDIATELY TO THE MATTER OF YOUR FAITH. Faith is the opposite of fear. It's the solution for fear.

Dr. Stanley reminds us that the first and best move to build up your faith is to get your eyes off your problem and off yourself and onto Jesus. He is the Source of all your supply. Speak aloud the words of **HEBREWS 13:6** over and over until they sink in. Listen to these words: *“The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”* Then, ask the Lord to give you the help you need, specifically. Thirdly, encourage yourself by memorizing the Word of God and quoting it as often as you need a fear-buster of inner strength.

Open your Bible to **Isaiah 41:10-13 (NLT)** and listen to these great words: *¹⁰Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. ¹¹“See, all your angry enemies lie there, confused and humiliated. Anyone who opposes you will die and come to nothing. ¹²You will look in vain for those who tried to conquer you. Those who attack you will come to nothing. ¹³For I hold you by your right hand—I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, ‘Don't be afraid. I am here to help you.*

In these verses, did you hear what we're promised? God's presence, power, provision and protection. The only other thing we need is asking others to PRAY FOR YOU. **James 5:16** says it

clearly: *"Pray for one another, that you may be healed."* You can overcome fear WHEN it rears its ugly head and it's up to you to break through this success roadblock with the power of God and His promises to be with you.

The second success roadblock closely related to fear is DOUBT. What is doubt? (LACK OF ASSURANCE) When we doubt, we become unsteady, tentative, and wavering in our pursuit of a goal. Let me ask you, *"When it comes to success, is believing vital to reaching success?"* Absolutely! Believing you can achieve a God-given goal is essential to reaching it. Turn to **Hebrews 11:6** for a great reminder of the importance of this concept: ***And without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

So, how do we please God? You please Him by receiving His Son, Jesus Christ as your Savior, and by obeying Him day by day. Part of your obeying God is doing what he tells you to do, including the pursuit of goals that God has designed for you. Without faith—and without believing God desires to reward you and will reward you as you diligently seek to follow Him—you fail.

So, what can we do here with DOUBT? Like fear, you must face doubts head-on and turn to God, who, remember is right there with you always—He never leaves nor forsakes you. Let's refresh our understanding of what God says about this. Turn to **Philippians 4:13**, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Now, look down just a few verses at **Philippians 4:19**, *"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

We've already read **Hebrews 13:5** that says, *"I will never leave nor forsake you,"* and need to claim that one in times of doubt. What about **John 16:24**? *²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will*

be complete. And, what about **Matthew 7:7** as a great assurance verse? ⁷*"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

When you face doubt, I recommend that you get on your knees, open your Bible and read it aloud to God claiming His promises and that you trust Him to do these things in your life. Remember it's all about your FAITH. As Paul says in **2 Cor. 5:7**, *"We walk by faith, not by sight."*

OUR THIRD ROADBLOCK TO SUCCESS is EXCUSE-ITIS!!! I hate to talk about this one, because this is a roadblock I use and hear daily. Let's talk about some of the excuses we hear every day from kids or others. What excuses do you hear? Excuse-it is the habit of excusing ourselves or offering an excuse at every turn for NOT doing what we know to do. It's the cornerstone of the blame-game—blaming the way we feel physically, blaming the poor parenting we had, blaming the fact that we were mistreated at some time in our lives, blaming our failure on the fact that we don't have a car or don't have enough money or don't have this or that.

This excuse is as old a man—in fact, as old as the first man and woman. Adam blamed who? And in turn, Eve blamed...? And how far did their excuses go with God? Yeah, nowhere. Their excuses didn't count with God, and excuses don't count for us with God either. Remember the call to Moses to return to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let the people go? One sorry excuse after the other. I can't talk, I'm a nobody, I'm not credible with the people, I'm a has-been. On and on. Did it work? Nope. And it won't work for us with God either. He doesn't accept any excuse for our not pursuing the goals He has put before us. Not one.

I loved the way Dr. Stanley worked his way through this roadblock this week. When someone says, *"But what about my situation. I'd love to teach, but the Lord knows I'm not trained as a teacher. I*

can't teach without training." His answer would be, "Get trained." When our schedule is overbooked and we don't have time to take one anything else, his answer is, "Change your schedule."

Remember the parable Jesus told in **MATT 25** about the rich man who went on a journey and entrusted his wealth to three servants? To one, he gave five talents; to another, two talents; and to a third, just one talent. When the master returned, he found that the first two servants had doubled his money in his absence. The third servant, however, got into EXCUSE-ITIS! In verses 24-25, he said, *"Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours."* How did the master respond? Look at verse **26**. He called this servant wicked and lazy, and he took the talent from him and gave it to the other one who had produced ten talents.

Never try to blame another person for your failure. That includes your spouse, your boss, your parent, your child, your pastor, your best friend, your doctor, or any other person you encounter. God has given you talents and spiritual gifts He expects you to use, without excuse.

As Dr. Stanley reminded us this week, there are no GOOD excuses for failing to go to church, read the Bible, pray, share your faith, use your mind, believe God, work to the best of your physical ability, give to God and others, or love others generously. Take a look at your life. What excuses are you giving to yourself and others for your continuing to live at a level that is less than what God desires for you? Isn't it time you got busy and got rid of those excuses.

The last success roadblock we have time to look at is **GREED**. How can we define that term? It's an insatiable hunger or craving for acquiring more than a person needs. Max Lucado tells a story

about a mission team going to Haiti and being overwhelmed with the poverty and starkness of the community they were visiting. The leader of the mission group asked the local translator what the biggest problem to their faith was in the area. Without hesitation, the local man responded by saying, "Greed." This response shocked the mission team's leader and he naturally asked how greed could be a problem in light of there being very little material trapping or stuff evident? The local man says that one man may have one pig and his neighbor wants two. Another man may have a shack and his neighbor wants a block hut with a thatched roof. Another man may have two cows and the neighbor wants three. You see, *"It's all relative. One man wants what he doesn't have but sees in the possession of his neighbor."*

Open you Bible to **Luke 12:15** and follow along as I read. **"¹⁵Then he said, "Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own."** Greed is an idolatrous attitude. It is desiring the things of the natural and material world more than the things of God. Dr. Stanley recommends a very practical step to help a person deal with greed: GIVE AWAY SOMETHING YOU VALUE. Picture the way Mother Theresa saw it. (HANDS OPEN AND DOWN) Anytime Dr. Stanley feels that he is clinging too tightly to something, he gives it away. He says nothing is worth holding on to if it means developing a spirit of greed or disobeying God. The SECOND WAY to confront greed is to make a conscious effort TITHE and GIVE OFFERINGS. Greedy people are rarely tithers.

To overcome these obstacles and roadblocks to success, you need to confess your need to God. Ask Him to forgive you. Then ask Him to help you move forward in your life. Become involved with others who can help you overcome these roadblocks in your life. Push them aside, one by one, and take the next step necessary to pursue your goals. '

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