

## Success in Christian Leadership

### Key #2: Progressively Fulfilling the Will of God for Your Life

***“To succeed we must disturb the present.”***

Fulfilling the will of God requires that the present becomes the past. Regardless of how your life has been, God wants it to become better. It may have been good, or perhaps not so good. Whether it has been comfortable or not, God wants to move you to the realm of the new and challenging (which may even become uncomfortable). Every step we take is a planned step in the progression of God’s will for our lives. The issue is not whether we have had success or failure, or even feel good about how things have gone to date, but whether we will use today as a stepping stone to tomorrow.

Dr. Tom Peters<sup>1</sup> has defined success as:

1. Progressively becoming the person God wants you to be.
2. Progressively fulfilling the goals that God would have you to fulfill for His glory.
3. Walking with God

This study was birthed out of those three thoughts. Dr. Peters said one thing that sums up the whole study of success. Here it is:

***“If you just tap into my plan, it is already blessed.”***

### The Will of God - Four Elements to Consider

“Progressively fulfilling the will of God for your life” has four component parts or elements. Each of these fills a role in securing the will of God for you. As you move in the will of God, step by step, you will meet each of these. The importance of recognizing them as they occur cannot be overstated. If you are able to recognize these elements daily, you will make the best of that particular moment in time and your success will be assured. Here they are:

**Element #1. COSTS**

**Element #2. TESTS**

**Element #3. EFFECTS (On You and Others around You)**

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#### Element #4. REWARDS

These elements may occur in groups. Each will accompany a particular step (or progression) toward God's will.

- They may happen concurrently (at the same time), or may occur in sequence.
- Each element may be first recognized for its potential, rather than actual current effect.

### A Study of the Four Elements involved in Progressively Fulfilling the Will of God for Your Life

#### First Element: COSTS

A cost is “something to be paid,” for one of two reasons:

**Reason #1** You appreciate *the value of something you want* and so you are willing to pay the cost *to gain that value*.

Example - Genesis 24: Abraham's servant bringing the bride price to Laban -

The Bible lists the following price Abraham paid:

- Genesis 24:22; 24:47 Rings and bracelets.
- Genesis 24:53 Jewelry of silver, Jewelry of gold, clothing and precious things.

**Reason #2** You commit to do something for *someone who you value*, and so you pay the cost of your commitment.

Example - Genesis 22: Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac because of his commitment to God.

The Bible lists the following costs Abraham was willing to pay:

- Genesis 22:2 - Loss of his precious son.
- Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-16; 15:5

**Abraham's apparent loss:** The promise he would be the father of many nations and have descendants more numerous than the stars. Your success may require payment of both kinds of costs.

- The cost is always a factor, but worship the Lord at all costs!
- Fear and reverence Him. Do not fear or worship the cost.

- Worship God with a grateful heart. Do not let the situation or perceived outcome ever stop you.

*(Genesis 22:5 NKJV) "And Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."*

*(Genesis 24:48 NKJV) "And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son."*

### **Worship Him for who He is. You will hear from him in the midst of it.**

Your worship will always put the cost in its proper perspective. Paying the cost is simply allowing God the opportunity to move in your life. Be aware that if you do something to take you out of the will of God, if you try to run from God, it too, will cost you! The cost will be that God is prevented from moving in your life. You will fail to move ahead in His will. Avoid this cost! Trust Him and move in faith.

## **Second Element: TESTS**

**Tests always involve personal costs. A test is something designed for you go through, so you can grow through!**

Tests have only one of two results: success or failure. The interesting thing about tests is that **even failure can ultimately result in progressively fulfilling the will of God, if... the one who failed learns from his or her failures.**

Peter is the prime example. He denied Jesus three times and later went on to great exploits for God.

*(John 18:26-27 NKJV) "One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" {27} Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed."*

*(Romans 8:28 NKJV) "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."*

## There are two purposes for tests:

**Purpose #1** A test is intended by God to bring a personal response that **you** can measure.

God is not unaware of or ever surprised by your response to a test. He knows that, in the process, you will grow more confident in your abilities, strengths and resolve to progressively fulfill His will for your life!

- Example of a successful test - Joseph, refusing to sleep with Potifer's wife, he paid the cost (imprisonment) (Genesis 39).
- Example of a failed test - Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18). He would not pay the cost that Jesus asked him to pay.

**Purpose #2** A test is always intended to draw you into more dependence on God.

God knows that true and lasting success depends upon your total trust in Him. He wants you to succeed.

Example of a successful test - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednago in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3)

Example of failure - Cain's response when the Lord encouraged him to bring a more acceptable sacrifice (Genesis 4:3-8)

**Tests: "You go through... to grow through."**

## Third Element: EFFECTS

(on you and others around you)

**Effect #1: Appearances** - What they see, they will assume they get. Reject every appearance of evil. How?

**First, judge carefully the company you keep.**

*(1 Corinthians 15:33 NKJV) "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"*

**Next, judge carefully every expression of your emotions.**

*(Ephesians 4:31 NKJV) "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."*

## Finally, judge carefully everything you take part in.

*(1 Thessalonians 5:22 NKJV) "Abstain from every form of evil."*

When people look at you they should see Jesus. Love and honor Him. Obey His two primary commandments - always!

*(Mark 12:30-31 NKJV) "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. {31} 'And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

## Effect #2: Thoughts - Reject evil thinking. How?

*(2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV) "casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,"*

Think about the implications for us in these words Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. Humble yourself before the Lord and take captive your thoughts in obedience to Christ. Give no place to evil thinking. Paul's words to the Philippian church make a great combination with what he wrote to the Corinthians.

*(Philippians 4:8 NKJV) "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things."*

## Effect #3: Words - Reject evil speaking. How? Change your heart. It will discipline your mouth.

*(Luke 6:45 NKJV) "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."*

*(Titus 3:2 NKJV) "to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men."*

*(1 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) "But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts."*

## It is Your Voice. It is Your Choice! Be a voice for Christ. How?

**“Speak the truth in love.”**

*(Ephesians 4:14-15 NKJV) “... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, {15} **but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ;**”*

### **To Reject Evil is to embrace Good.**

- Good Appearances
- Good Thoughts
- Good Words

#### **Results**

For yourself: Progressively fulfilling the will of God in your life.

For others: Helping (never hindering) them to draw closer to God.

### **Fourth Element: REWARDS**

“Progressively fulfilling the will of God” will bring certain rewards, for both today and eternity. Among these are the following.

**Reward #1 You gain a deep, meaningful, transformation - on a regularly recurring basis.**

Life can become a great journey in which you look forward to your next encounter with God. Your greatest anticipation and motivation can be knowing the Lord is about to explode on the scene with some new and wonderful change within you. Transformation is a wonderful reward itself. It is full of satisfaction, delight and promise.

Transformation rewards your willingness to fulfill each progressive phase of His will for you. What areas of your life would you next like to see growing?

*(1 Thessalonians 4:3a NKJV) “For this is the will of God, your sanctification”*

## Your sanctification ... has its rewards.

*(Romans 12:2 NKJV) “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

### **Reward #2** - You gain further appreciation and thankfulness for the abilities God has brought into your life.

Your confidence level goes higher and higher. Your success illuminates and confirms the reality that God is at work. Your heart grows more grateful as you grow more able. You can do everything He calls you to do. When have you failed to appreciate what God was doing in you?

*(1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV) “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

### **Reward #3** - You gain enduring strength... and with it, the confidence to compete... and complete.

Life is an ongoing contest - a race with a prize for its completion. However, that is not the only prize. Your rewards along the way become highly prized. You recognize them as things that forever change how you feel about yourself (and others). You know that what would have stopped you yesterday will never stop you tomorrow. You become strong in the Lord and the power of His might. You know you are a winner and a champion. What is going to be your next victory? Why?

**You know that what would have stopped you yesterday will never stop you tomorrow.**

**Winners win for Jesus. Champions are crowned by Christ.**

### **Reward #4** - Sonship, which is an abiding, permanent place in God's family.

Sonship describes your standing with heaven. You are entitled to all the promises of God because you are a child of God. You have every right to say “**Abba**” to the Father.

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

*(1 John 5:4 NKJV) "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And **this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith.**"*

As a daughter or son of God, you have access to all of His authority, power and might. In your weakness' you will find His strength.

*(Hebrews 10:36 NKJV) "For you have need of endurance, so that **after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise**"*

*(Ephesians 6:10 NKJV) "Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.**"*

God assures you of enough available power to win your battles, because they are His, not yours. He never asks or expects your strength to secure the victory. He only asks you to have faith in His strength. Your faith brings His victory into your life!