

SUCCESS

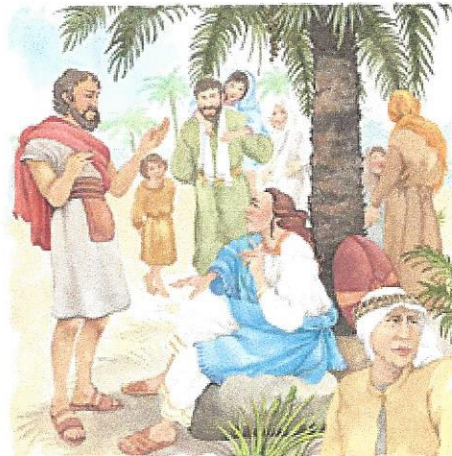
Definition: Attaining the desired outcome. Reaching a goal.

Synonyms: Accomplishment, Triumph, Victory

This week we will look at four Biblical women who achieved success God's way.

DAY 1

Read Judges Chapter 4



Holding court under the Palm of Deborah.

The Israelites conquered Canaan but did not follow God's instructions. Instead, they allowed the enemy to live among them, so the people were constantly battling for power.

Judging Israel at this time in history was a woman name Deborah. She not only settled internal disputes but was commander and chief of the military. So it was up to Deborah to reclaim the Promised Land (Canaan) for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Unlike Samson, who disobeyed God's laws and Gideon, whose faith faltered, Deborah was an obedient judge whose faith was strong. Sending for her military leader, Barak, she delivers the following directive: This is what the LORD, the God of Israel commands you:" (Judges 4:6b). Then she imparts God's word to Barak concerning the battle to come. She was following God's decrees. However, it appeared that Barak depended on Deborah more than God for he demanded Deborah accompany him to the war zone.

Note in Judges 4: 17-23, we read about another strong woman in Barak's life.



Jael showing Barak her victory over the military leader of the enemy.

Deborah predicted that God's victory over Sisera would be at the hands of a woman. Jael killed the military leader; thus Deborah's prediction was right. Barak did not receive the honor of defeating the enemy's leader.

Under Deborah's leadership, Israel was victorious, and there was peace in the land for forty years!

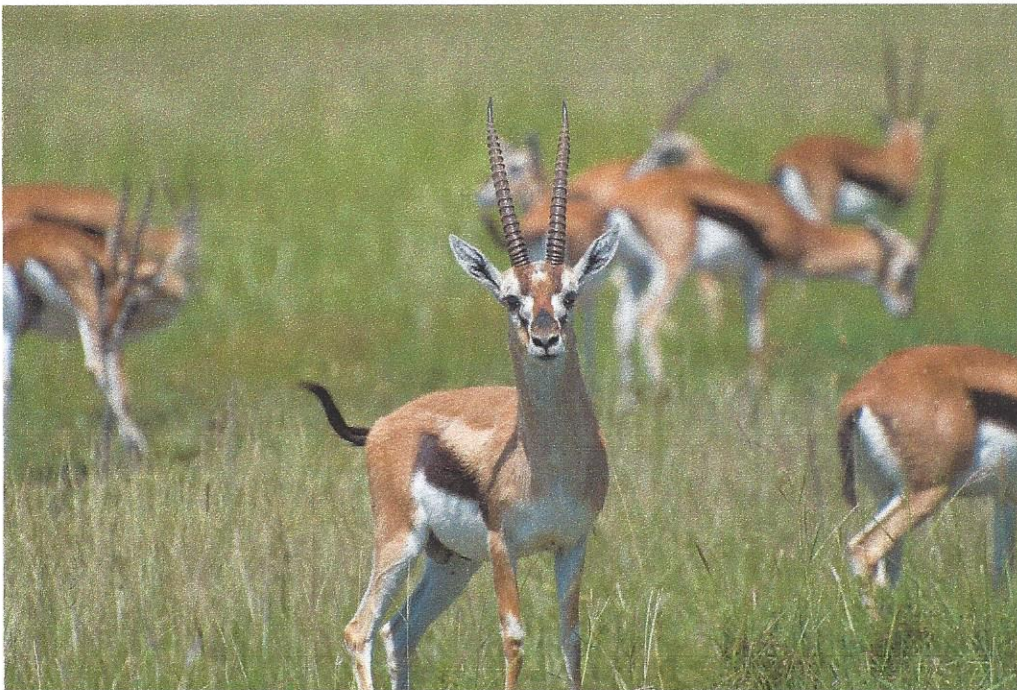
THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

SEEK GOD WHEN YOU ARE IN A LEADERSHIP POSITION.

DAY 2

Read Acts 9: 36-42

Dorcas means gazelle, a picture of delicate beauty. Social animals, gazelles live together in large herds. Befitting her name, Dorcas is sociable and hospitable.



Only seven verses in Scripture describe this woman, but we can glean a lot from them. Her kindness and charitable acts define her life. Practicing her faith openly in such perilous times attest to her strong convictions and trust in Jesus.

Her inviting and peaceful home was a place where women loved, supported, and cared for each other. Sometimes we can be our own worst enemy, backbiting and gossiping about one another. We often hear the expression “a man’s man.” I think of Dorcas as a “woman’s woman.”

Loved by the community for her kind heart and benevolent nature, Dorcas likely launched the first Christian nonprofit, using her talents as a seamstress to provide clothing for the poor, especially widows.



Dorcas at home ministering to other women.

Was she successful? Many people mourned the death of this benevolent woman. Additionally, there are Dorcas Societies operating today! What other nonprofit or business has lasted over 2,000 years!

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

YOU DENIGRATE GOD'S CREATION WHEN YOU DISPARAGE WOMEN.

DAY 3

Read Acts 16: 11-15

Expensive purple cloth, often worn by nobility or royalty, was the merchandise Lydia sold. Translation, she was rich.

Respected in the community, she probably conducted business with the well-to-do. Instead of spending her leisure time with the elite or the party crowd, we find her worshipping outside the city on the Sabbath.

This woman knew about the God of Abraham, but not about Jesus. When Paul visited the area, he spoke with her and the other women worshippers. The Lord opened Lydia's heart to the truth. She received Jesus as Lord and Savior and was baptized.



Immediately, she wanted to give back. Offering the hospitality of her home to the travelers, she all but begged them to accept. Do you suppose she hoped to learn more about her new faith if they were in her home?

Despite Lydia's success and wealthy status, she had a humble heart. She was open to learning and spent her leisure time in spiritual endeavors. Perhaps she understood that all good things come from God, and without God, anything we accomplish is worth nothing.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

REMAIN HUMBLE, FOR ALL SUCCESS COMES FROM GOD.

DAY 4

Read Acts 16:1-5 and 2 Timothy 1:5

Today we look at two women who didn't find success in the world; instead they used their gifts and talents in the home. Eunice and Lois are the mother and grandmother of Timothy respectively.

Timothy was half Greek, which makes me wonder about Eunice's adherence to the law. Even if her Jewish faith was nominal, obviously her faith in Jesus was strong. Both she and her mother taught Timothy about Jesus, and despite his father's possible influence, he grew into a young man who was respected by other believers.



The world might not consider Eunice and Lois successful women. They didn't lead a military or own a thriving business, but they influenced the growing Christian church by instilling a strong faith in Timothy.

As mothers and grandmothers, we have considerable influence on future generations. I believe that God will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23 NIV) to all women who were living examples in their homes and took the time to instill the principles of the Christian faith in children.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

DO YOU LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH AT HOME?

WEEKEND REFLECTIONS

Seek God.

Are you in a leadership role? Deborah followed God into battle. She didn't plan first and then ask God to bless her strategy. Be like Deborah, seek God before making plans.

Don't denigrate God's creation.

"I much prefer to work with a man." "Women are so manipulative."

How many of us hear ourselves in those statements? We must not denigrate other women. When we talk poorly about our gender, particularly about our sisters in Christ, we hurt God's heart. After all, God created us. Develop a Dorcas style home and attitude.

Remain humble.

Read James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:6. God does not honor a proud spirit. All successful endeavors (even those attained by nonbelievers) are by the grace of God. Someday, all people will know this is true. Remember Lydia, and seek God's approval – not the world's admiration.

Live out your faith at home.

All smiles on Sunday morning; we pray, teach a Sunday school class, or volunteer for a project, but are we different at home? Do our children see us pray? Are we teaching them the Bible? Does our faith show in every decision or action that we take?

My prayer is that we all share our faith as successfully as Eunice and Lois.