

*September 25, 2016—Fall Quarter 2016—Sunday Morning Bible Class*

# UNMERITED FAVOR

*Your supernatural advantage for a successful life*

# JOSEPH PRINCE

## *Chapter 1*

# *The Definition of Success*

**T**he sweltering Egyptian sun blazes down on the bustling market. The distinctive scent of aromatic spices wafts over the countless rows of merchants calling out their wares and treasures brought here from far and wide. Looking over the crowd, you will find a colorful assortment of people: Dancers, musicians, thieves, busy housewives, pickpockets and wealthy landlords, all gathered here shopping, bargaining, eyeing over and sifting through the countless objects on display. Everything, from the intricate creations of precious metals to livestock, has a price. In fact, a slave can be yours for 20 pieces of silver. There are no rules here for fair exchange. A top bid will get you what you desire. An inferior one will leave you empty-handed.

Amid this hustle and bustle in the main square by the fountain stands a young man of about 17 years old, his neck and his hands bound firmly with coarse ropes. From the rope burns across his wrists and around his neck, you can tell that the merchants have not been kind as they hurried to reach the market in time to put their prize on display. They have heard a rumor that Potiphar, a high-ranking official from Pharaoh's court, is planning to make a purchase today.

The young man is dazed from so many days of walking. His legs keep buckling beneath him, his arms are weary from the constant tugging and his mouth is parched from the dry desert winds. He is in a foreign land where the people speak in an incomprehensible tongue. With nothing to his name, not even a loincloth to cover his modesty, he is bound and displayed, completely naked. In a short while, he would be inspected like an animal against his will, and sold into a lifetime of slavery.

And yet, God Himself calls this young man, named Joseph, a successful man!

Now, think about this for a moment, and imagine yourself in the scene of this Egyptian market. If you were among the many curious spectators and bystanders in the main square, would you consider this young man who is about to be sold into slavery "a successful man"?

Of course not!

Yet, God says in His own words that Joseph was a successful man.

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in

the house of his master the Egyptian.—GENESIS 39:1-2

### **Success Is A Result Of Who You Have**

God's definition of success is contrary to the world's definition. Corporate America measures success based on what **you** have done, what **you** have accomplished and what **you** have accumulated. It is based entirely on **you** focusing all your time, energy and resources in meriting titles and collecting accomplishments.

Now, we have witnessed how this self-indulgent accumulation has led to the subprime crisis, the decimation of investment banks and a widespread international financial meltdown.

My friend, I want to encourage you to begin to see that the world's model of success is unstable and built upon a foundation that is shakable. It may have the outward appearance of the good life, but it is temporal, and we have all seen for ourselves how the world's transient wealth can dissipate like smoke and easily slip away like the shifting sands in the desert.

*It is the presence of the Lord in your life that makes you a success!*

From Genesis 39:2, it is clear that success is not **what** you have, but rather **who** you have! Joseph literally had nothing materially, but at the same time, he had everything because the Lord was with him. The material things that you have accumulated or are feverishly trying to amass do not make you a success. It is the presence of the Lord in your life that makes you a success!

We need to learn to stop pursuing things and to start pursuing Him. God sees your relationship with Him as the only thing that you need for every success in your life. I can't imagine starting in a worse place than Joseph. He was completely naked. He had nothing! No bank accounts, no educational qualifications, no natural connections with people of influence, nothing. Thank God the Bible records a picture of Joseph who began with nothing, so that you and I can have hope today. If you think that like Joseph, you have nothing, well, you can start believing in the power of the presence of the Lord in your life. Start looking to Jesus and claim that promise in that scripture for yourself!

Let me show you how you can personalize this promise in your life. Insert your name here into God's promise for you:

"The Lord is with \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a successful person."

Now, read this aloud to yourself. Read it out loud a hundred times if you have to, and begin to see this as your reality. Stick this promise on your

mirror, and every morning when you brush your teeth, remind yourself that today, as you go to work, as you go to school, as you start the day caring for your children at home (or do whatever it is that you need to do), the Lord is with you. And because He is with you, **YOU ARE ALREADY A SUCCESS!** When you have Jesus in your life, you are no longer trying to be a success; you **ARE** a success!

### **Saving You Is God's Job Description**

Let me share with you a powerful truth hidden in the birth of Jesus. When Mary was engaged to Joseph, before they shared any intimacy as husband and wife, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, being a just man and not willing to make Mary a public spectacle, thought of a way to "put her away secretly." (Matthew 1:19)

Bear in mind that at that point, Joseph did not yet know that the unborn child was of the Holy Spirit. He thought that Mary had committed fornication. Yet, this righteous man was not willing to expose her publicly. In those days, if you were found to have had sexual relations before marriage, they would stone you to death. That was the culture and law of the Jewish people at that time. But Joseph loved his wife--to--be, Mary, and wanted to protect her dignity and preserve her life as best he could.

Now, as Joseph was contemplating these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-21) The name "Jesus" is *Yeshua* in Hebrew, which contains an abbreviation for *Yahweh*, the name of God in Hebrew. So the name "Jesus" literally means "*Yahweh* is our Savior" or "The Lord is our Savior"! What a beautiful name!

Every time you call the name of Jesus, the name that is above every other name, you are calling God Himself to save you. Saving you is Jesus' job description! Whatever the challenge or circumstance, whatever crisis you are in--physically, financially or emotionally--you can call on the name of Jesus and Almighty God Himself will save you!

My friend, you can take time to know the names of God, which He revealed under the old covenant, such as *Elohim*, *El Shaddai*, *El Elyon*, *Jehovah-Jireh*, *Jehovah-Rophe* and *Jehovah-Nissi*. You can do a complete study on the names of God. I am not against that at all. I teach on the names of God in my church as well, but all these names will mean nothing to you if you don't know that God Almighty Himself, Jesus, wants to save you first from all your sins, then from all your challenges.

God can be all powerful, but if you are not confident that He is

interested in your success, His power would mean nothing to you. So, you don't have to memorize all the names of God from the old covenant. What you need is a full revelation that Jesus, in the new covenant, is your *Savior!* What is Tiger Woods famous for? Golf! What is David Beckham famous for? Soccer! (No, he's famous for product endorsements!) What is Jesus famous for? Saving you!

***Jesus is your Savior!***

That's not all, my friend. The Bible goes on to say that "all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name **Immanuel,**' which is translated, 'God with us.'" (Matthew 1:22-23) Now, it is very interesting for us to note that Jesus' name is not just Jesus! His name is also Immanuel, meaning the Almighty God is with us.

### **Jesus Is Immanuel, The Almighty God with Us**

A precious brother shared with me that even as a believer years ago, he had a problem with alcohol, and every night he would be out drinking to the point that he could not even remember how he got home the next day. He tried everything he could to stop drinking, but failed over and over again.

One day, he went out with some friends for a game of squash, and after the game, he laid down on the ground to rest. As he was resting, he felt Jesus' presence come upon him, and in that very moment, the Lord broke his addiction to alcohol and completely removed his desire to drink!

Today, this brother whom the Lord delivered from alcoholism is a key leader in my church. Isn't it just like God to take the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the foolish things of the world to confound the wise?

You know, all our struggling, willpower, discipline and self-effort cannot do what the presence of the Lord can do in an instant. And who is to say that as we are talking about Jesus now, His presence will not take away something that is destructive in your life? You see, you are transformed not by struggling. You are transformed by beholding Jesus and believing that He loves you and wants to save you.

Now, what does it mean to say "God with us"? We must understand it the same way the Hebrew people would have understood it. There is something beautiful here—this is the secret of Immanuel! The Jewish mind understands that when the Lord is **with you**, you become successful in every endeavor in your life. Don't just take my word for it. Look through the chronicles of Jewish history. The Bible records that whenever the Lord was **with them** in battle, the children of Israel were never defeated, and every

military campaign ended in overwhelming success.

In fact, in the battle for Jericho, the city was theirs with just a shout! (Joshua 6:20) Why? The Lord was with them. Even in battles when they were outnumbered, they triumphed because the Lord was with them. It is no different in the modern context. When the Bible says that Jesus is with you, He is with you to help you, assist you, turn things around for you and make good things happen for you. He is not with you, as some wrongly believe, to condemn, judge or find fault! When Almighty God is with you, good things will happen in you, around you and through you. I have seen that time and time again!

***When Almighty God is with you, good things will happen in you, around you and through you.***

I learned the truth of what it means to have the Lord with me early on in my teens. One of the first truths that the Holy Spirit taught me was Genesis 39:2--"The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man ..." So you know what? I began to claim that verse every day and I would say out loud, "Jesus is with me, so everything I do will succeed." I was practicing the presence of Jesus. It is one thing to give mental assent that Jesus is with you, but it is another thing to start being conscious of Jesus' presence. You can start practicing His presence by speaking it out.

### **Practice His Presence and See His Power**

Do you know that the best time to thank Jesus for His presence is when you don't "feel" His presence? When it comes to the presence of Jesus, don't go by your feelings. Feelings can be deceptive. Go by His promise that He is Immanuel!

Have you heard the story of a groom who approached his pastor almost immediately after his wedding ceremony? He went up to his pastor and said, "Pastor, can I talk to you for a second?"

"Sure," the pastor replied.

The groom said, "You know what, I don't **feel** married."

The pastor grabbed him by the collar and growled, "Listen, boy. You **ARE** married whether you feel it or not, understand? Just take it by faith that you are married!"

***Feelings aren't based on truth. God's Word is truth!***

You see, my friend, you can't go by your feelings. You go by the truth and the truth is this: God promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) So the best time to practice His presence is precisely when

you **feel** like Jesus is 100,000 miles away. Remember that feelings aren't based on truth. God's Word is truth!

Anyway, soon after I graduated from high school, I took on a part-time job to teach in an elementary school where I was placed in charge of a class of 10-year-olds. I remember one day, when I was practicing His presence, I knelt down in my living room and prayed, "Lord, I just thank You that You are always with me." As I was on my knees, the Lord told me to pray specifically for one of the girls in my class who had been absent from school that day.

Now, it is very common for kids to miss class now and then for various reasons, and I had never been led by the Lord to pray specifically for any of them. This girl was the first! The Lord told me very clearly to pray for His protection to be over this girl and to cover her with His precious blood.

The next day, there was a big commotion in the school and I found out that the girl had been kidnapped by a notorious serial killer that very afternoon that the Lord had told me to pray for her. The killer, Adrian Lim, had kidnapped several children to be offered up as sacrifices to the devil. He believed that Satan would give him power when he offered the blood of these children to him.

Over the next couple of days, this girl from my class was all over our national media because she had been miraculously released. Sadly, she was the only girl released. All the other kidnapped girls had been brutally murdered.

When she returned to class, I asked her how she came to be freed. She told me that her kidnapper was "praying" over her when suddenly he stopped and told her, "The gods do not want you." She was quickly released that evening. Of course, you and I know why the "gods" didn't want her-she was covered and protected by Jesus' blood!

Listen to what I am saying here. In America today and around the world, the devil is trying to destroy a new generation because he is afraid that the young people of the new millennium are going to take over the world for Jesus. That is why we have to cover our children with Jesus' protection.

I am sharing all this with you because I want you to see the importance and power of practicing His presence. As a teacher during that time, my class was my responsibility, just like my congregation is my responsibility today. Think with me: How in the world, with my finite knowledge and intelligence, could I have known that one of my students was in grave danger? It is not possible! But because the Lord, who knows all things, was with me, He made me a successful teacher.

Similarly, whatever role or vocation you are in, whether you are a schoolteacher, business leader or homemaker, I want you to know that Jesus is with you and He wants to make you a success. Now, remember, all this happened to me before I became a full-time pastor, so please don't think that this unmerited favor from Jesus is only for pastors. Beloved, His unmerited favor is for you. The Lord Immanuel is **with you**.

**Whatever role you are in, Jesus is with you and He wants to make you a success.**

You see, it is not us; it is Him. If Jesus is with us, He will give us success in all that we do and cause us to have good results in every area of our lives to the glory of God. If God can do it for Joseph, a young man sold into slavery, He can do it for you! Let this be your reality:

"The Lord is with \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a successful person."

As you become conscious of how Jesus is with you, you'll see Him leading you to success in all that you need to do!

HOMEWORK:

1. T F: God doesn't say that Joseph was a successful man.
2. God's definition of success is contrary to who?
3. Name three basis Corporate America measures success based on:
  - 👉 what \_\_\_\_\_,
  - 👉 what \_\_\_\_\_,
  - 👉 and what \_\_\_\_\_.
4. It (Corporate America measures success) is based on you focusing all your:
  - 👉 \_\_\_\_\_,
  - 👉 \_\_\_\_\_ and
  - 👉 \_\_\_\_\_ in meriting titles and
  - 👉 \_\_\_\_\_ accomplishments.
5. It helps you to see that the world's model of success is \_\_\_\_\_ and built upon a foundation that is \_\_\_\_\_. It may have the outward appearance of the good life, but it is \_\_\_\_\_, and we have all seen for ourselves how the world's transient wealth can dissipate like

smoke and easily slip away like the shifting sands in the desert.

6. Name one in your life that makes you a success?
  7. Genesis 39:2 is clear that success is: which choice you choose
    - who you have
    - what you have
    - both
  8. Joseph literally (really) had nothing materially, but at the same time, why now Joseph had everything?
  9. Choice: a) to start pursuing God b) to stop pursuing things c) ?
  10. The Bible records a picture of Joseph who began with \_\_\_\_\_, so that you and I can have hope today. If you think that like Joseph, you have \_\_\_\_\_, well, you can start \_\_\_\_\_ in the power of the presence of the Lord in your life. Start looking to \_\_\_\_\_ and claim that promise in that Scripture for yourself! You can personalize in your life. See bold letter 'me' in: You speak aloud or sign with ASL daily, "The Lord is with me, and I am a successful person."
  11. When you are a success? \_\_\_\_\_
  12. What is God's job description? \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 1:21 NIV: She will give birth a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.
13. The name "Jesus" is \_\_\_\_\_ in Hebrew, which contains an abbreviation for \_\_\_\_\_, the name of God in Hebrew. So the name "Jesus" literally means "Yahweh is our Savior" or "The Lord is our Savior"! What a beautiful name!
  14. What is Jesus' job description? \_\_\_\_\_
  15. Every time you call the name of Jesus, the name that is above every other name, you are calling God Himself to \_\_\_\_\_ you.
  16. Whatever the challenge or circumstance, whatever crisis you are in-- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_--you can call on the name of Jesus and Almighty God Himself will \_\_\_\_\_ you!
  17. God can be powerful, but if you are not confident that He is

interesting in your success, His power would mean \_\_\_\_\_ to you.

18. What you need is a full \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus, in the New Covenant, is your what? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What is Jesus famous for? \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 7:14—Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call Him 'Immanuel'".

20. His Name is also 'Immanuel', which meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

21. Important is you know, all your struggling, willpower, discipline and self-effort **CAN** or **CANNOT** do what the presence of the Lord **CAN** or **CANNOT** do in an instant.

22. Important is you see: check the box which you choose

you are transformed by struggling, willpower, discipline and self-effort.

you are transformed by beholding Jesus and believing that He loves you and wants to save you.

23. The Jewish mind understands that when the Lord is with you, you become successful in every endeavor in your life. Look through the chronicles of Jewish history. The Bible records that whenever the Lord was with them in battle, the children of Israel were NEVER DEFEATED, and every military campaign ended in overwhelming success.

24. The Bible says that Jesus is with you:

❖ Y N NS: Is Jesus with you to help you?

❖ Y N NS: Is Jesus with you to assist you?

❖ Y N NS: Is Jesus with you to turn things around for you?

❖ Y N NS: Is Jesus with you to make good things happen for you?

25. If Jesus is not with you,

✓ some \_\_\_\_\_ believe,

✓ to \_\_\_\_\_,

✓ to \_\_\_\_\_,

✓ or to \_\_\_\_\_.

26. When Almighty God is with you **BAD** or **GOOD** things will

happen \_\_\_ you, \_\_\_\_\_ you, and \_\_\_\_\_ you.

27. You can start being conscious of Jesus' presence and you can start \_\_\_\_\_ His presence by what?
28. Do you know that the BEST TIME to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus for His presence is WHEN you don't " \_\_\_\_\_ " His presence? When it comes to the presence of Jesus, **DO** or **DON'T** go by your feelings.
29. "Feeling" can be what? \_\_\_\_\_
30. You go by His \_\_\_\_\_ that He is 'Immanuel'.
31. T F: Feeling is truth. God's Word are based truth!
32. In America today and around the world, the devil is trying to destroy a new generation because the devil is afraid that the young people of the new millennium are going to take over the world for who? \_\_\_\_\_ It is important for your role to pray to cover your children with Jesus' protection.
33. Y N NS: Are you beloved in Christ?
34. Y N NS: Is His unmerited favor for you?
35. Y N NS: Is the Lord 'Immanuel' with you?
36. Whatever \_\_\_\_\_ you are in, Jesus is with you and He wants to make you a success.
37. Again, you see, it is \_\_\_\_\_ us; it is \_\_\_\_\_. If Jesus is with us, He will give us success in \_\_\_\_\_ that we do and cause us to have \_\_\_\_\_ results in \_\_\_\_\_ area of our lives to the glory of God.
38. If God **CAN** or **CANNOT** do it for Joseph, a young man sold into slavery, God **CAN** or **CANNOT** do it for you today!
39. As you \_\_\_\_\_ conscious of how Jesus is with you, you'll see Him leading you to success in all that you need to do!

### Prayer:

Lord Jesus, because You are my mighty Savior, there is no challenge or circumstance that can successfully defeat me. Thank You for saving me from my sins and from every challenge that besets me today. I receive Your wisdom, protection and provision to deliver me from and

prosper me in every difficult circumstance I have to deal with today. Jesus, You has saved me from my sins and Your power is available to save me from any and every challenge in my life in Your Name. Amen.

Lord Jesus, I thank You that You are with me, and that You will never leave me nor forsake me. And because I have Your presence in my life, I am already a success! In everything that I need to do today, I know that You are with me to help me succeed at it. Because the Lord Jesus is with me, I am a successful person in Your Name. Amen.