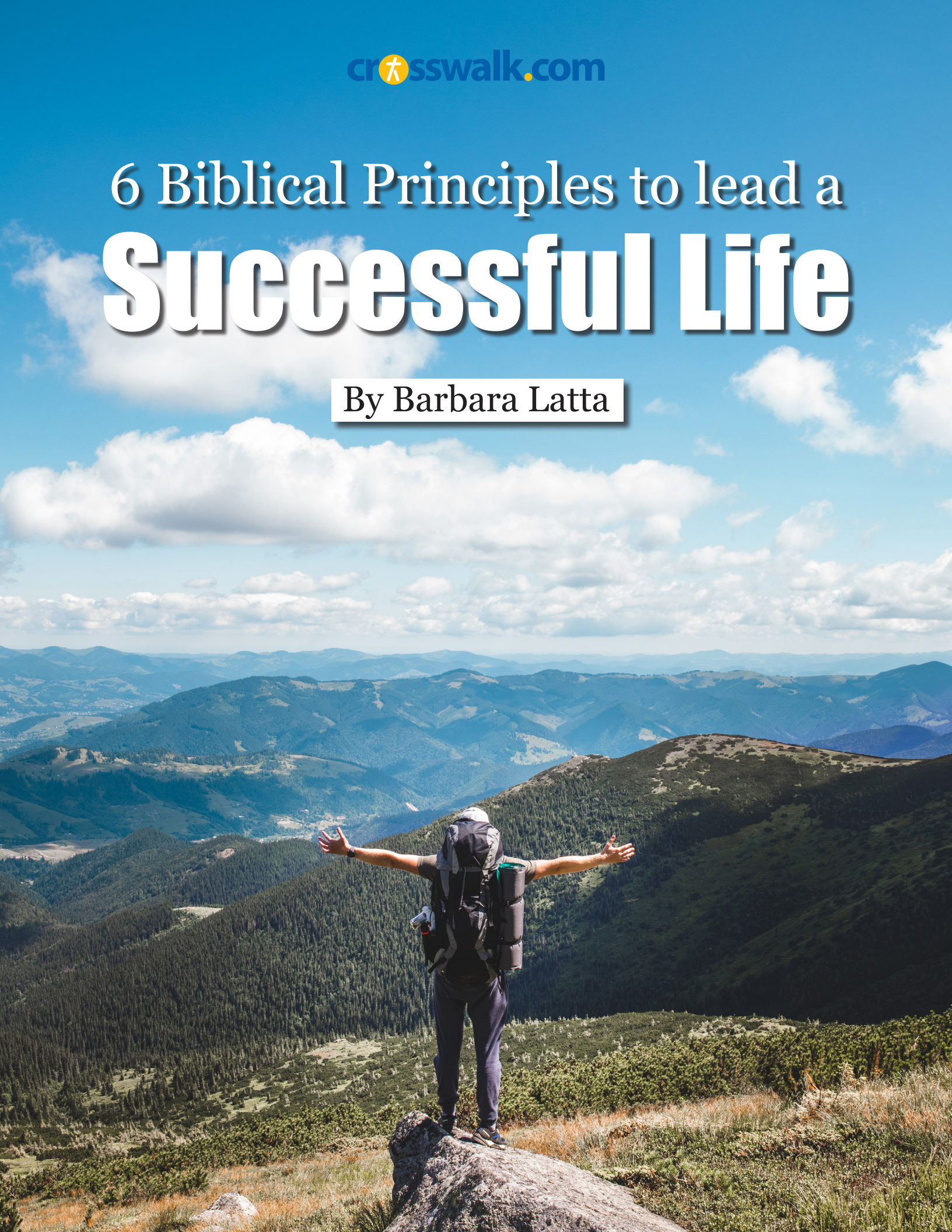


# 6 Biblical Principles to lead a **Successful Life**

By Barbara Latta





King Saul was an example of a man who began his national leadership submitted to God. He enjoyed victories in war while he followed the Lord. But when his true character was revealed, jealousy of David drove him to the point of madness where he even tried to kill David. His selfishness was the downfall of his reign and it cost him his life and the lives of his sons as well.

In contrast, David is called a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). David sinned terribly on more than one occasion, yet he always repented. He never blamed anyone else for his failures, rather he took the consequences that the Almighty laid out.

David won multitudes of battles because he listened to the Lord's guidance before he pursued an enemy. He is an example to us that seeking divine vision is the path to success. These 6 biblical principles will teach us how to live a successful life:

## 1. Seek the Wisdom of God

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is un-

derstanding. (Proverbs 9:10 NIV)

To receive the Holy Spirit's power in our lives, we must deny any power we think we may have. The first step toward a blossoming life is submission to His authority.

We sometimes equate humility with the domination of our lives by others. But humility and meekness are not weak traits. Jesus was described as meek and lowly of heart, a place where we can find rest for our souls (Matthew 11:29). Yet He was a tower of strength to combat Satan, sin, and religious hypocrisy. The Son of God did nothing without hearing from His Father first (John 5:19). He always sought answers from the Spirit. Even at twelve years old, He was pursuing the wisdom of heaven (Luke 2:49). How much more should we?

Moses is described in Numbers 12:3 as the meekest man on the face of the earth in the King James Version, and called humble in other versions. Yet Moses is the man who wrote the book of Numbers! He led millions of people across the desert and gave them the Law. Moses certainly wasn't a weakling.

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His achievements were because he humbled himself before the great I AM.

We exhibit strength when we acknowledge we need wisdom from a source greater than we are.

## 2. Avoid Foolish and Ignorant Disputes

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. (2 Timothy 2:23)

The world we live in is filled with varying opinions. Some people can get harsh with their views and will not stop trying to get the rest of whatever group they are addressing to come over to their side. But if we allow ourselves to be drawn into these debates, we are giving ourselves over to an argumentative spirit, wasting our time, and polluting our minds.

Arguing does not change the issue nor does it alter a person's mind. Only the Holy Spirit can transform a person's thinking. We don't want to listen to this kind of negative talk so

much that we are influenced into absorbing a divisive mindset. Spending time in needless discussions takes us away from the focus of our goals.

## 3. Be Willing to Accept Advice

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)

We cannot learn and grow if we think our opinion is the only one that matters, or if we think we already know so much that we don't need to listen. When a person is full of pride, they have no ears for anyone else's voice.

This was another of Saul's problems. He didn't listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. After Samuel confronted Saul with wrongdoing, Saul blamed it on the desire to please the people (1 Samuel 15:24).

We are admonished not to compare ourselves with others to the point of jealousy, but we can learn from those who have traveled a road ahead of us and their experience can save us a lot of pain.

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Good instruction helps us grow. We can become teachers to those who may need help and want to ask our advice for their situations. Timothy's leadership as the pastor of the church of Ephesus was the result of humbling himself under Paul's tutelage.

Learning and listening to others takes denying our flesh. Sometimes it hurts. We may feel like we have crawled upon the altar of criticism, but a loving instructor corrects with love and bandages any wounds that occur during teachable moments.

We should examine the advice we receive to discern the intent. Some advice is not godly or does not fit our situation. But we can listen and graciously thank the giver of words for their time and concern.

#### **4. Stay Focused on the Goal**

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (Philippians 3:12)

It's been said that if you want to kill a person's vision, give him two. James 1:5-8 tells us that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. We cannot flourish in our goals and dreams if our mind is divided on the direction we need to go. Once we receive spiritual insight, we should stay focused on that and not allow other influences to sway us.

Satan sets traps for us when he knows we seek a holy objective. A mind full of dreams will not be accomplished without opposition. Nehemiah stayed true to the goal of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem while surrounded by accusations toward his intent, physical attacks, and slander against his character (Nehemiah 2:10). His unwavering focus is what brought about the completion of his task.

Despite criticism and persecution, Jesus never wavered in His mission. His focus was always on the will of His Father (John 5:19). Even when He knew He would suffer crucifixion in Jerusalem, He still went to the city and subjected Himself to death because He saw the joyful goal of redemption for mankind (Hebrews 12:2).

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## 5. Stay Out of Regret

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. (Isaiah 43:18-19)

Wallowing in regret and condemnation over past failures and sins will not benefit us. All people have failed and sinned but when we remain stuck in the past we can't be productive. Living in the past prevents us from moving forward.

The Old Testament patriarchs all made mistakes that affected their lives and the generations after them. Abraham had a relationship with Hagar, Jacob deceived his brother, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, and Moses killed a man then ran away, which caused him to spend forty years in the desert.

The history of Israel is filled with other examples of failures and sin. But the Lord didn't leave the story there. Redemption was provided when they accepted His hand of grace, and their triumphs are recorded for us to learn from.

No matter what has happened in our lives, our Father promises to restore and rebuild if we adhere to His ways (Joel 2:25). His mercy endures forever, and He is able to turn our disasters into diamonds. But He can only do that if we use His Word for healing of our damaged souls and depend upon His mercy.

## 6. Remember Where Success Comes From

Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God...otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Deuteronomy 11-14).

After all the miracles and provision Jehovah had given the Israelites, they fell into sin and worshipped gold instead of God. They didn't heed His warnings and the prosperous lives

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they enjoyed for a time ended in captivity. Solomon started out with sensitivity toward the Lord. With all the wealth he had, he still sought to make alliances with foreign nations by marrying women from these idol-worshipping lands. His wives turned him away from the Lord. Because he forsook those warnings, the kingdom was divided after his death (1 Kings 11:11).

Nebuchadnezzar found out that his reign was not his own. After the three Hebrews had come out of the fire, the king acknowledged the Providence who saved them. He praised the One he saw and was given dreams about the end times that Daniel interpreted. Yet only one year later, Nebuchadnezzar walked about the palace and declared that he had built the great Babylon.

This royal ruler transformed into a beast of the field for a season until God restored him. He then praised the Holy One again and

acknowledged the supernatural Spirit before him.

Greed, lust for power, and worldly pleasures have turned scores of people away from the Lord from the beginning of time until now. God knows human nature and that must be why He warned the Israelites about the consequences of forgetting Him.

The rich young ruler who came to Jesus seeking the answers to eternal life left disappointed. It is evident through his reaction to Jesus' words that though he implied a law-keeping history, his soul was turned toward his riches (Luke 18:18-23). Yet Zacchaeus was a wealthy man also. But when he encountered Christ, he immediately repented, and it was his own decision to give away part of what he had acquired through selfish means (Luke 10:1-10). Zacchaeus could be considered a flourishing man, while the young man who left Jesus could be considered a failure because of his heart's condition.

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## The Ultimate Guide

A prosperous person is one that fulfills the will of the Father. Jesus told His followers that the key to abundant life was in seeking God, not possessions (Matthew 6:33). Once our affection is in the right place, He will meet our needs.

Bookstores abound with guides on how to plan our lives, but the only one that never fails is the Creator's plan. The Bible is our guide in how to live the Lord's way. When we rely on the source of our success, we can be fruitful, joyful, and peaceful.

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8 NIV)

**Barbara Latta** is a true southerner and is transplanted from Arkansas to Georgia. She writes a monthly column in her local newspaper and contributes to devotional websites, online magazines, and has stories in several anthologies. She is the author of *God's Maps*, *Stories of Inspiration*, and *Direction for Motorcycle Riders*. She enjoys traveling with her Harley-riding prince on his motorcycle taking in the creativity of nature. Drinking coffee on the patio while the sun comes up is her favorite time of day. Barbara shares about walking in grace and thriving in hope on her blog, *Navigating Life's Curves*, at [www.barbaralatta.blogspot.com](http://www.barbaralatta.blogspot.com). She cherishes her role in life as a wife, a mom to two grown sons, and Mimi to one granddaughter.

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