

5 Star Review of *Principles of the Kingdom* By Mamta Madhavan for Readers' Favorite

Principles of the Kingdom (God's Success Principles) by James M. Becher offers good insights given by Jesus about the parables depicting the kingdom of heaven. It is said that the principles from the Bible, if followed properly, will lead to a successful life. The 17 chapters in this book deal with 17 of these principles such as: knowing the purpose of life, forgetting the past, believing, focusing, resting, sowing and reaping, conquering fears, giving and receiving, and many others that will motivate readers to make positive changes in their thinking, lifestyle, and endeavors.

Principles of the Kingdom is a good book that will help readers make changes that will make them happier and empowered. All 17 principles have been explained in detail, making it easy for readers to understand them. Every chapter has quotes from a famous person that is connected to the contents in the chapter. The author handles the subject in a manner that is neat and simple and makes it easy for readers to understand and enjoy it. It is a good book for all those readers who want to discover their divine purpose and set their goals accordingly. It can also be used in Bible classes and as a starting point to improve faith in God. Sometimes it is easy for readers to understand God when points are listed one by one and explained in that order and this book does that so that there is no need for readers to search for the messages hidden between the lines.

PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM
(GOD' SUCCESS PRINCIPLES)

By James M. Becher

TAKEN FROM THE AUTHOR'S ARTICLES IN THE
"INSPIRATIONAL SUCCESS TIPS" EZINE,
WITH QUOTABLE QUOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM THE AUTHOR'S BIBLICAL NOVEL

By James M. Becher, author of *OF SUCH IS THE
KINGDOM, A Novel of Biblical Times, 3rd edition in 3
Parts.*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: THE BASICS

“...a householder...brings forth out of his treasure things old and new.”

--Jesus (Matthew 13:52)

A. The Growth and Development of the Kingdom as Given by Jesus

“The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed...”

-----Jesus (Matthew 13:31)

In the 13th chapter of Matthew, Jesus gives several parables depicting the kingdom of heaven. We can draw a few basic principles from these parables.

The first and most obvious principle would be the increase of the kingdom. This is clearly seen in the parable of the mustard seed (vs.31-32) and the parable of the leaven (vs. 33). The former simply looks forward to the eventual growth of the kingdom from the smallest beginning to a large ending. The parable of the leaven shows an infusion of the kingdom in the world system. The small amount of leaven spreads throughout the bread and causes it to rise, and so the kingdom will spread throughout the world, leaving its influence as it does so.

The second principle which can be drawn from these parables of Jesus is that the kingdom will initially contain both good and bad elements—both the righteous and the wicked, but the wicked will be separated out at the end of time. This is clear from the parable of the

tares in vs.24-30, as Jesus Himself explains in vs. 37-43. It is also clear from the parable of the net in vs.47-50.

In the first parable of the chapter, the parable of the sower (vs.3-17), we see the different types of people who initially receive the word of the kingdom. Jesus also explains this parable in vs.18-23, saying that the seed is the Word of God. The Word of God is sown and finds root in different types of soil. Some go on to produce fruit, but others fail to do so for various reasons.

Thus, from these parables, we gain a picture of the kingdom in various stages of development. It starts small but grows to be big. It initially contains people with all kinds of hearts as represented by the different soils, some of whom will fall away, be snatched away by Satan, or wither and die. Those who remain produce fruit in various quantities. Yet, among these, there may still be some who are not real followers but are represented as either tares or bad fish, to be thrown out at the end of time. When, however, in chapter 19, he says of the children, "...of such is the kingdom of heaven," I believe that there he is talking about the basic nature of the kingdom as it will be at the end, after the removal of the tares and the bad fish.

I originally called this book "God's success principles," because I believe there are principles throughout the Bible which, if followed, can cause us to have a successful life. There are many speakers or writers who speak or write about some of these principles. Some of these speakers and writers may not be true followers of Jesus. Who is and who isn't remains to be seen until the final judgment. But that

doesn't make the principles any less effective. Thus for the remainder of this book I intend to share some these principles which I have found helpful along with some quotes from some of these speakers and writers as well as from the Bible in the hope that as we follow them to the best of our ability, they will produce a measure of success in our life and endeavors.

Since the kingdom is what it is, as depicted by Jesus in the Matthew 13 parables, that is, since at the present time, it contains people of different types of soil and people in different stages of development and at present it must contain both wheat and tares, both good fish and bad and we cannot really tell the difference as yet, I thought it might be helpful to refer occasionally by way of example of some of the principles I am about to set forth, to some of the characters in my novel, *Of Such Is The Kingdom, A Novel of Biblical Times*, even though the characters themselves are flawed. I use them to show examples of the principles I am about to set forth, even though they may not be the best sort of people to follow. They, according to Jesus' parables would, could or may be in the kingdom at the time, but whether or not they will remain in it to the end, for the most part, we cannot now tell. I include Timotheus the beggar for his seeking attitude and hopefulness toward the coming of Messiah. I include Pilate for his soft-heartedness, confusion, and weakness. Even though he sent Jesus to be crucified, he did it grudgingly, washing his hands. And he did ask Jesus, "What is truth?" I include his wife for her far-sighted vision and also for warning her husband of her dream regarding Jesus. I include Manaheem, Herod's foster brother for his searching and open heart as well.

Admittedly these characters lack something when it comes to being shining examples of truth to follow. But I use them to point to specific aspects of their character or life which illustrate specific principles or truths. And, I trust that they can be of use, at times, as negative examples of what not to do or think.

Jesus also said, in vs.52 of Matthew 13 that “...every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which brings forth out of his treasure things old and new.” I trust, therefore, to bring forth in the following pages, some timely principles derived from both the old and new testaments of Holy Scripture to guide us toward successful living. As to why I use the Bible to derive success principles, there is more on that in Chapter 2. But for now, let me briefly describe two of the most important principles, that of purpose and that of vision which together comprise the inspiration necessary for any mission.

B. The Power of Inspiration

“But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.”

----Job 32:8

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge HIM and HE shall direct your paths.”

-----Proverbs 3:5-6

INSPIRATION can be a powerful thing. It can keep you going when all around you cries out .quit! It is

even more powerful than motivation, as motivation gives you your basic reasons to keep going—it tells you why you want to do what you do because motivation is based on goals. These, in turn, may be based on necessity want or desire. But inspiration fills those reasons with hope, possibility, and enjoyment and keeps the grind from becoming too grindy. But just what does inspiration consist of? I posit three elements: purpose, vision and mission.

1) Finding your purpose is the crucial first element which will give you the inspiration needed to move forward in life. In my novel, *Of Such Is The Kingdom*, Timotheus began thinking seriously about purpose too late in life. If he would have thought about it earlier, perhaps he MIGHT have been able to find a more useful way to make a living. On this, we can only conjecture. Yet, the purpose of your life, as Rick Warren reminds us in *The Purpose Driven Life*¹, “is greater than ...your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. And it begins with God.” He further points out (and I paraphrase) that we were made by God and for God, and that life will never make sense until we understand that. God’s purposes are revealed in His Word, the Bible.² That’s why I include quotes from the Bible in the quotes section at the end of every chapter of this book, as I did in every issue of my ezine, *Inspirational Success Tips* (now unpublished) (More on Purpose in Chapter 4)

2) Once you realize your purpose, you will begin to have a vision. Proverbs 29:18 says “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” A vision is the first step toward turning your motivation into inspiration. A person with a vision sees down the road. He can sense

what it will be like six weeks, six months, a year, two years, five years and more ahead.

But how do you get a vision? you ask. First, of course, you need to sense your purpose. But having done this, you need to narrow your perspective. You can't attempt to ride off in all directions at once, so to speak. Try to decide what it is you are looking for, so you'll know it when you see it. In other words, try to have in mind some general goals as to where you want to be six months a year, etc. from now. These goals will not only form the basis of your motivation but should also serve to limit to an extent the scope of your activity.

Next, try to locate and choose an opportunity (business, career or job) which you feel is right for you—which will fulfill your purpose and thus further your vision. This may be easier said than done, as there are many choices which sound good. You may come upon an outstanding one right away, purely by chance. If so, latch onto it. But you will probably have to pick several at first and study the things which each one offers and try to evaluate the potential of each one as you see it. Settle on the one which you feel has the most potential with the least amount of hassle (preferably one that is totally internet driven as opposed to one where you have to spend time calling potential prospects by phone).

Once you have chosen your field of endeavor, (your career, job or company) stand behind it in every way and don't quit or change your mind. B.C. Forbes said, "Without loyalty, nothing can be accomplished in any sphere...." Think of yourself as being in it for the long haul, no matter what. Try to envision, based on what

you know, how things will be down the road. Keep that picture before your mind, and never doubt. Napoleon Hill said, "What the mind can conceive and believe it can achieve, and the Bible says, in Hebrews 11:1 "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Once the vision stemming from your sense of purpose is firmly implanted in your mind, let it become your driving force. Let the vision excite you with the possibility of its fulfillment and you will automatically begin the next step—you are on a mission. Your mission is to bring about the realization of the vision. If you keep the vision in mind, you will move forward in the mission, accomplishing enthusiastically step by step that which is necessary to bring the vision into reality. You will have developed a sense of excitement, importance, and urgency which will keep the fires of inspiration burning in your heart and moving you ever onward and upward. Another example from my novel is Pilate's wife. She saw his purpose as to be a ruler over a large territory and she pursued that vision until it was her mission.

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

1) "Success is; knowing what you're doing, loving what you're doing, and believing what you're doing."

---Napoleon Hill

2) "Believe you can, believe you can't, either way, you're right."

---Zig Zigler

3) "There Are No Limits To What You Can Accomplish, Except The Limits You Place On Your Own Thinking."

--Brian Tracy

4) "People Who Are Crazy Enough To Think They Can Change The World, Are The Ones Who Do."

---Rob Siltanen

5) "If you really want to do something, you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse."

---Jim Rohn

6) "In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can."

---Nikos Kazantzakis

7) "Whatever the mind can conceive and believe it can achieve."

---Napoleon Hill.

8) "If you can dream it, you can do it."

---Walt Disney

9) "...All things are possible to him who believes."

---Jesus (Mark 9:23)

10) “I answered them by saying, ‘The God of heaven will give us success.’”

---Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:20)

11) “[Those who trust GOD are] like trees... putting down roots near the rivers—Never a worry through the hottest summers, never dropping a leaf, Serene and calm through droughts, bearing fresh fruit every season.”

---Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17:8 MSG)

9) "NOW FAITH IS the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

---Paul (Hebrews 11:1)

10) “I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens *and* empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]

---Paul (Philippians 4:13 AMP)

¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Zondervan, 2002, p.17-18

² *ibid.*

CHAPTER 2: WHY THE BIBLE? +A **FORMULA FOR DYNAMIC LIVING**

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

-----Psalms 19:7-10

It may surprise some of you to know that God actually desires our success in life, He says in the book of Jeremiah 29:11, "'For 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." But are there certain principles which we can derive from the Bible itself which will lead to a successful life?

Some of my readers may wonder why I quote from the Bible. My answer is that since the Bible itself claims to be inspired by God (II Tim. 3:16), it is my studied opinion that the Bible is God's guidebook to us and that following its principals will inevitably lead to our success, whether in business or in life. Most of the concepts that modern motivational thinkers have come up with, have been ultimately derived from, or are reflections or re-statements of, Biblical precepts, whether they know it or not. The truth is the truth whoever states it, and God's precepts will work whether followed by believer or pagan. But be that as it may, God doesn't promise success in life from studying the words of motivational thinkers. He does promise success, however from meditating on His word, the

Bible. In Joshua 1:8, he says: "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night that you may observe to do all that is written in it, for then shall you make your way prosperous and then shall you have good success." And in Psalm 1, David speaks of the blessedness of the person whose "delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night." The word "law" in these passages does not just refer to the ten commandments, but to all of God's precepts and principles given in His word. David goes on to say of the person who meditates in the word that "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth his fruit in his season...and whatsoever he does shall prosper." Those are pretty powerful promises, but how many of us fail to realize them because we fail to meditate on God's word? How many believers don't even take time each day to read the Bible?

I'm assuming that if you've read this far, you at least have a basic belief in God. I realize that this is not true of everyone, but as someone said, "Whether or not you believe in God, He believes in you." Let's face it: someone or something had to cause everything we see to come into existence. I don't really want to spend a lot of time arguing for God's existence, except to say, as someone else has said, "If there is a watch, there has to be a watchmaker somewhere."

But David took it a step further in Psalm 100:2. Here he uses the verb "to know," implying a strong positive realization. He says: "Know that the LORD He is God: It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves." So, then, if we know that He made us, then we should

also realize that He best understands how we function. And is it not reasonable that he would have left us a set of instructions for this thing called life? When you buy any kind of electronic product, a VCR, say or stereo, it usually comes with a manual. But how often do we, in our haste to enjoy the product, try to set it up and run it without checking the manual? We think it seems so simple. Just plug this here and push that button. And then we wonder why it doesn't work. Well,-- time to check the manual! It's the same with life. If your life is messed up, perhaps it's time to check the manual.

Here's a formula I came across in some old church notes:

Formula For Dynamic Living: $DL=(GGE+GPS) \times PSI$.

In other words, Dynamic living=

(God Given Equipment [potential]

+God's Principles of Success)

---→ X (multiplied by) Proper Self Image

Thus, you can see the important place self- image plays.

Mary-Ellen Gresham's article, "Wasting Your Substance" is a perfect example of the application of Biblical principles to successful living. Citing the Biblical parable of the prodigal son, she concludes: "In the same way we know that when we cease our rebellions against God and his rules, we will find that every law is a love guide for our own good. The Bible is and always has been the best handbook on how not to be a fool, how not to waste our substance. We find our true worth as God's only son, Jesus, directs us back

toward home, ‘where we can have the hope of becoming the best that we can be.’”

In his article, ”The Potential For Greatness”, Sean Nelson points out that “Our own past and shortcomings cloud the honest judgment of ourselves that, if clear, would show our real and unlimited (and, I added, God-given) potential.” The words ”God-given” are mine, added because I firmly believe that it is God who made us and He made us for success.

Our minds are like computers with 15 Billion cells. Anything we set our mind to do, we can do. But we must follow the principles which He, the creator has set down in the manual, His Word, the Bible. And some of those principles involve keeping a positive self-image. Personally, I don’t see how we can separate the concept of self-image from God’s success principles because we must start to see ourselves as He sees us. But I see what they mean by the formula: If we follow all the rest of God’s principles with a positive self-image, the result will be dynamic living. So, the first thing we should consider would be our self-image. We have the God Given Equipment and once we have the right self-image, we can begin to rightly apply God’s principles. In turn, as we do so, we’ll find that applying some of God’s principles will result in our having a better self-image.

An example of someone with a poor self-image would be Pontius Pilate, as I portray him in my novel *Of Such Is The Kingdom*. His wife had to always pump him up to get him to feel good about himself.

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