

SUCCESS
SECRETS
of the
BIBLE

JOHN EDMUND
HAGGAI



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I dedicate this book to the faculty members of Haggai Institute worldwide, including faculty members at the international, Middle Eastern, Mandarin (Chinese), regional, and national seminars. Each one of them has demonstrated the kind of success of which we read in Joshua 1:8:

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Collectively, these faculty members have influenced millions (you read that right, millions) to achieve true success in the 184 nations where the alumni live and work.

God has used these leaders to transform their own societies, and they personify that which they teach. They focus all their efforts on the target: presenting the gospel without compromise and without offense. They are indeed populating heaven, and only eternity will reveal the full impact of God's victories through them.

Many of the alumni have written to me to say these faculty members gave life and reality to the alumni's opportunities to transform their culture. These alumni represent every rank of intellectuality, every echelon of lifestyle, and every kind of leadership vocation. They include government leaders (from mayors to heads of state), Supreme Court justices, physicians and surgeons, media moguls (both print and electronic), university presidents and professors, authors, multinational business leaders, urban planners, financiers, engineers, manufacturers, bankers...in all, they represent 115 different professions!

They are impacting the world. The names of some appeared in a *Time* magazine list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

One lady, a prominent socialite in the Philippines, told me with tears in her eyes that it took the training at Haggai Institute under these superb and sterling lecturers to put fire and meaning in her life. She said, "I feel twenty years younger, and I'm looking to the future with indescribable anticipation." She later became one of our faculty members.

Words fail me in my effort to express the profound gratitude I feel for these marvelous people to whom I dedicate this book. Their lives and their achievements beggar description.

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Why the Bible Holds the Secrets of Success

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success (Joshua 1:8).

God promises success to all those who follow this formula, to all who focus on the teachings of God's Word—"this Book of the Law." To all those who make the Word of God the subject matter of their talk (both to others and to themselves) and who meditate and observe to *do* according to all that is written, success is guaranteed.

The word "meditate" means much more than contemplation. The idea is that one should reflect on God's Word in a thoughtful way, applying its truths to every facet of life.

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night
(Psalm 1:1-2).

The success promised by God carries His own guarantee. The success may not surface immediately, but surface it will.

Folks would not have considered Jesus a success in the hours before His crucifixion. The cross appeared to put a sudden end to His life. However, after the cross came the resurrection. The number of Christians in the world today stands at 2.1 billion, compared with perhaps 200 followers on the day Jesus died.

Jesus said, “In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

As an example of one man’s success as a result of pursuing success God’s way, consider pioneer missionary Adoniram Judson.

When Judson began his mission in Burma [now called Myanmar], he set a goal of translating the Bible and founding a church of 100 members before his death. When he died, he left the Bible, 100 churches, and over 8,000 believers. In large part due to his influence, Myanmar has the third-largest number of Baptists worldwide, behind the United States and India...

Each July, Baptist churches in Myanmar celebrate “Judson Day,” commemorating his arrival as a missionary. Inside the campus of Yangon University is Judson Church, named in his honor, and in 1920, Judson College, named in his honor, merged into Rangoon College, which has since been renamed Yangon University.

Judson compiled the first ever Burmese-English dictionary. The English-Burmese half was interrupted by his death and completed by missionary E.A. Steven. Every dictionary and grammar written in Burma in the last two centuries has been based on ones originally created by Judson. Judson “became a symbol of the preeminence of Bible translation for protestant missionaries.”¹

In the 1950s, Burma's Buddhist Prime Minister U Nu told the Burma Christian counsel, "Oh no, a new translation is not necessary. Judson's captures the language and idiom of Burmese perfectly and is very clear and understandable."² His translation remains the most popular version today in Myanmar.³

At least 36 Baptist churches in the United States are named after Judson, as is Judson University in Illinois. Judson College in Alabama is named after his wife, Ann. Though he became a Baptist, he is honored with a Feast Day on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church (USA) on April 12. In World War II, the liberty ship *SS Adoniram Judson* was named in his honor.

I think I have made my case regarding his success.

Follow the advice of this world, and you may achieve your 15 minutes of fame. But only by following the teaching or path of God's Word in the Bible will you change your life and the lives of those you know.

CHAPTER 1

The World Says “Don’t Look Foolish” The Bible Says “Know Where You’re Headed”

I NEED YOU TO BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.

If you’re not prepared to confront your weaknesses and deal with them, you might as well stop reading this book right now. Plain and simple, you just don’t have what it takes to succeed. You could save the time you’re spending flipping through these pages.

If you *are* going to be honest, start by answering this question: If doing the right thing could injure your reputation, subject you to ridicule, or bring censure from others, would you do it anyway?

I’m asking that question because the road to success involves some tough decisions. It involves actions that other people—including your friends and family—may find hard to swallow.

So you have a choice. Either you cave in and do what everybody else does or you chart your own course because you know what you want to achieve.

That’s the first secret to success you’ll find in the Bible, and not surprisingly it comes right at the beginning, in the book of Genesis.

Read the story of Noah in Genesis 6–9. When Noah turned his hand to shipbuilding, people must have thought he had lost his mind. He lacked any conceivable qualification, he lived 100 miles from open water, and nothing in the current meteorological situation justified what he was doing. His project looked like madness.

And yet he kept working on an ark for 120 years.

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Hebrews 11:7).

Setting the Tone Doesn't Always Make You Popular

Fast-forward to Elijah in the book of 1 Kings.

Elijah put his reputation on the line with Israel's King Ahab. Elijah told the king, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word" (17:1).

Ahab probably thought Elijah was a deranged lunatic. And public opinion would no doubt have been on Ahab's side.

But the next morning there was no dew, and down in the valleys no fog was rising. Month after month, not a cloud could be seen. The bubbling spring on the hillside disappeared. The little brook that formerly rippled over the rocks and down the mountainside vanished. Eventually a wail could be heard in the land. As a result of no rain, a famine was creeping up like a serpent.

That didn't make life any easier for Elijah.

Now the corrupt king began to take notice. Ahab determined to find the man who had predicted the famine. He searched high and low. He went to the surrounding nations and took an oath from them that they had not hidden away this man.

By the second year the people were doubtlessly emigrating by caravans from that God-forsaken and desolate country. In the third year there was still neither dew nor rain. Six months later, Ahab and his chief of staff, Obadiah, went in opposite directions, scouring the country for Elijah.

Catch the picture. Imagine the desolation on all sides: bones of animals bleaching, streams dried up, vegetation gone, thirst and hunger everywhere, funeral processions bearing away the dead,

pestilence and famine and ruin and desolation from one end of the land to the other.

Obadiah finally found Elijah, and trembling like a leaf in the autumn wind, he told Elijah that Ahab would kill him if he dared go back without Elijah in his custody. Obadiah had been a courageous man. When Jezebel was killing God’s leaders, Obadiah hid them by fifties in a cave. So Elijah went with Obadiah.

When Ahab saw Elijah he said, “Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” (18:17).

Elijah shot back that it wasn’t he, but Ahab himself who had troubled the Israelites by causing them to forsake the commandments of the Lord and follow the pagan god Baal. In effect, Elijah said to the king, “I’m not the problem; you’re the problem.” Talk about fearlessness! He accused King Ahab of bringing ruin upon the country. He might as well have said, “I warned you this would happen.”

Then he made a proposition. He told Ahab to arrange a camp meeting on the top of Mount Carmel. “Gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table” (18:19).

When everyone had assembled, Elijah said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him” (18:21). Elijah then challenged the people to lay a sacrifice on an altar and call on their god, Baal, to send fire to consume the sacrifice. And so they did.

The 850 false prophets prayed. They danced and even sliced their flesh to get Baal’s attention. Nothing happened. No fire consumed their offering. Elijah taunted them, asking if Baal had maybe taken an afternoon nap and couldn’t hear them. Finally, exhausted, they gave up.

Then Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been broken down. He placed the sacrifice on the altar, and to make his

point absolutely clear, he also instructed the men to pour water on the wood, which they did. He told them to do it a second time and then a third time, and they did. The water filled the trench Elijah had dug around the altar.

Then in response to Elijah's 63-word prayer to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and dust, and even the water in the trench.

This was when Elijah predicted rain. He did this with gusto, telling Ahab that he heard "the sound of abundance of rain" (18:41).

Elijah then sat on the top of the mountain, bowed down on the ground, put his face between his knees, and told his servant to go look toward the sea for a cloud.

Six times the servant came back and reported nothing. The seventh time he came back and said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" (18:44).

Many twenty-first-century investors say, "The trend is your friend." What trend did Elijah see? Sun, sun, and more sun, followed by one very small, distant cloud. What would you project from that? What would be the safe bet on which to premise your planning and your future security?

Elijah had God's express promise of rain. And he *acted* on the promise! He *prayed*.

The clouds grew dark. Elijah warned Ahab to hurry to Jezreel to get ahead of the storm. (An aside: Elijah was a physical powerhouse. He ran in front of the chariot the 13 miles from Carmel to Jezreel!)

Both Noah and Elijah chose not to follow the current trend. They went very seriously off-road. They were in territory where even a four-wheel drive would do them no good.

Why? Because the vision that drove them wasn't the kind of vision that shows you what's right in front of your nose. It was a vision of God-empowered possibility. They could have bowed out,

but they didn’t. Instead, they decided to take the risk of obeying God’s command.

Each man took immediate action on the vision. No procrastination. No waiting for a more convenient time. No trend watching and hedging. They saw and they acted.

The Biblical Dynamic of a Vision

In my book *The Influential Leader*, I have written at length about vision. “Vision” is the word the Bible uses for a central, durable, foundational plan. A vision prevents you from drifting. It keeps an organization together and on track. Solomon, the wisest man of all time, said, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18 KJV).

The Hebrew word translated “perish” could also be translated “cast off restraint.” No activity in business or anywhere else will succeed unless there is a vision to draw together the effort and motivation and loyalty of the people involved. Without that rock-solid foundation, the personnel will become fragmented, critical, and sometimes destructive.

The Old Testament leader Nehemiah had a vision for a protective wall around the city of Jerusalem. He took a leave of absence from the Persian king’s service and traveled to Jerusalem, where he encountered insufferable obstacles, ridicule, and attempted sabotage. Nevertheless, thanks to the strength of his vision, we read the great words, “So the wall was finished” (Nehemiah 6:15).

It takes determination.

Charles Spurgeon, the most famous clergyman of the nineteenth century, admonished his students in London to move ahead with “the blind eye and the deaf ear.” In other words, don’t hear anything that will derail you from your commitment to the vision. And don’t see anything that will likewise neutralize your vision and diminish your effectiveness.

Follow Joshua’s advice: “Do not turn from it to the right hand

or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go" (Joshua 1:7). Proverbs 3:5-6 gives similar advice:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

How Do You Know What You Want?

Michael Rozak spent many years with a public relations firm in New York. He got tired of the rat race and retired to Brattleboro, Vermont, where he started brokering businesses.

He would not sell a business to anybody until they had written at least 50 pages of what they wanted to do with the business. Some would get to a half a page and say, "That's it." He would force them to keep writing.

Who will man the business? How will the doors stay open if your key person gets sick? Are you going to be open on holidays, and if so, which ones? What kind of retirement program will you provide for your employees?

He found that until he forced people to dig down deep into their subconscious and into their viscera, they were not ready to do business. He sold 103 businesses; 102 of them prospered beyond the owners' wildest dreams. One failed.

That one failed, Rozak said, because he was in the Northwest at a wedding and was not able to look over the person's shoulder to make sure he kept writing.

As the old saying goes, "How do I know what I think until I read what I wrote?" If you can capture your vision in words, you will more easily and effectively communicate that vision to other people.

During the life of the apostle Paul, only about three percent of the world's population was literate. How would he reach the most

people? He could not visit them all, so he wrote. But who could read his letters? Obviously he focused on the leaders, the literati—those who could read.

His vision permitted no delay and no compromise with anything less than the preaching of the gospel to the whole world.

Writing has been the essential ingredient, the basic element in carrying out the vision. According to philosopher Francis Bacon, “Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.”

So often I hear people say, “I know what I want to say, but I can’t express it.” If you can’t express it, you don’t know what you want to say. Dr. Robert Walker, one of the great writing coaches of all time, said, “If you can think it, you can write it. If you can’t write it, you haven’t thought it.”

In his book *Greatness*, Steven Hayward compares the lives of two of the twentieth century’s most noted political leaders, Ronald Reagan and Winston Churchill. At first sight, they were very different men. Churchill was an intellectual whose early life was shaped by his experience as a war correspondent in South Africa. Reagan went into politics from Hollywood and was often underestimated as a result. In fact, he liked it that way.

But both Churchill and Reagan wrote. Churchill’s many books, historical and autobiographical, probably totaled 10 million words. Reagan wrote out completely the 320 speeches he delivered during his political career. That compares with 18 written by President Obama (at the time of this writing), whom many have considered one of the great communicators.

Churchill and Reagan made an impact with their words that was both memorable and controversial.

Churchill’s radio speeches are credited with holding the British nation together in the darkest days of World War II. Yet in the aftermath of the war, when he delivered his “Iron Curtain” speech in Missouri in 1946, even fellow conservatives trashed him.

Similarly, when Ronald Reagan first referred to the Soviet Union as the Evil Empire, some of his closest friends, including political pundit George Will, went on record to disagree. Even Reagan's wife, Nancy, did not like it. But when Reagan was convinced that something was right, he did it. Period. Full stop.

Today the world lauds both men for the very speeches their friends and colleagues lambasted. They grasped what was going on at a time when most of their contemporaries still had their gaze fixed on the past. These men shaped the geopolitics of the day. They knew what they wanted to achieve.

The Rocking Chair and Ottoman

When others criticize you, staying true to your objectives isn't easy. You can easily start to doubt whether you have the qualities required to get through.

I used to be a pastor, and during the early years of my ministry I suffered indescribable stomach upset prior to preaching. The condition was so severe, the doctor prescribed medicine to keep me calm enough to make it through the message.

Like so many people who refuse to face the facts, I rationalized. After all, I had suffered severe speech handicaps. My voice was so high and raucous as a boy, my father asked me to be quiet while he was studying because my voice went through the house like a saw blade. I had a noticeable impediment until my late teens.

Now I was 22. I had studied under two of America's premier voice coaches. At the university I had won an award for oratory. In debate I had done well. Nevertheless, the fear of not performing lingered on. The old fears erupted every time I moved toward the pulpit.

At the end of every message I went home dejected, convinced that my sermon had been a bomb. For months on end, every Sunday afternoon I planned to resign the following week.

My father visited me one Sunday and sensed my distress. The following day he purchased an ottoman for me.

He said, “John, I want you to make a habit of sitting in your high-back rocking chair with your feet on this ottoman after you return from your morning service. If you’re downcast, ask yourself if it’s because you had not properly prepared your message. If you had prepared, then ask the Lord to forgive you for your fear and to deliver you from it. As the Scriptures say, ‘Be of good courage.’”

Great advice! And it worked. Ten years later at the age of 32, I was honored to address 10,000 Christian leaders at Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis, Missouri. My message was reported in newspapers across America, including the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Examiner*.

Since then God has granted me the opportunity of speaking in Asian cathedrals, at the Kiwanis international convention, among parliamentarians in London’s Church House Westminster, to the religious newspaper editors of America, to the Society of Industrial Real Estate Brokers, to 125 CEOs of Korea’s largest corporations, at a symposium of leaders representing India’s ten major religions, and to an audience of 165,000 at the Maramon Convention in Kerala, India.

In the 66 years that have followed my father’s sage advice, I have consciously worked on my communication skills. Even today I work on keeping my voice strong.

The Difference Between Can and Can’t

Of all the high-achieving men and women I have been privileged to meet, the late Robert G. LeTourneau ranks near the top.

Though not a highly schooled man, LeTourneau pioneered the development of heavy earth-moving machinery. His machines represented nearly 70 percent of the earth-moving equipment and engineering vehicles used during World War II. He authored nearly 300 patents.

Assisted by his wife, Evelyn, he founded LeTourneau University, a private Christian university in Longview, Texas.

He was a devoted Christian and generous philanthropist. He lived on 10 percent of his income and gave 90 percent to Christian causes. Across the world, both Christians and non-Christians identified him as "God's businessman."

He had little interest in traditional education. In fact, he left school with the blessing but apprehension of his parents. He got a job apprenticing to an ironmonger in Portland, Oregon. While working in the foundry, he was given a course from an international correspondence school. He studied mechanics using these materials but never completed any course assignments. He then moved to San Francisco and worked at a power plant, where he learned welding and became familiar with the application of electricity.

He then moved to Stockton, California, and worked a number of jobs, including woodcutter, farmhand, miner, and carpenter's laborer. This knowledge of the manual trades became valuable later in life.

In 1911 the Superior Garage in Stockton hired the 23-year-old LeTourneau. There he learned vehicle mechanics. Shortly thereafter he became half-owner of the business.

The military disqualified him because of permanent neck injuries sustained in a car-racing accident. He worked as a maintenance assistant at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, where he improved his welding skill and received training as an electrical machinist.

After the war he returned to Stockton to discover that the Superior Garage business had failed. He took a job repairing a Holt Manufacturing Company crawler-tractor. The tractor owner then employed him to level 40 acres using the tractor and a towed scraper.

This type of work captivated his interest. In 1920, at age 32, he bought a used Holt tractor, rented a scraper, and became a regrading contractor.

The next year he bought a plot of land and established an

engineering workshop, where he designed and manufactured several types of scrapers. As he combined contracting and earth-moving equipment manufacturing, his business expanded. In 1929 he incorporated his business in California as “R.G. LeTourneau, Inc.”

In the 1920s and early 1930s he completed numerous earth-moving projects, including the Boulder Highway to Hoover Dam in Nevada and the Marysville Levees, Orange County Dam, and Newhall Cutoff in California.

In 1933 at age 45 he retired from contracting to devote his time and energies to manufacturing earth-moving equipment.¹

There’s much more to this remarkable story, but I want you to stop for a few moments and reflect on what you have read.

What made LeTourneau different? As you can see, only after several changes of position did he identify what he really wanted to do. But once he had caught that vision, he couldn’t be separated from it. He would say, “The only difference between ‘can’ and ‘can’t’ is ‘t.’”

From 1957 to 1968, when I was a campaign evangelist, LeTourneau often gave his Christian testimony on Saturday nights. He held crowds spellbound. Only heaven will reveal how many were motivated by his testimony to mount their fears and attempt things they previously thought impossible.

Despite dropping out of school, LeTourneau racked up a list of outstanding achievements:

- He pioneered heavy earth-moving equipment.
- He designed and built machines using technology that was years and sometimes decades ahead of its time, including the use of low pressure, heavy-duty rubber tires, two-wheeled tractor units (the Tournapull), the electric wheel drive, and mobile offshore drilling platforms.

- He built factories that supplied 70 percent of all the heavy earth-moving equipment used by Allied forces during World War II.
- He founded a university.
- He received more than 30 awards related to engineering, manufacturing, and the development of heavy equipment.
- He was presented with the Appreciation of Service Achievement 1931–1935 by Six Companies Incorporated for supplying earth-moving equipment to the Boulder Dam project.
- He was presented with the Beavers Award at the third annual awards dinner of the Beavers, an association of leaders in the heavy construction industry.
- He launched a development project in Liberia with the goals of colonization, land development, livestock introduction, evangelism, and philanthropic activities.
- He accomplished a similar project in Peru.
- He received the Frank P. Brown Medal in 1956 from the Franklin Institute, one of the oldest centers of science education and development in the United States.
- He held many respected positions throughout his life as a Christian layman, including lay leader in the Christian Missionary and Alliance Church, president of the Christian Business Men's Committee, and president of the Gideons International.
- Despite his heavy schedule, he traveled thousands of miles to attend weekly Christian speaking engagements.

I’m sure you have noticed that his achievements were often without precedent. Talk about thinking outside the box—LeTourneau rarely thought *inside* the box.

In 1953, at age 65, LeTourneau sold his entire earth-moving equipment line to the Westinghouse Air Brake Company. He had to sign a no-compete agreement, which was to be in force for five years. The Westinghouse leaders evidently believed he would be no threat at retirement age. They didn’t know Robert G. LeTourneau.

As soon as he sold the company, he applied his ingenuity to the development of an electric wheel drive. In 1958, at age 70, he reentered the earth-moving equipment manufacturing business. He now offered contractors a range of high-capacity earth-moving, transportation, and material handling machines based on the revolutionary electric wheel drive system he had developed.

In 1963 his wife, Evelyn, invited me to their home for a quiet 75th birthday celebration for Mr. LeTourneau. In the middle of the meal he received a phone call from longtime friend and legendary industrialist Henry J. Kaiser, then 85 years old. I could hear only one side of the conversation but soon started cracking up with laughter. After LeTourneau hung up, he filled me in on details I could not hear.

Kaiser asked LeTourneau to help him build the Hawaiian Hilton Village. LeTourneau responded that he could not because he was busy helping Dr. Albert Schweitzer clear out the jungles in Liberia!

Single-Minded, Not Double-Minded

Two thousand years ago, James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote this:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will

be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:5-8).

It's as relevant today as it was back then.

Multibillionaire Richard M. (Rich) DeVos started a company with a friend from school days, Jay Van Andel. They began the business in the basement of Jay's home. They encountered obstacles, potential lawsuits, and the opposition of governments, but they never lost sight of the vision. Nor did they veer from it in their actions.

Today, their company, Amway, which Forbes listed as the 32nd largest privately owned American company in 2010, grosses \$10 billion annually in sales. And they keep growing despite the global economic downturn.

Similarly, Cecil Day had a vision for a budget luxury motel chain. In the middle of his journey to his determined destination, the 1974–1975 oil embargo hit the USA. Traffic came nearly to a standstill on the interstate highways where he was building his chain. Liquidity dried up. He was stuck with 15 percent construction loans even though many of his motels had advanced to the place where a nine percent conventional loan was justified.

Cecil Day didn't deviate from his plan. Instead, he visited three bankers daily for 21 months until he secured the lifeline he needed. By the time he died in 1978, Days Inn Hotels was one of the largest motel-hotel chains in the world.²

Start on any new endeavor, and you won't lack critics to tell you how likely it is you'll fail. Any enterprise requires concentrated effort and single-mindedness of a kind outsiders often don't understand.

Time to Decide

Success begins with you. Thousands, probably millions, have great ideas and high ambitions. Yet they come to nothing because they don’t have the single-minded determination to realize their goals. In many cases, they are less motivated by their own vision than they are by the shifting opinions of those around them.

Outside pressure, often from those you love and trust, can kill your achievement on the starting blocks. In its multiple voices, the world will say to you, “Don’t take the risk of doing something unpopular or failing and looking like a fool.”

The Bible says, “Know where you’re headed.”

The world or the Bible—which are you going to listen to?