

- ***READ Genesis 39:1-6*** This year in our Young Peoples' Study, we have been going through a book written by twin brothers Alex and Brett Harris entitled, "Do Hard Things." The premise of this book is for young people to excel beyond the mediocre expectations that are so often laid upon them by society. Many look to our youth and see their younger years as years where they can just mess around, not be taken seriously, and basically waste those years because they don't matter much anyways. I appreciate the authors strong feelings that these thoughts are garbage and foolishness, and their efforts to motivate the younger generations not just waste their young years but to thrive and truly make the difference in the world and their faiths that they are capable of doing.
 - The book focuses on five specific things that can prove to be difficult for young people: The first step, raising the bar of expectations, doing big things, doing small things, and taking a stand when going against the crowd. With any book of this sort you would expect for the authors to offer up some sort of keys to focus on that will bring success in these areas, and that is exactly what the Harris brothers do in introducing their three pillars. Instead of calling them pillars or keys to success...I am calling them the three "C" s to success.
 - While these three words are key to the ideas that are presented in this book, let me suggest that these three words are critical to basically anything we might try to achieve in this life. In fact, I would take it a step further and suggest that these three words are vitally important to our success as disciples of Jesus and servants of God. While these three words are not found in the text we read just a few minutes ago from **Genesis 39:1-6**, these principles are present in the success of Joseph while he was in Potiphar's house and beyond. Let's consider these three "C"s to Success: Character, Competence, and Collaboration and see how they helped Joseph and others and how they can help us to achieve success in our lives that we live for God.
- I. **Three "C"s from "Do Hard Things" that can lead us to great success in many areas of our lives, especially our efforts as Christians.**
- A. Character
1. When we speak of character, we are speaking of who it is that we are as individuals. Our values, our priorities, and the key traits that make us who we are as people. For us, and for Joseph, and for the godly people that we read of in the Bible...our character is defined by our willingness to be righteous and holy in our actions.
 2. Consider the character of Joseph. Joseph lived his life in such a way that God blessed him in his work for Potiphar, and everything that he was about prospered. I can easily imagine Joseph as a hard working, honest, responsible, and faithful worker for Potiphar and leader of those who were under him.
 3. In fact, I would offer up the issues with Potiphar's wife as the ultimate example of Joseph's character. (**Genesis 39:6-12**) Here was a good looking young man who was being pursued by a woman who had great interest in him. Being in charge as he was, I would think that he would easily have had the ability to do as he pleased with her without getting caught. But his Godly character led him to refuse Potiphar's advances because he couldn't allow himself to do this great evil against Potiphar and his God. I am firmly convinced that Joseph thrived as he did because he had the type of character that put him in that position.

B. Competence

1. But it wasn't just that Joseph had good character, but he was also a competent man, meaning that he had the skill and knowledge to bring about success in what it was that he did. Again, Joseph had to have been doing something right. It wasn't as if God just magically brought about Joseph's success, but I feel confident in saying that Joseph was wise and skilled in his work through God's blessings and he was successful because of it.
2. Further proof of Joseph's competence is seen when Egypt faced the famine. **(Genesis 39:25-36)** Remember that Joseph was asked to explain Pharaoh's dream to him and he did. But he also instituted the plan of saving up and rationing the grain for when the famine actually hit. This great competence of Joseph was noticed by Pharaoh to the extent that Pharaoh said, "there is no one so discerning and wise as you are." **(Genesis 41:39)** Joseph's competence made him an invaluable asset to Egypt in a time of need.

C. Collaboration

1. But we must not allow it to escape our notice why it was the Joseph was of such high character and competence...God was with him. We see that here in **Genesis 41:39**, and we see this as being the case when Joseph first rose to any sort of position of importance in Egypt in Potiphar's house. Joseph's willingness to be faithful to God allowed God to work flawlessly together with him.
2. This is slightly different than how we might normally look at collaboration because we would look at it as being the ability to work together with other people to achieve a common goal. However, there is the key similarity that it was Joseph's character and faithfulness to God that allow for him to work together with God so that he would be blessed as he was. His work was not just blessed, but people took notice that it was because of his God whom he was faithful to. We, as well, must be people of good character so that we can work together well with others to achieve great things. Yet, Joseph was not the only person who was of great character, competence, and collaboration within Scripture who experienced great success in what he did.

II. God's greatest servants possessed all three of these traits and abilities.

- A. Throughout the Bible, God's most faithful followers lived lives that exemplified these three values.
 1. There were many people in Scripture who followed this pattern of success in what they did for God and for those around them. I think about Moses and his father-in-law Jethro as they sought to judge over Israel well. Remember that Moses was the only one who was sitting in the place of judgement for all the people of Israel. When someone needed a judgment or had an inquiry of God, they came to Moses and he served them morning until night. Moses was able to judge because he was a man of good character and competence, yet his collaboration and work with Jethro and others led to a greater degree of success with the people. **(Exodus 18:13-26)**
 2. Jesus and his disciples serve as another excellent example of people employing these values in their lives and in their efforts towards achieving a goal. Jesus's character was obviously of the highest degree. His competence was revered by those who listened to Him because He spoke as someone who held authority. And He didn't seek to do it all by Himself, but He relied upon His disciples to go out preaching the message of the Kingdom, and He equipped them with the proper character and competence to get the job done. Might I also mention that He sent them out together in pairs. **(Mark 6:7-12)**

3. Then also consider the Apostle Paul. His work as an Apostle could certainly be characterized as having good character, competence, and the ability to collaborate. He was a man who's character was patterned after the way that Christ lived. (**I Corinthians 11:1**) He was a man who was able to say the right thing at the right time and become all things to all people. (**I Corinthians 9:19-23**) He was constantly working with others in his efforts for the Gospel. Silas, Barnabas, and Timothy seem to be three men with whom Paul collaborated with the most in his efforts in spreading the Gospel and growing and strengthening churches.
 4. These individuals, and more whom we don't have time to mention, show the validity of the three pillars that the Harris twins believe to be vital to the success of any endeavor.
- B. Logically speaking, if disciples in a single church will thrive in these areas, then the church will thrive just the same.
1. We saw the success that was brought to Israel through Moses, Jethro, and the judges working well together. We know the great work that was accomplished through Jesus and His disciples. Certainly we would logically then see the great opportunity for success in our churches if we all seek to be people who are of good character, competence, and collaboration.
 2. I think a good picture that shows the truth of the need for and the good that is done through having these three values is found in **I Corinthians 12:14-30**. We know well the context of this chapter is the use of miraculous spiritual gifts, and I think we will see that these principles of character, competence, and collaboration were much needed if this particular church was going to function well and thrive in their work for the Lord.
 3. First of all, each part had to have the right character. Each part had to have the right desire to serve where they could. They had to have contentment fulfilling their role, and when they did their job well...the church prospered and operated well. Secondly, each part had to be competent in its role. It had to know what its purpose was, and how it could do it well. Lastly, each part had to be willing to work together with the rest of the body parts. We see what would happen if the eye wanted to do the ears part of the ear wanted to do the eyes part.
 4. While the church isn't made up of actual eyes, ears, and other body parts, it is made up of men and women who each play an important role in its working and success. Not all are everything, and no one is nothing, but each must find his or her role and fulfill it well with the proper character, competence, and ability to work together with the other parts that make up the body. When this happens, just as a body is healthy and strong, so is the church healthy and strong and thriving for the Lord. An awesome example of the church working together in this way to a successful end is in **Acts 6:1-7** where the apostles and church worked together with great character and competence to serve those in need and spread the Gospel.

III. A failure to possess even just one of these will lead to further failure.

- A. We often think that as long as we're doing good for the most part that we will be fine, but we must recognize that a failure to establish one of these three key pillars will result in our failure to be successful in our faiths for God.
1. Think about these scenarios. How successful could a preacher be if he was extremely good at his job of preaching the word, and he worked well with others, but he never allows for his teaching to impact him in his life? This man lacks character.
 2. Or it could be that a church really focuses in on evangelism. The members are good hearted and faithful brethren, and they are willing to work together...yet no one really has a clue about what they can do to be successful in sharing the Gospel. They have character and collaboration, yet lack the competence to be successful.

3. What about a different group that is wanting to do the same thing, and this group has good ideas about evangelism, but no one to lead them in a specific direction. Their lack of ability to collaborate and move forward will only hinder their efforts.
- B. Each person must take the time to consider whether or not these values are present within their lives.
1. I need to know whether or not my character is such that people will want to work together with me. If I am rude, inconsiderate, arrogant, unreliable, or anything of this sort then people are not going to want to work with me. If I have no clue how to get important jobs done because I haven't put in the time or effort to learn, then I serve no use in the work that might want to be accomplished. God put us in churches for a reason, but if we refuse to work together with others then we will never reach the level of success that God has called us to achieve.
 2. The truth is that these pillars either being present or absent in our lives will determine our amount of success or failure in our lives. The wise Christian will see the need for these values so that he or she can accomplish great things for the Lord and His Church.

Now, it might be that you are sitting there and thinking that you struggle at times in one of these areas. If that is you then let me offer a word of encouragement. These values, pillars, and "C"s to success are truly game changing in our endeavors as Christians, but please keep in mind that these things don't always come naturally. Sometimes we have to work to develop these values within ourselves. It might not be easy, but I am confident that each of us can be successful in our faiths if we will commit to living our faith with these pillars ever present in our lives. May God bless us and help us to hold to these three "C"s so that He might be glorified in our lives. ***PRAYER***