



Part 2 — Success in life is, at times, dependent upon how we finish a season and enter into the next. It's important (especially in the spirit) that we deal with issues that have caused us to stumble. Hebrew 12:1-2 tells us to *...lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,...*

Two Important Steps

When Israel had miraculously crossed the Jordan River and faced the mighty, walled city of Jericho, God commanded Joshua to do something very unusual before they began their conquest of the land promised to Abraham (Genesis 12:7,15:18-20).

1. Israel's first step was preparation. All the Jewish males who had come out of the wilderness were to be circumcised (Joshua 5:1-9). To them this was the renewing of God's Covenant. It was also God's way of "rolling off" any attitudes or behavior (ridicule, reproach) that Israel might carry into the Promised Land.
2. In the New Testament circumcision is a sign of cleansing and getting rid of our sin. (Romans 2:29 *...circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit,...*) When we cleanse our hearts, we have spiritual power. When Israel obeyed God's Commands, the Lord caused their enemies to be defeated before their face. Although the enemy would come out against them one way, he would flee seven ways. (Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 7)
 - James 4:7 *...submit to the authority of God. Resist the devil, stand firm against him, and he will flee from you.*

3. Israel's second step was dedication. They were to give Jericho to God. All of it! It all belonged to God and was rightfully His. This is the principle of the First, and it is Holy to God.
4. God was establishing this principle with the new generation of warriors. The consequences for disobeying His command in Joshua 6:18-19 was very clear: "keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them." Jericho was to be dedicated as the Tithe of the Promised Land and everything belonged to Him. However, when Achan kept back a portion of the spoils he and his entire family were destroyed (Joshua 7:10-26).
5. Dedicate the First (the Tithe) to God and He will reward you. The Tithe is not an issue of the Mosaic Law. It was in effect before, during, and after the Law.
 - Adam and Eve were not to eat from the one Tree in the middle of the Garden, that was God's (Genesis 2:15-17).
 - Abraham gave Melchizedek a Tithe (Genesis 14:18-20).
 - Jacob vowed to give God a Tenth (Genesis 28:22).
 - The Levites and the Tithe (Numbers 18:26).
 - Jesus in the Gospels (Matthew 23:23).
6. God has given us a powerful principle by which to govern our life, our finances, our time, etc. and experience His Divine abundance! This life changing principle is clear in the Old Testament book of Malachi 3:10-12. When we honor God as First in our lives, He will pour out such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. He will rebuke the devourer for our sakes, and all the nations will call us blessed. It's about honoring God as it states in Proverbs 3:9-10.
7. God's blessings are independent of what is going on around us. Trust in Him. Do life His way and watch Him "roll away the reproach" of 2020.