

God Enables Success

Dr. Ben Carson, one of the most famous neurosurgeons of our time, wrote about a life changing moment in his book, Gifted Hands. Carson was motivated by his single mom to be an avid reader as the means to achieve. Reading changed his academic performance from being one of the poorest students in elementary school to a class ranking of #3 of his graduating high school class. Ben Carson had his choice of colleges, selecting Yale University for his pre-med studies. The first semester of his freshman year was an eye-opener. The other students were even more gifted academically and came from more affluent backgrounds, while Carson came from inner city Detroit. Being somewhat overwhelmed in his freshman year of college, Carson was failing chemistry going into the final exam. Failure would block his lifetime goal of becoming a doctor. The eve of the final exam brought much prayer for this man of deep faith. His only chance to pass chemistry was to do extremely well on the final. Finally falling asleep just hours before the final exam Carson had a dream. In the dream he was the only student seated in the classroom when a professor entered the room and wrote down a chemistry formula on the board. Then the professor wrote a second one. Carson intently studied the formulas in his sleep. This kind of dream was a first for Ben Carson but he concluded the dream was his mind dreading the upcoming chemistry final. The next morning he awoke, walked into the chemistry final and opened up the test booklet. The same two exact formulas from his dream were the answers to several questions in the test booklet. It gave him confidence for the rest of the exam. As Carson left the classroom he prayed to himself: "God, You pulled off a miracle. And I make a promise to You that I'll never put You into that situation again." Carson wrote in Gifted Hands, "The only explanation just blew me away. The one answer was humbling in its simplicity. For whatever reason, the God of the universe, the God who holds galaxies in His hands, had seen a reason to reach down to a campus room on Planet Earth and send a dream to a discouraged ghetto kid who wanted to become a doctor." Ben Carson scored a 97% on the test and continued his pursuit of becoming a doctor.



Carson was a changed man, strengthened by the confirmation from God as to the direction for his life. He was now more committed than ever to that pursuit. He knew that He and God were working together towards becoming a doctor. In prayer Carson said to God, "It's clear that You want me to be a doctor. I'm going to do everything within my power to be one. I'm going to learn to study. I promise You that I'll never do this to You again." Carson realized, "God had forgiven me and come through to pull off something marvelous for me."

When our goals are in line with God's plan the Lord will enable us to succeed. That is what the passage means, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" (Philippians 4:13). God doesn't grant wish list items at our every whim, but when we ask for something so that we can serve and help others, God grants them. *God enables our success: equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever* (Hebrews 13:21). By doing this God changes lives through us. We are the gifted hands of the Lord.

God speaks to us in different ways. For Ben Carson, God's answers came in a dream. There are numerous biblical examples of God speaking to people through dreams. God also speaks to us through the written word in our Bible, something that Carson read daily. He also speaks to us through opportunities and people He places in our path, at the exact moment when they are most needed. Carson became a doctor to help people, performing numerous miracle surgeries that no other doctor would try. Seek to do God's will, and He will "will" you to succeed.

Questions: In what ways has God enabled you to succeed when failure seemed likely? Did it set you on a path to do something that would help others?

Gifted Hands is the autobiography of Dr. Ben Carson, published in 1990. On the back cover of the book Barbara Walters said of Carson, "He works miracles on children others have written off as hopeless."