

Discover
the **Champion**
in **You**

THE GOOD LIFE SERIES PART 3

Danny Yamashiro



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Discover the Champion in You

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To Jamie

A winner in life
who continues to elicit
the champion in others.

I am proud to call you my wife.

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Jamie and our children Allie, Hugh and Luke.

The Holy Spirit who guides me.

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Discover the Champion in You

*“God said to build a better world and I said how?
The world is such a cold, dark place and so complicated now.
And I’m so young and useless there is nothing I can do.
But God, in all His wisdom said, ‘Just build a better you.’”¹*

The purpose of this book is based on several premises. First, God has created in you the potential to be a champion. Second, you have a desire to make improvements in your life. Third, you believe that with God’s help you can build a better you. Fourth, by making positive changes, you will become an even more productive member of society.

Seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong was the host of the 2006 ESPY (Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly) Awards, which included some of the finest athletes in America. Jerome “The Bus” Bettis, Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, Shaun Alexander, Venus Williams and Tiger Woods were among the athletes in attendance. Highlights were shown of the dramatic 2005 Rose Bowl championship between the University of Texas Longhorns and the University of Southern California Trojans. Awards were presented. Champions praised.

When highlights of the past year’s victories and dramas are displayed, why are we captivated? Why do we care? It is because we each desire to achieve, to be excellent, and to be recognized.

One of the common statements uttered by award recipients is, “First of all, I’d like to thank God...” Recognition of God’s grace in abundant athletic gifting is coupled with a work ethic that sets these athletes apart. In addition, these athletes possess the confidence and mental strength that enable them to perform under great pressure.

God has his own type of ESPY award that extends beyond sports. It extends beyond the Academy Awards, the Emmys and other forms of recognition. Psalm 139:13–14 states that God formed our “inward parts.” We are “wonderfully made.” God’s works are marvelous. We are each unique and recipients of God’s gifts. We all have the potential to be champions. There are, however, reasons most people fall short of fulfilling their destiny.

Words can damage. They can be full of “deadly poison”² when they are used to discourage and to tear down. Such is the reason for this third book in *The Good Life* series. It is possible for out of the same mouth to proceed both blessing and cursing.³ The purpose of this book is to elevate your sights to what God has made you to be, a champion. It is my prayer that your spirit will be well fed with a healthy dose of what God thinks of you. Each section of this book is designed to show you how to live as a champion.

Champions are not only defined by winning single events; champions live a specific way on a daily basis. And when the opportunity arises, they are ready because they have been preparing all along.

Danny Yamashiro
Honolulu, Hawaii



PART 1

Principles That Elicit the
Champion in You



PRINCIPLE OF CHAMPIONS #1:

Be zealous in pursuit of your goal

Thomas Edison is a premier example of a person who was zealous in pursuit of his goal. While being questioned by a young reporter about an invention on which he had been working for a long time, he revealed one of the secrets of his greatness.

“Mr. Edison,” the reporter asked, “How does it feel to have failed 10,000 times in your present venture?” Edison replied, “Young man, since you are just getting started in life, I will give you a thought that should benefit you in the future.” Edison continued, “I have not failed anything 10,000 times. I have successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work.”⁴

Edison estimated that he actually performed over 14,000 experiments in the process of inventing and perfecting the incandescent light. How, after so many seeming setbacks, did he remain on task? How do we remain on task and stay the course? Here are some suggestions.

First, seek mentors who possess the success and satisfaction you desire. For example, Joshua and Caleb were two gutsy young Hebrew warriors who, in spite of the odds, were willing to trust God and fight against overwhelming foes even though other seasoned leaders chose not to.⁵ Joshua was mentored directly by Moses, an iconic figure in the *Old Testament*. Caleb was mentored indirectly. Caleb may not have had the close relationship with Moses that Joshua had, nevertheless, he had an example to follow. You don’t always have to be in personal contact with a mentor. Your mind and spirit can be developed through mentorship by reading someone’s books, listening to CDs, watching DVDs or attending seminars.

Second, be careful not to let yesterday’s success paralyze you from tomorrow’s challenges and subsequent victories. When an achievement is reached,

celebrate! Relish the moment! But don’t stay there. Life is not to be lived in the past, but in the present. Take on new challenges, set new goals, stay “hungry.”

Third, failure can always be redefined as success if it helps you reach your goals. Like Edison, other people may call your futile attempts failure—but you know they were stepping stones to your eventual success. As long as you are pursuing your goal, each attempt makes you wiser and brings you closer. The champion’s attitude is one that is not simply fueled by victory, but, also by defeat. Such powerful disappointments are harnessed into greater desire. You evaluate what went wrong and correct it.

When the pupil is ready the teacher will appear.”

—Plato, Ancient Greek philosopher

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

“I press toward the goal for the prize....”

—Philippians 3:14

SUGGESTION FOR PRAYER:

Dear God, keep me fresh with desire. Cultivate in me an eagerness to grow and learn and achieve greater things. Amen.

PRINCIPLE OF CHAMPIONS #2:

It is more important where you end
than where you begin

Everyday millions of people around the world enter Starbucks and order their favorite coffee drinks. The Starbucks company is more than coffee; it has created a culture and captured multiple generations. Men, women, and even children go there to relax, to work, to conduct meetings, to develop relationships, to create memories. It has become a home away from home for countless people.

How did Starbucks become the giant it is today? Howard Schultz is the founder and visionary of Starbucks, Inc. who grew up in the Brooklyn projects. He was known to be a penniless daydreamer.

Schultz said, “From my personal experience, I’d say that the more uninspiring your origins, the more likely you are to use your imagination and invent worlds where everything seems possible. That’s certainly true of me.”⁶

Where did you begin? It is more important where you end than where you begin in your journey in life. Your hope lies not in the past but in the future. Think about your future. Take into account what it is you deeply desire. Consider that God has placed such a yearning in your heart. Develop a plan on how to get there—and go.

“If you can project yourself out to age 80 and sort of think, ‘What will I think at that time?’ it gets you away from some of the daily pieces of confusion.”

—Jeffrey Bezos, founder of Amazon.com

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

“...though I was blind, now I see.”

—John 9:25

SUGGESTION FOR PRAYER:

Thank You, Lord, for the reminder that I am not stuck in my past;
I am on my way to a better future. Amen.