

The Amazing Power of Focus (Amazing Race #1)

Sermon by Todd Lester

February 14, 2016

2 Thessalonians 1:11 So we keep on praying for you ... May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.

1. _____ **YOUR POSITION** Genesis 24:1

Q: Where am I now (spiritually, financially, relationally, physically)? What would I like to change?

2. _____ **YOUR PURPOSE** Genesis 24:2-5

Q: What do I want to be? What do I want to do? What do I want to have?

3. _____ **A PROMISE** Genesis 24:7

Q: What promise can I claim for this goal?

4. _____ **THE PROFIT** Genesis 24:7b

Q: What is the reward? Why do I want the reward?

5. _____ **IN PRAYER** Genesis 24:12

Q: Am I praying regularly about this goal?

6. _____ **THE PROBLEMS** Genesis 24:21, 49, 58, Matthew 6:34

Q: What specific problems will I face in trying to accomplish this goal?

7. _____ **A PLAN** Genesis 24:10-11, 43-44, 22

Q: How do I intend to get there? How long will it take (deadline or date)?

8. _____ **YOUR PERSONALITY** Genesis 24:21, 33, 49, 56

Q: In what ways will I need to be disciplined in order to accomplish my goal?

9. _____ **ON PEOPLE** Genesis 24:49-51

Q: Who can I ask to be a support? What kind of support will I need?

10. _____ **THE PRICE** Genesis 24:53

Q: What will it cost? What am I willing to give to reach the goal? Is it worth it?

Puzzle Challenge

Without checking your notes (at first!) see how many words you can find and match up with the main points from Sunday's message.

D	X	V	T	I	S	O	P	E	D	Y	S
N	C	C	E	M	W	B	S	O	E	T	M
E	Q	E	N	I	L	P	I	C	S	I	D
P	O	S	I	T	I	O	N	A	C	L	S
E	S	O	P	R	U	P	C	P	R	A	M
D	D	N	D	E	T	E	R	M	I	N	E
I	D	G	G	E	S	A	L	D	B	O	L
L	K	A	C	H	Y	I	E	P	E	S	B
N	G	I	S	E	D	F	M	X	O	R	O
C	R	D	R	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R
P	L	A	N	N	T	I	F	O	R	P	P
R	R	D	E	S	I	R	E	G	W	P	E

1. D _____ your P _____

2. D _____ your P _____

3. D _____ a P _____

4. D _____ the P _____

5. D _____ in P _____

6. D _____ the P _____

7. D _____ a P _____

8. D _____ your P _____

9. D _____ on P _____

10. D _____ the P _____

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2 Thessalonians 1:11 So we keep on praying for you ... May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.

1. DETERMINE YOUR POSITION

Genesis 24:1 Abraham was now a very old man, and the Lord had blessed him in every way.

Q: Where am I now (spiritually, financially, relationally, physically)? What would I like to change?

2. DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE

Genesis 24:2-4 One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, “Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh. Swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac.”

Genesis 24:5 The servant asked, “But what if I can’t find a young woman who is willing to travel so far from home?”

Q: What do I want to be? What do I want to do? What do I want to have?

3. DISCOVER A PROMISE

Genesis 24:7 For the Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to my descendants. He will send his angel ahead of you, and he will see to it that you find a wife there for my son.

Q: What promise can I claim for this goal?

4. DESCRIBE THE PROFIT

Genesis 24:7b ...and he will see to it that you find a wife there for my son.

Q: What is the reward? Why do I want the reward?

5. DESIRE IN PRAYER

Genesis 24:12 “O Lord, God of my master, Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham.”

Q: Am I praying regularly about this goal?

6. DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEMS

Genesis 24:21, 49, 58 The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the Lord had given him success in his mission...So tell me—will you or won’t you show unfailing love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I’ll know what to do next...So they called Rebekah. “Are you willing to go with this man?” they asked her. And she replied, “Yes, I will go.”

Matthew 6:34 So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Q: What are the barriers or problems?

7. DESIGN A PLAN

Genesis 24:10-11a Then he loaded ten of Abraham’s camels with all kinds of expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled...to the town where Abraham’s

brother Nahor had settled. He made the camels kneel beside a well just outside the town.

Genesis 24:11b It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water.

Genesis 24:43-44 This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.” If she says, “Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too,” let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master’s son.

Genesis 24:22 Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets for her wrists.

Q: How do I intend to get there? How long will it take (deadline or date)?

8. DISCIPLINE YOUR PERSONALITY

Genesis 24:21, 33, 49, 56 The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the Lord had given him success in his mission...Then food was served. But Abraham’s servant said, “I don’t want to eat until I have told you why I have come.” “All right,” Laban said, “tell us...” So tell me—will you or won’t you show unfailing love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I’ll know what to do next...But he said, “Don’t delay me. The Lord has made my mission successful; now send me back so I can return to my master.”

9. DEPEND ON PEOPLE

Genesis 24:49-51 Please tell me yes or no, and then I’ll know what to do next.” Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “The Lord has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has directed.”

10. DEPOSIT THE PRICE

Genesis 24:53 Then he brought out silver and gold jewelry and clothing and presented them to Rebekah. He also gave expensive presents to her brother and mother.

Q: What will it cost? What am I willing to give to reach the goal? Is it worth it?

Word Search
Solution

D	+	+	T	I	S	O	P	E	D	Y	+
N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	E	T	+
E	+	E	N	I	L	P	I	C	S	I	D
P	O	S	I	T	I	O	N	+	C	L	S
E	S	O	P	R	U	P	+	P	R	A	M
D	+	N	D	E	T	E	R	M	I	N	E
+	+	G	+	E	S	A	L	D	B	O	L
+	+	A	C	+	Y	I	E	P	E	S	B
N	G	I	S	E	D	F	M	+	O	R	O
+	R	D	R	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R
P	L	A	N	N	T	I	F	O	R	P	P
+	+	D	E	S	I	R	E	+	+	P	+

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Icebreaker/Introduction

The Puzzle Challenge is meant to be a fun, simple activity to review the main points of Sunday's message. It is probably impossible for anyone to get all the blanks filled in without checking their notes but it might be fun to try. Feel free to give clues as needed. The answers for the word search are included in the Scripture page.

Ask if there was anything from this week's message that stood out – either a point that was made which really resonated with them, or perhaps a question or difficulty that came up for them.

Consider 2 Thessalonians 1:11 – Todd pointed out that 'focus' is one of the most important qualities to have in life and is a necessity if we want to achieve our goals. Can you think of a time in your life when you needed to be particularly focused in order to accomplish something?

Todd shared that the story of Abraham sending his servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for his son Isaac, teaches us great principles on how to accomplish a God-given goal. Consider reading Genesis 24:1-27 to review the story.

Note: in the discussion guide below I have included the questions Todd suggested for each section (in black italics).

1. DETERMINE YOUR POSITION Genesis 24:1

In many ways the following points and discussion will be most useful if members of your group take time to think of a specific goal in their life that they would like to work on. Then they can apply these principles/ideas/questions to that specific objective. So you may want to begin by asking them to consider different areas of their lives (Todd mentioned goals that might be related to family, work, relationships, finances, health, spirituality) to determine what kind of goal they want to think about – or perhaps they are already working towards a goal already and can use that one. It may be important to set an end-date for accomplishing this goal.

Q: Where am I now (spiritually, financially, relationally, physically)? What would I like to change?

2. DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE Genesis 24:2-5

Is the goal you chose clear, concise and compelling? (ie. avoid vague goals)

What are your reasons for choosing this goal?

Q: What do I want to be? What do I want to do? What do I want to have?

3. DISCOVER A PROMISE Genesis 24:7

Todd said that the kind of goal that pleases God is one that stretches you and makes you depend on Him, which builds your faith. Does your goal meet that criteria? How much will you need to rely on God in order to achieve your goal?

Consider looking for some promises in Scripture (this may need to be homework). Suggestions: Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 4:19, Isaiah 40: 29-31, John 14:27. Or check out the website: www.365promises.com

Q: What promise can I claim for this goal?

4. DESCRIBE THE PROFIT Genesis 24:7b

What will be the benefit from achieving your goal? Will it be good for both you and others?

Is there something practical you could do to keep this benefit in mind when things may get difficult?

Q: What is the reward? Why do I want the reward?

5. DESIRE IN PRAYER Genesis 24:12

Todd reminded us that prayer and success go together. What are some ways that you could incorporate regular prayer for your desire to reach your long-term goal?

Q: Am I praying regularly about this goal?

6. DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEMS Genesis 24:21, 49, 58, Matthew 6:34

Look ahead to what problems might arise in trying to accomplish your goal. Depending on your goal they will take a variety of forms.

Would you agree that anticipating difficulties can better prepare us for facing and solving challenges?

Q: What specific problems will I face in trying to accomplish this goal?

7. DESIGN A PLAN Genesis 24:10-11, 43-44, 22

Thinking about the specific problems you may face, what are some strategies for solving them? Is it helpful to break things into smaller steps?

Q: How do I intend to get there? How long will it take (deadline or date)?

8. DISCIPLINE YOUR PERSONALITY Genesis 24:21, 33, 49, 56

Can you recall the different ways that Todd said Eliezer was disciplined? (with his thinking/planning, with his appetites, with his words, with his time)

How easy or hard do you find it to 'defer pleasure'?

Q: In what ways will I need to be disciplined in order to accomplish my goal?

9. DEPEND ON PEOPLE Genesis 24:49-51

Review the ways Todd suggested we can look to others for support (accountability, prayer, input/advice). Are there other ways?

Discuss Todd's statement that "one of the (main) purposes of the church is to learn to live in community."

Recall a time when someone was an important support to you (through prayer, input, or accountability or in another way).

Q: Who can I ask to be a support? What kind of support will I need?

10. DEPOSIT THE PRICE Genesis 24:53

What did Todd say we may need to give up in order to accomplish a goal? (time, money, reputation, things)

Can you think of a time in the past when you have had to give up something that wasn't necessarily wrong, but wasn't necessary?

Q: What will it cost? What am I willing to give to reach the goal? Is it worth it?