

# The Amazing Power of Fortitude (Amazing Race #4)

**Sermon by Todd Lester**

March 6, 2016

1 Corinthians 9:24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!

Jeremiah 32:17 O Sovereign Lord! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!

## ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH

Psalm 19:1-2, Ephesians 1:19-20

**PROBLEM #1: THE \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_**

Romans 7:18, Philippians 2:13

**PROBLEM #2: THE \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_**

Psalm 6:2-3, Ecclesiastes 2:11, Isaiah 40:28-31

## APPROPRIATE THE STEPS TO GAINING GOD'S STRENGTH

**1. YOU \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR LACK OF STRENGTH**

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

**2. YOU \_\_\_\_\_ IN FAITH**

Mark 9:23

**3. YOU \_\_\_\_\_ IN FAITH**

2 Corinthians 4:13, James 3:3-5, Proverbs 18:21

**4. YOU \_\_\_\_\_ IN FAITH**

Joshua 3:13-17

# The Tortoise and the Hare

How fast have you been going lately? What pace has your life been moving at recently? Choose one of the items below (or think up your own) which reminds you of the pace of your life and then take turns sharing your answers with the group.



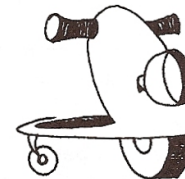
**Battery-powered Bunny**

I just keep going and going. I wonder when I am ever going to stop!



**Space Shuttle**

I blast off brightly, get my work done, and then coast back to earth ready to blast off again.



**Scooter**

I may not set any speed records, but I putt-putt along and go where I need to go.



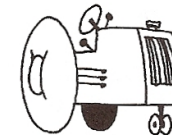
**Stately Riverboat**

I take it easy. I paddle along elegantly down a gently flowing river.



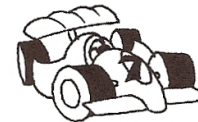
**Conked-out Convertible**

I'm happy to sit in the sun and not go anywhere. I already have enough miles on me.



**Farm Tractor**

I work hard and pull big loads. I don't move fast but I move mountains.



**Formula 1 Race Car**

I am the fastest one around, but I need a lot of attention when I pull in the pits.



**Roller Coaster**

My pace changes drastically. My pattern is slowly up, up, up and then go super-fast.



**Overworked Airlines**

I get a tight schedule, make numerous "flights" a day and am ready for the hangar every night.

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## Icebreaker/Introduction

The 'Tortoise and the Hare' activity can connect with the idea of ways to face a challenge or looking at the pace or strength or strategies people use to accomplish goals.

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.

**Read 2 Corinthians 9:24 and Jeremiah 32:7** – Todd talked about the power of the sun being less to the power of its creator. What are some other things in nature that you feel demonstrate God's power?

Share an example from your life when you feel God gave you the power to overcome something.

Todd said we shouldn't look for the 'strength within you.' Do you agree with that statement? Is there a balance needed (in that there is some strength within you isn't there? Or do we need to acknowledge even that strength comes from God?)

## **ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH**

**Focuses on Psalm 19:1-2, Ephesians 1:19-20**

Discuss Todd's statement that many people argue about when the world was made, but the Bible is more concerned with who made it and why.

Todd said, 'It takes more faith to not believe in God than to believe.' Do you agree?

Can you recall the different ways Todd said that Jesus demonstrated God's power? (over nature – calming the storm, over illness – healing of many, over death – raising of Lazarus, over the devil – casting out demons)

## **PROBLEM #1: THE STRENGTH TO GET STARTED**

**Focuses on Romans 7:18, Philippians 2:13**

Todd asked: "What would you to change about yourself but can't seem to get motivated to get started?"

What holds people back from tackling a goal? What holds you back?

Todd pointed out that Philippians 2:13 says God gives us both the power and the desire to do right. Do you believe that all desire to change comes from God?

## **PROBLEM #2: THE POWER TO KEEP GOING**

**Focuses on Psalm 6:2-3, Ecclesiastes 2:11, Isaiah 40:28-31**

Can you identify with David's feelings in Psalm 6:2-3? What kinds of things tire you out? What do you do when you are exhausted?

Read Isaiah 40:28-31. What encouragement do you find there? Do the expectations there seem too unrealistic for you?

## **APPROPRIATE THE STEPS TO GAINING GOD'S STRENGTH**

### **1. YOU ADMIT YOUR LACK OF STRENGTH**

**Focuses on 2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

How do you tend to react when you are confronted with your weaknesses?

We often wait until we are at the end of our rope, with no strength of our own left, before we turn to God. Why is it harder to rely on Him when things are going well?

In the passage from Corinthians, Paul says he is glad to boast about his weaknesses. Are you able to boast about yours? If so, go ahead and share with your group;

### **2. YOU BELIEVE IN FAITH**

**Focuses on Mark 9:23**

The title for this section is 'believe in faith.' Are believing and faith the same? Should we say 'believe, (ie. comma) in faith'? Or should it be believe in God?

Todd asked us to consider the following questions: "What are you expecting God to do in your life?" and "What are you expecting God to do through your life?" Can you answer these? (Todd said they are important questions because God works according to our faith)

Todd said that we limit God by our lack of belief. In what areas do you lack belief (what do you find it hard to believe God for)?

### **3. YOU SPEAK IN FAITH**

**Focuses on 2 Corinthians 4:13, James 3:3-5, Proverbs 18:21**

How comfortable are you in speaking about your faith? Can you identify with what Todd said about what we believe and what we say sometimes not matching up?

Todd reminded us that what we say to our self and to others directs the course of our life. What are you saying about the kinds of things he mentioned: family, job, marriage, finances, kids, school? What should you be saying??

Todd said that a goal is a statement of faith. Do you agree? What goals do you have for your life (both short-term or long-term) and how does God factor into them?

### **4. YOU ACT IN FAITH**

**Focuses on Joshua 3:13-17**

Discuss Todd's statement that immaturity is living by feelings but maturity is living by commitments.

Have you found that it does work to act, even when you don't feel like it, and that the feeling will follow? Can you give a personal example of this?

Todd encouraged us to reflect on Isaiah 40 (especially verses 29 and 31) and use it as an impetus to ask for God's help and strength this week with specific challenges you may face. Can you think ahead to a situation or person when it would be especially helpful for you to do this?

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The Bible says you must run the race to win the prize, but how do you do that? We've talked about that in this series, about the tools that God has given us so we can run the race to win. This week we finished this message series with the topic of fortitude.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!  
Jeremiah 32:17 O Sovereign Lord! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!

## **ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH**

Psalms 19:1-2 The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.

Ephesians 1:19-20 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead.

## **PROBLEM #1: THE STRENGTH TO GET STARTED**

Romans 7:18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.

Philippians 2:13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

## **PROBLEM #2: THE POWER TO KEEP GOING**

Psalms 6:2-3 Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony. I am sick at heart. How long, O Lord, until you restore me?  
Ecclesiastes 2:11 But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

Isaiah 40:28-31 Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

## **APPROPRIATE THE STEPS TO GAINING GOD'S STRENGTH**

### **1. YOU ADMIT YOUR LACK OF STRENGTH**

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 "My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

### **2. YOU BELIEVE IN FAITH**

Mark 9:23 "Anything is possible if a person believes."

### **3. YOU SPEAK IN FAITH**

2 Corinthians 4:13 But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God, so I spoke."

James 3:3-5 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.

Proverbs 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

### **4. YOU ACT IN FAITH**

Joshua 3:13-17 ... But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge, the water above that point began backing up a great distance away ... And the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea until the riverbed was dry.