

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS #1 – DON'T LET THE CYNICS GET YOU DOWN

Sermon by Todd Lester

March 26, 2017

Ecclesiastes 10:10 (NIV) If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success.

FOUR CYNICS DAVID FACED BEFORE GOLIATH

1 Samuel 17:1-52

1. HIS FATHER OVERLOOKED HIS POTENTIAL (Barrier: Delay)

1 Samuel 17:12-15 Now David was the son of a man named Jesse ... he had eight sons ... David was the youngest son. David's three oldest brothers stayed with Saul's army, but David went back and forth so he could help his father with the sheep in Bethlehem.

2. THE SOLDIERS CONSIDERED IT IMPOSSIBLE (Barrier: Discouragement)

1 Samuel 17:8-11 Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. "Why are you all coming out to fight?" he called ... "Choose one man to come down here and fight me! If he kills me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

1 Samuel 17:16 For forty days, every morning and evening, the Philistine champion strutted in front of the Israelite army.

1 Samuel 17:23-24 As he was talking with them ... David heard him shout his usual taunt to the army of Israel. As soon as the Israelite army saw him, they began to run away in fright.

3. HIS BROTHERS QUESTIONED HIS MOTIVES (Barrier: Disapproval)

1 Samuel 17:26-29 David asked the soldiers standing nearby, "What will a man get for killing this Philistine and ending his defiance of Israel? ... But when David's oldest brother, Eliab, heard David talking to the men, he was angry. "What are you doing around here anyway?" he demanded. "What about those few sheep you're supposed to be taking care of? I know about your pride and deceit. You just want to see the battle!" "What have I done now?" David replied. "I was only asking a question!"

4. THE EXPERTS DOUBTED HIS ABILITY (Barrier: Doubt)

1 Samuel 17:32-33 "Don't worry about this Philistine," David told Saul. "I'll go fight him!" "Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth."

Todd: "In life there will be people who will say, '...You're an amateur.' I want to remind you that Noah built the ark that saved the world, and he was an amateur. Professionals built the Titanic."

The word "amateur": 1784, "one who has a taste for (something)," from

French amateur "lover of," from Latin amatorem (nominative amator)

"lover," – amateurs do something because they love to do it; professionals are paid.

1 Samuel 17:17-18 One day Jesse said to David, "Take this basket of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread, and carry them quickly to your brothers. And give these ten cuts of cheese to their captain."

Luke 16:10-12 "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?"

HOW TO DEFEAT THE CYNICS IN YOUR LIFE

1. REMEMBER THEY ARE NOT GOD

Proverbs 29:25 Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety.

Isaiah 8:13 Make the Lord of Heaven's Armies holy in your life. He is the one you should fear. He is the one who should make you tremble.

2. DON'T GET DISTRACTED

"Every opportunity comes with opposition."

Nehemiah 6:3-4 I replied by sending this message to them: "I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?" Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the same reply.

Matthew 10:26 "But don't be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all."

3. NEVER ATTACK BACK

Proverbs 11:12 It is foolish to belittle one's neighbour; a sensible person keeps quiet.

1 Peter 2:23 He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

4. STAY FOCUSED ON GOD AND HIS PROMISES

1 Samuel 30:6 David was now in great danger because all his men were very bitter about losing their sons and daughters, and they began to talk of stoning him. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

Psalms 118:6 The Lord is for me, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?

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FOUR CYNICS DAVID FACED BEFORE GOLIATH

1 Samuel 17:1-52

1. HIS FATHER OVERLOOKED HIS _____ (Barrier: _____)

1 Samuel 17:12-15

2. THE SOLDIERS CONSIDERED IT _____ (Barrier: _____)

1 Samuel 17:8-11, 1 Samuel 17:16, 1 Samuel 17:23-24

3. HIS BROTHERS QUESTIONED HIS _____ (Barrier: _____)

1 Samuel 17:26-29

4. THE EXPERTS DOUBTED HIS _____ (Barrier: _____)

1 Samuel 17:32-33, 1 Samuel 17:17-18, Luke 16:10-12

HOW TO DEFEAT THE CYNICS IN YOUR LIFE

1. REMEMBER THEY _____

Proverbs 29:25, Isaiah 8:13

2. DON'T GET _____

"Every o _____ comes with o _____."

Nehemiah 6:3-4, Matthew 10:26

3. NEVER _____

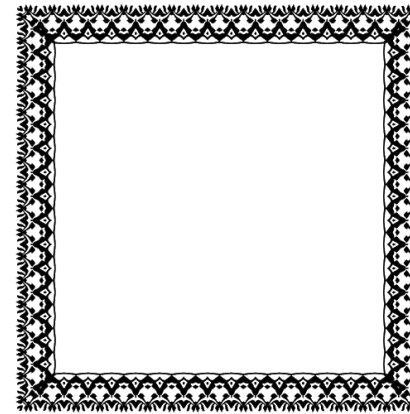
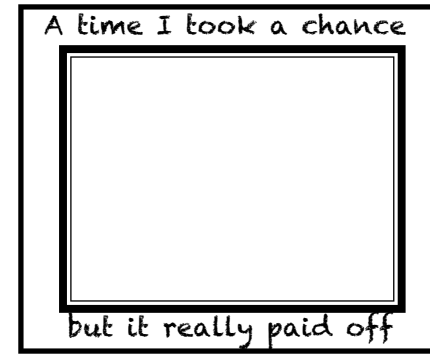
Proverbs 11:12, 1 Peter 2:2 3

4. STAY FOCUSED ON _____

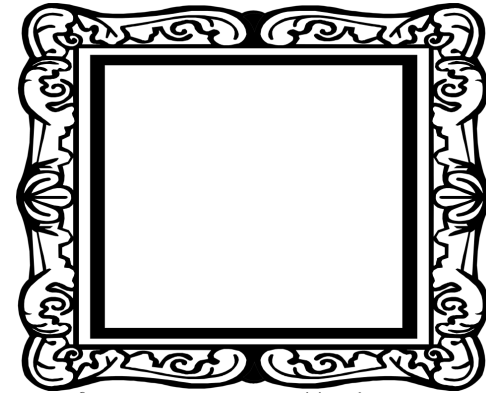
1 Samuel 30:6, Psalm 118:6

Snapshots

Let your group look at some interesting scenes from your past. Write down or draw the following snapshots from your life and then share about some of the most interesting ones.



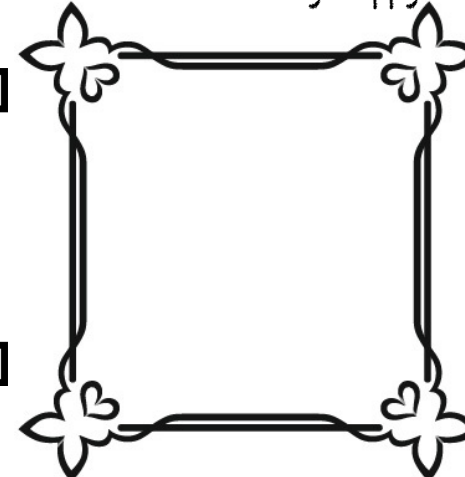
A time I really chickened out



A time I was really happy



A time I toughed it out and accomplished a goal



A time I was really embarrassed

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Icebreaker/Introduction

The 'Snapshots' activity is a tool to get participants to reflect on some interesting points in their lives. Give time for people to reflect on the ideas and then take time to share some together.

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 [Ecclesiastes 10:10](#). Compare this verse with Todd's statement at the beginning of the message that many 'experts' say that all we need is desire and determination to succeed.

What are some ways of 'sharpening your axe'? (Todd mentioned sermons, Bible study, courses – can you think of other ways?)

Who are some naysayers (cynics, those with an habitually pessimistic view) that you have run across in your life? (Mmm, are you one?)

Is it challenging to accept Todd's statement that they aren't bad people (that they may even love you and have your best interests in mind)?

FOUR CYNICS DAVID FACED BEFORE GOLIATH

1. HIS FATHER OVERLOOKED HIS POTENTIAL (Barrier: Delay)

Focuses on [1 Samuel 17:12-15](#)

What are some of the reasons Todd gave for why people get overlooked (or feel like they've been overlooked) – he said: age, gender, race, less educated, less athletic, less musical, less academic. Do any of these resonate with you (now or when you were younger)?

Can you recall a time when your parents encouraged you to see your potential and follow your dreams? If you have your own children, how have you tried to do this for them?

2. THE SOLDIERS CONSIDERED IT IMPOSSIBLE (Barrier: Discouragement)

Focuses on [1 Samuel 17:8-11](#), [1 Samuel 17:16](#), [1 Samuel 17:23-24](#)

Todd said that conventional wisdom/popular opinion is often wrong. Can you think of an example of this?

Todd pointed out that Goliath created a culture of fear among the Israelites through psychological warfare (daily threats). Todd asked us 'what voices are you listening to'? What negative influences do you have in your life? (do you think the news counts?) How can you fight them?

3. HIS BROTHERS QUESTIONED HIS MOTIVES (Barrier: Disapproval)

Focuses on [1 Samuel 17:26-29](#)

Describe a time when you felt someone questioned your motives. How did it make you feel and how did you handle it?

Do you agree with Todd's statement that everyone wants their family to be supportive? In what ways have your family or friends been supportive to you? (or not?)

4. THE EXPERTS DOUBTED HIS ABILITY (Barrier: Doubt)

Focuses on [1 Samuel 17:32-33](#), [1 Samuel 17:17-18](#), [Luke 16:10-12](#)

Todd talked about David 'serving cheese and crackers before facing the giant'. How important do you think it is to have an attitude of humility and service in these situations? How does it help answer the 'doubters'?

David definitely had ability/skill (with the sling) that was unknown to the leaders. Does David's confidence in facing Goliath depend on that skill, or God, or some combination of both?

HOW TO DEFEAT THE CYNICS IN YOUR LIFE

1. REMEMBER THEY ARE NOT GOD

Focuses on [Proverbs 29:25](#), [Isaiah 8:13](#)

Read [Isaiah 8:13](#). What does it mean to fear God? How do you understand this idea in light of God's great love for us? In light of Jesus?

Discuss Todd's statement that 'the bigger your vision of God, then the smaller your problems (or the opinions of others) will appear'. How can we practically maintain a bigger vision of God?

2. DON'T GET DISTRACTED

Focuses on [Nehemiah 6:3-4](#), [Matthew 10:26](#)

"Every opportunity comes with opposition."

Discuss Todd's statement that the internet is the biggest distraction today. Do you agree? What are some other major distractions for people? Does everyone have their own particular weakness in this area?

Have you run across naysayers (trolls) on the internet? What was the context/issue?

3. NEVER ATTACK BACK

Focuses on [Proverbs 11:12](#), [1 Peter 2:23](#)

When someone says something hurtful or negative about you how do you usually respond? Do you find it challenging to 'keep quiet'?

Read [1 Peter 2:23](#). What are some important things to remember when you are being accused or attacked?

4. STAY FOCUSED ON GOD AND HIS PROMISES

Focuses on [1 Samuel 30:6](#), [Psalm 118:6](#)

Discuss one or more of Todd's statements from this section: 1. People can dislike you and it won't harm you.

2. You don't need others' approval to be happy.

3. You are as happy as you choose to be.

Consider Todd's closing statement about David that he was 'a man after God's own heart' and the question he asked 'can it be said of you?'