

Eyes On The Prize

Taking Ownership series

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How are you all doing today? Awesome. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you once again to the opportunity to come together as a church family as we dive into taking ownership for our lives. Lead and guide us in Jesus name, Amen.

I think it was back in, I almost said 2014. It was 1914. Ernest Shackleton, noted famous explorer, author of *Endurance*, set out on a journey with his men to go to Antarctica. Brrr. Cold. And along the way, many of you who probably know his story know that they lost their ship. It got crushed. And so they had to get off the ship dragging their boats and all of their gear floating away on ice caps. And eventually, everyone made it out. Amazingly, in Antarctica, freezing cold could have easily taken their lives. They lived on ice floats, they sailed the lifeboats hundreds of miles in a very terrible, terrible sea. They climbed mountain peaks. And shortly after the *Endurance* was crushed, Ernest, he encouraged everyone aside from the group gear, they could only take 2 pounds, 2 lbs. of personal gear. And they had to make a decision. What were they going to prioritize to take on this journey, to escape this cold place?

In the South Georgia Museum, it's noted as well, it said on July 16, 1914, as the endurance expedition was underway, Queen Alexandra, widow of King Edward VII, visited the ship. The Queen presented Shackleton with the Union flag, a replica of her own standard, and two inscribed copies of the Bible. And as they're trapped in the Weddel Sea, Shackleton and his men, they quit the stricken ship and they have to take very extreme measures to save themselves. They hauled the boats and stores across the ice. Each man again was only able to carry two pounds of personal items.

So Shackleton, he led by example. He took the Queen's inscription, He tore the 23rd Psalm and also another verse from the book of Job from the Bible, and left the Bible behind. One of his other men saw it though, and he thought, we cannot leave this behind. So he actually grabbed it. Didn't tell Shackleton until later. But on the Queen's inscription it comes from Psalm 107:24. It says, May the Lord guide you through all the dangers by land and sea. May you see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. And the verse that he took from Job was out of whose womb came the ice and the hoary frost of heaven. Who hath gathered, hath gendered it. The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of deep is frozen.

Two pounds of gear that they were only able to take personally. Shackleton prioritized that which was most important because these verses also helped keep him encouraged and motivated to move forward. You have to wonder, did Shackleton and I'm sure some of his men, did they ever get discouraged? Did they ever get scared? Did they wonder, are we really going to make it out of here? And against all odds, against all odds, every person was saved. What a tremendous story. But they had to ensure that they could be able to climb over the mountains, haul the boats across the ice. It would take a lot of work.

How many of you, for instance, you think, just one more thing, one more thing, and eventually you keep adding that up and it's going to weigh you down. I used to go hiking with my family a lot. And you know, me being the adventurous that I was, I was prepared for everything. I had rope, I had extra water, I had a shelter, and it was just a four mile walk, but I was ready because we were going to the mountains. I wanted to be prepared. It was way more than two pounds. I didn't follow Shackleton's orders.

And here we see that Shackleton had to create and set priorities as to what was most important that would help make them be able to move quickly, efficiently, spend less energy and eventually get help and make it out alive.

Priorities. Today we're talking about eyes on the prize. What is it that we can do, prioritize to help us make it to the end goal? And of course in our big picture, our macro perspective is here is ultimately we all want to see Jesus. Amen. So what is it going to take to get there? And oftentimes it's actually, you know, you just, you have to be, sometimes you have to make hard decisions, things that are not necessarily comfortable.

Now we're going to look at some of these passages here. So our first passage, I want to go to Luke chapter 10, and I know it says 41, but actually I want to go to, I want to go to verse 38 before we even get there though. Okay, Question that I have. **Have you ever felt stuck?** And you don't know what to do. Have you ever felt stuck? Maybe you're also stuck with fear. Maybe you're stuck with something you just cannot get past. Sometimes you just don't know where to start. And we're going to talk about how we can prioritize things and help us to move forward. But I want to go to this passage, Luke 10. It's a famous passage. We've actually talked a little bit about it before.

Luke 10, verse 38. Okay. As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a little Village. Sorry. To a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do everything here by myself? Tell her to help me.

Any older siblings? Can you relate? I know my siblings are watching. It's true. You're the oldest. You're held with the most responsibility. She's schlepping it out, getting everything done.

And Jesus responds, Martha, Martha. The Lord answered, you're worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed, or indeed only one. And Mary has chosen what is better. And it will not be taken away from her.

What is Jesus trying to say here? You need to have priorities. Okay? Now, to be fair, okay, we understand Jesus is. He's trying to teach her that the most important thing is, of course, focus on the Lord. Okay? But you still have to eat, right? And at some point, somebody got to do the dishes. Somebody still got to clean the house. And so this is an example. It's a good reminder of the dichotomy that we sometimes experience in that we want to be close to God, but real life is also there. And how do we deal with that? How do we set the principles and the priorities of what we should focus on? Definitely take care of the most important, but also set aside for the things of life. It's a good balance that we see.

Now, I'll be honest again, I'm Team Martha because I'm a doer. I like to get things done. And sometimes I have to remind myself, I gotta stop. Sometimes I just have to stop to listen, to reflect. You know, oftentimes I would just. I could not be going without listening to music or a podcast or something. And recently I've just. I've been driving without any music. And it's amazing what you hear. You hear things about your car you don't want to hear. Amen. And then you realize your wallet might get a little lighter this week, but you also hear other people talking. As I'm driving, sometimes I'll crack the window and I hear conversations. Some of them may be good, some of them not so good.

When's the last time you stopped just to reflect? When was the last time you just stopped to just be quiet, to be still? When was the last time you were silent? How can we hear God if we are constantly surrounded by noise? Is Jesus A priority in your life? Is your family, your spouse, your children a priority? Your loved ones, or is your job your priority? Is your phone your priority? Is your TV your priority?

Priorities. How do we become unstuck?

Let's go to Proverbs 4. Proverbs 4, verses 25 through 27. Okay?

Proverbs 4. 25. 27.

All right. We all there? All right, 25. Let your eyes look. What? Straight ahead. Fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all of your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left. Keep your foot from evil.

I love this proverb because it is essentially telling you, in order for you to move forward with success, what do you have to do? You have to look forward and you have to move forward, right? If you always keep looking back, wondering about the mistakes or the things that you've done wrong, or if you always keep yearning for the past and not looking forward, it's easy. I mean, do you drive like this? Where are you going to end up? Somebody's fender bender or off the road? That's not good. It's going to impede our ability to move forward. We have to look forward and pay attention. If you don't look forward, what could happen? Somebody could hit you, you could hit something, or you accidentally take a detour. That's going to take some time. As we move forward, what is the ultimate goal? To see Jesus. And what are we doing? What are we prioritizing to make that happen?

So I want to actually, I want to talk about priorities and how we can make things, delineate things to make things that are important to us possible.

Okay? So as we **prioritize and go, clarify the goal you want to accomplish**. And you could either do this personally or maybe you're married, you have kids, why don't you get together and say, this is what do we want to accomplish? Do we want to go on a trip somewhere? Right? What is it going to take to get us there? But also, what do we want to do? What do we want to do accomplish? You have to decide where you're headed. You have to have a vision. You have to want to know where you are headed. It's a snapshot basically, in a reminder in your head, or you put it on your wall. This is what I want to accomplish.

But then don't just think about it. Don't talk about it. **Write it down**. And sometimes actually the act of writing down, what does it actually do? It clarifies and it makes it real. You're telling your, yes, I actually want to do this. But then you also have to think about, well, what's required of doing this? And so write down, what are the steps that you need to take? What responsibilities am I going to have to save money? Am I going to have to set aside time? How long is this going to take? Okay, **write down the tasks, responsibilities**.

The next thing is you gotta. There's many things you have to do, but you have to ask yourself what's most important, what's most needed, what needs to be done first? Okay. And so you **can categorize what's most urgent, what's important**. Maybe there's something that is important, but it's gonna take a really long time or, hey, it's a quick thing you can get done. It's an easy win. There's some things that are important, but it's going to take a while. You got to categorize and then prioritize decisively, meaning, get rid of the fluff. What's most important?

Oftentimes the night before, I'm going to write down what are at least two or three things I have to accomplish tomorrow. And sometimes I may only get one done because there are things that just come up. Okay, so be intentional at the very least. Maybe as you're planning

for the next day, what's the number one thing you need to get done tomorrow? Not 15. The old adage, less is more is better. Be clear about what you want to accomplish and prioritize decisively, ruthlessly, making sure that you're able to accomplish that goal.

And as well, as I mentioned before, too, you know, sometimes this is something I've been doing recently, is write down the night before what you want to accomplish, or even on Sunday or Friday, what do you need to accomplish for the following week? Schedule it out. Which leads me to.

Sorry, how many of you love due dates? You know what due dates do? They give me anxiety. But if we are proactive, if we know that something is coming up, what does it do? It reminds us. Work on it. There was an event I was helping to plan. There was actually a couple of events. We planned the first one and we realized, you know what, we got to be more intentional about how we're planning this event. And so I actually looked up and I looked up planning event ideas, and I got this outline of things you can do. It takes a year. We knew we were going to do the same event the next year around the same time. So I shared it with the group maybe about three months later, but we still had at least nine months to plan for this event. Guess what happened? We didn't use it. And you know what? We still got everything done, but it was stressful because everything got done late and last minute. And it wasn't as successful as it could have been if we had been more intentional and prioritized things and talked it out as a team, what did that lead to? Frustration. You have to be intentional, both personally and even, for instance, with your family. What do you want to accomplish? What do you want to do with your family to help you succeed? So set times up, okay? And delegate what needs to be accomplished by then.

And the last thing, as you prioritize, go, don't just write it down, don't just talk about it, but **go and lead and accomplish** that which you feel that God has inspired to do.

As you go forward, as you have your eyes on the prize, it helps you to see your purpose and mission in life. Amen. And it helps us, when there's a lot of noise, when there's a lot of discouragement, it's easy to get discouraged. Amen. But when you know where you're heading and the ultimate goal, that is what will help propel us forward.

You know, this last week has been a challenging week. Amen. I think many of us feel a lot of emotions. Some of us feel perhaps more fear right now. Maybe there are some of us who feel anger. Maybe some of us feel victorious. I don't know. What I do know that there's a lot that happened. And I don't normally say this, but I'll say this. Many of you probably know what happened on Wednesday. A young man was gunned down. And I don't advocate for violence because violence at its core will not help you succeed in changing people's minds. Amen. I don't know the individual very well, but I don't care what you believe or whatever.

Life is life. A woman went to bed without her husband. Two kids woke up without their father. No matter what you believe, we're all children of God. Amen.

And it's hard because sometimes our thoughts, our emotions want us to do something that potentially also may also not be in line with what would God want us to do? And when I talk about priorities as well, don't just. Don't live with priorities just to get to the kingdom. But I want to encourage you to live the kingdom principles today. Even when you're sad, even when you're angry or when you're feeling uncertain or When God does a wonderful miracle in your life, give God credit and say thank you. Because our God can do wonderful, wonderful things.

We live in a very challenging, chaotic, dark world. The world needs light. God has called us to be vessels of kindness, of love, of compassion, to shed the light. And it's so easy to let that light get snuffed out and go the opposite direction. And so I just encourage you as your pastor. Yes, there's a lot of things, but lead with the love of Jesus. Amen. May God be your biggest priority. Be of courage, because Jesus has also said, I have overcome the world. So this week, to reflect.

I also forgot to mention, after you've done all that and you start to go, you may have to **review and adjust a little bit**. Okay. There might be some times where, hey, what we thought we could accomplish, we could all do that this hour or maybe this day. Maybe it took a couple of hours. Maybe it took a couple days. That's okay. We live and learn. Amen.

So where do you feel stuck, but know you need to move forward and make headway?
Where in your life right now do you feel stuck or you feel uncertain?

Okay. And again, I know I've said it. Gustavo has reminded it. When you're stuck, don't just stay stuck. Do something. Make a call, make a decision. Try something. Because as you try, things will come about. And when you're just. When you're trying to figure out problems of how to. How to come up with solutions, be creative. Don't just do what you've done always, because that's why you're there. It's just stuck. You're just doing the same old thing. Be creative. When you're trying to accomplish a task, especially as a team, throw out all kinds of ideas on the board. And again, you can prioritize what's most important and what's realistic.

This week, **choose a problem or a task that you've been stuck on. Okay. Create a plan.**

And if, with your family or your team, assign tasks to accomplish the goal and go, can we do that? All right, I look forward. I want to hear stories from you all.

By the way, we mentioned it last week, if you have any leadership questions, please either contact me or write down. There's little cards out there. You can write it, throw it in the

basket. We'd love to respond to any leadership questions that you might have. All right, let's pray. God, we thank you for the opportunity to gather once again as a church family.

Lord, it's been a heavy week, but we know, Lord, that you are our ultimate prize and that which gives us comfort as we move forward. Give us strength, Give us courage, Lord. Help us to work together to accomplish the goal of sharing your love and everything about you to the whole world. Until we meet again. In Jesus name. Amen.

Grace and peace everyone.