

Prosperity

DEVOTED TO GOD

Bonnie Richardson ran. She threw. She jumped. And finally, she accepted the 1A team championship for Rochelle High School. She was the only athlete from her school to qualify for the state meet. It was the first time a single athlete had won the girls' team title – by herself!

For the record, her marks in the field events were: high jump (5 feet, 5 inches), placed second in the long jump (18-7) and was third in the discus (121-0). The next day she won the 200 meters in 25.03 seconds and nearly pulled off a huge upset in the 100 before finishing second (12.19) to defending champion. She earned a total of 42 team points to edge team runner-up Chilton (36).

Bonnie Richardson couldn't have been more prosperous in the Texas state track meet. However, real prosperity is more of a condition of our hearts, rather than attaining individual or team goals.

God does promise to bless us with food, clothing and shelter as we seek Him (Matthew 6). Rather than manipulating and seeking after selfish ambitions, stay faithful and humble. Allow God to decide when you should be exalted and praised.



GOD'S PLAYBOOK

For forty years the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness as punishment for their lack of faith. Joshua was now in command and ready to enter the Promised Land with a new generation of people ready to follow His lead. Before crossing the Jordan River to claim God's promise, God charged Joshua and the people to be devoted to God and His Word. If they would do this they would prosper. Throughout the first eleven chapters of Joshua we see that they remained true to God and His Word. Because of this they were blessed with overwhelming victories.

TEAMBUILDER

Invite a very successful Christian businessman or businesswoman to your team meeting. Work with your coach on identifying a good person from your community. Ask them to share with you the Top 10 reasons they achieved success (ask them to not exceed 15 minutes). At the end of their presentation, have a brief Q&A time with them.

WARMUP

Prosperity: Flourishing or being successful.

1. Who do you know that is regarded as a "living legend?"
Would you classify this person as prosperous?
Why or why not?

WORKOUT

1. How has God prospered you and your family?
2. Have you done a good job of handling prosperity?
Why or why not?
3. Comment on the following: "Real success comes not in thinking you've arrived at a place where others should serve you, but in recognizing that in whatever place you are, you have arrived at a position where you can serve others." What results when a prosperous person has an attitude of servanthood?

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"For I know the plans I have for you" – [this is] the LORD's declaration – "plans for [your] welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

PRAYER

Lord, I want to glorify God rather than seeking my earthly rewards. Help me to . . .

GOSPEL FOCUS

You've seen repeatedly if you watch much religious television. The health-wealth-and-prosperity gospel advocated by so many televangelists is the ultimate example of fantasy faith. This false gospel appeals to the flesh, corrupting all the promises of Scripture and encouraging greed. It makes material blessing, not Jesus Christ, the object of the Christian's desires. Christ is no longer the focus of the message. Never forget that Christ died on a cross to save us from God's wrath, not to provide us with our best life now! For the believer, the best life is yet to come.

Gordon Thiessen is the founder of Cross Training Publishing and serves as the Director of Training and Resources for the Nebraska Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He is author of 12 books for Christian athletes and coaches that can be found at www.crosstrainingpublishing.com.