

# Brighten Up: From Self-preservation to No Reservation

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## Opening Questions:

- What is the dream that is driving your life?
- Is God part of that dream that drives you?
- Has having kids diminished the dreams you have for God?

## Bible Study

### Joseph: Are you Driven by Dreams?

Matthew 1:18-21, 24 ERV

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah happened. His mother Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, he learned that she was expecting a baby. (She was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.) [19] Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to cause her public disgrace, so he planned to divorce her secretly. [20] But after Joseph thought about this, **an angel from the Lord came to him in a dream.** The angel said, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to accept Mary to be your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will give birth to a son. You will name him Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins." ...[24] When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel told him to do. He married Mary.

- Joseph was a man who was driven by his dreams.
- God would speak to him in his dreams and he would follow.
- Prior to, during, and after having a kid, Joseph was never deterred from following God through his dreams.
  - **Matthew 2:13-14 ERV** God came to Joseph in a dream and he went to Egypt
  - **Matthew 2:19-21 ERV** God came to Joseph in a dream and he went to Israel
  - **Matthew 2:22-23 ERV** God came to Joseph in a dream and he went to Galilee
- Has having kids altered who you dream for?

### Are you too busy for God?

Deuteronomy 8:10,12,14 NLT

[10] When you have eaten your fill, be sure to praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. [12] For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live

in, [14] Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt.

- Are you too busy for God now that you have kids?
- How do you know if you are too busy for God?
  - You used to love reading your Bible and praying, but now you make little time or it's just part of your checklist.
  - You used to love midweek and the fellowship, but now you just complain about how long it is and just want to go home to your family. You don't mind missing it.
  - You used to love meeting up for spiritually engaging discipleship times, but now you just focus on what an inconvenience it is to travel and how it disrupts your kids bedtime.
  - You use to love studying the Bible with people, but now you are too busy with your kids activities to help others.

## God or Google?

Luke 10:41-42 ERV

[41] But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and upset about too many things. [42] Only one thing is important. Mary has **made the right choice**, and it will never be taken away from her.”

- We have an important choice to make everyday, and that choice is whether we will choose God, or choose humanism and self-reliance to help us handle the demands and responsibilities of life.
- Is your family's schedule so packed that you have become too busy to live out God's purpose for your family?
- We must ask ourselves, where do I turn to for answers?
- When you need help and guidance, who do you ask first and follow? God or Google?

## Do Your Dreams Have Power?

2 Thessalonians 1:11 NLT

[11] So we keep on praying for you, asking our **God to enable you** to live a life worthy of his call. May **he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.**

- Sometimes the dreams that God puts on our hearts are there, but we lack the power to carry them out.

- You can agree with the Bible, but then no make no decision to change.
- When we are in this spot we must look inside to see if we are still alive inside.

## What's Strangling God's Dream?

Ezekiel 37:1-5 TLB

<sup>1,2</sup> The power of the Lord was upon me and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley full of old, dry bones that were scattered everywhere across the ground. He led me around among them, <sup>3</sup> and then he said to me: "Son of dust, can these bones become people again?" I replied, "Lord, you alone know the answer to that." <sup>4</sup> Then he told me to speak to the bones and say: "O dry bones, listen to the words of God, <sup>5</sup> for the Lord God says, 'See! I am going to make you live and breathe again!...

- We can become dead inside and not even realize it.
- When the Scriptures no longer move us and our prayers are passionless, these are signs that we are dead inside.

Ezekiel 37:10-12 TLB

<sup>10</sup> So I spoke to the winds as he commanded me, and the bodies began breathing; they lived and stood up—a very great army. <sup>11</sup> Then he told me what the vision meant: "These bones," he said, "represent all the people of Israel. They say: 'We have become a heap of dried-out bones—all hope is gone.' <sup>12</sup> But tell them, 'The Lord God says: My people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to **rise again** and return to the land of Israel.

- God wants us to come alive again on the inside.
- First we must begin by recognizing what we've become hardened to.

Hebrews 3:7-8 NIV

"Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not **harden your hearts** as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness

Mark 4:18,20 MSG

"The seed cast in the weeds represents the ones who hear the kingdom news but are **overwhelmed with worries** about **all the things they have to do** and **all the things they want to get**. The stress strangles what they heard, and nothing comes of it. [20] "But the seed planted in the good earth represents those who hear the Word, embrace it, and produce a harvest beyond their wildest dreams."

- What stresses are strangling your life? Worries that consume you...
- The Bible teaches it's not only the things we have to do, but also the things we want to get that strangle our lives.
- What are all the things you want in life that you put above God?

## What Dream Is Driving Your Life?

Luke 12:15-17 VCE

You'd better be on your guard against **any type of greed**, for a person's life is not about having a lot of possessions. [16] (then, beginning another parable) A wealthy man owned some land that produced a huge harvest. [17] He often thought to himself, "I have a problem here. I don't have anywhere to store all my crops. What should I do? [18] I know! I'll tear down my small barns and build even bigger ones, and then I'll have plenty of storage space for my grain and all my other goods.

- Is one of the different types of greed driving your life?
  - Greedy for Possessions
  - Greedy for Attention
  - Greedy for Comfort
  - Greedy for Status

## What Is the Destination You Dream of?

Luke 12:19-21 VCE

[19] Then I'll be able to say to myself, '**I have it made! I can relax and take it easy** for years! So I'll just sit back, eat, drink, and have a good time!'" [20] Then God interrupted the man's conversation with himself. "Excuse Me, Mr. Brilliant, but **your time** has come. Tonight you will die. Now who will enjoy everything you've earned and saved?" [21] This is how it will be for people who accumulate huge assets for themselves **but have no assets in relation to God**.

- This man dreamed of arriving at a destination where he could take life easy and sit back. He had a destination in mind that he was dreaming of and driven by.
- What is the destination of your dreams?
  - Living a certain lifestyle?
  - Living in a certain place? A certain area code?
- For some of us, our kids have become everything and we are living for them. God's dream has been replaced by your dream for them.
- Does the destination of your dream include God?

## What Do Your Worries Say About Your Faith?

Luke 12:22-26 VCE

[22] (then, to His disciples) This is why I keep telling you not to worry about anything in life—about what you'll eat, about how you'll clothe your body. [23] Life is more than food, and the body is more than fancy clothes. [24] Think about those crows flying over there: do they plant and harvest crops? Do they own silos or barns? Look at them fly. It looks like God is taking pretty good care of them, doesn't it? Remember that **you are more precious to God** than birds! [25]

Which one of you can add a single hour to your life or 18 inches to your height by worrying really hard? [26] If **worry can't change anything, why do you do it so much?**

- Has worry replaced your faith?
- Do you have more faith in worrying?
- We can get to a spot where we believe that fretting & worrying are more productive than faith.
- Why do we worry and stress so much? Because we've let go in our relationship with God & don't really believe he's going to take care of us.

## What Do Your Worries Say About Your Relationship With God?

Luke 12:27-28 VCE

[27] Think about those beautiful wild lilies growing over there. They don't work up a sweat toiling for needs or wants—they don't worry about clothing. Yet the great King Solomon never had an outfit that was half as glorious as theirs! [28] Look at the grass growing over there. One day it's thriving in the fields. The next day it's being used as fuel. If God takes such good care of such transient things, how much more you can depend on God to care for you, weak in faith as you are.

- We can worry so much in our day to day lives because we doubt God's ability and willingness to take care of our lives.
- Have you reached a place with God that you no longer trust him to help you?

## What Do Your Worries Say About Your Wants?

Luke 12:29-32 VCE

[29] **Don't reduce your life to the pursuit of food and drink; don't let your mind be filled with anxiety.** [30] People of the world who don't know God pursue these things, but you have a Father caring for you, a Father who knows all your needs. [31] Since you don't need to worry—about security and safety, about food and clothing—then **pursue God's kingdom first and foremost,** and these other things will come to you as well. [32] My little flock, don't be afraid. God is your Father, and **your Father's great joy is to give you His kingdom.**

- Is building God's Kingdom a priority in your life?
- Is it something you want?
- Are you passionate about building his kingdom?
- Do you have a vision for what he wants you to build?

## God's Kingdom: Grateful or For Granted?

Luke 12:33-36 VCE

[33] That means you can sell your possessions and give generously to the poor. You can have a **different kind of savings plan:** one that never depreciates, one that never defaults, one that can't be plundered by crooks or destroyed by natural calamities. [34] **Your treasure will be stored in**

**the heavens**, and since your treasure is there, your heart will be lodged there as well. [36] I'm not just talking theory. **There is urgency in all this.** If you're apathetic and complacent, then you'll miss the moment of opportunity.

- If you don't treasure the kingdom then you won't be urgent about building it.
- When we aren't urgent we miss the moment of opportunity.
- What are the moments of opportunity you may have missed to change a life and make a difference?

## **Come Alive: Will You Surrender Your Stress?**

Matthew 26:36-39 NIV

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." [37] He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. [38] Then he said to them, "**My soul is overwhelmed** with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." [39] Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, **if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.** Yet not as I will, but as you will."

- It's easy to assume Jesus was overwhelmed by the idea of the level of pain he would have to endure on his journey to the cross.
- That may be true, but it is not the only reason he was overwhelmed. We learn from this Bible study that often times we are overwhelmed because we want something other than what God wants for us.
- The question is are we willing to imitate Jesus and wrestle with God to surrender our stress so we can embrace God's dream for our lives?
- Once Jesus embraced God's dream for his life he was no longer overwhelmed, but at peace.

## **Additional Scriptures:**

- Mark 14:39 VCE
- Isaiah 27:5 AMPC



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