

DREAMS, PLANS AND SETTING GOALS

Where are you going in life? Have you even thought about it? Are you a person that is just in a canoe going down the river, lazily enjoying life but really going nowhere? Are you someone who says, "I would like to do something with my life. I don't really have anyone in my life to help me. I don't even know how you do it. I don't know how you make plans or set goals." God is here to help you today. God is the biggest goal setter there ever was. He set a goal to win the whole world. He set a goal to send His son, Jesus, to die for people's sins and pay the price. It happened and He got the victory. Jesus got the victory. Jesus is your victory. He wants to help you and give you a life that is full of good things. Most people seem to think, "If I trust the Lord and if I hope and pray, it will happen."

It does not happen in my world like that. You have to work really hard. My husband and I have a saying of, "Work as if everything depended on you and pray as if everything depended on God." Nothing is ever really accomplished in a big way unless someone works a lot. God gives you power and strength, God gives you wisdom, and then you have to do something with it. You cannot just sit around and say, "Well, Jesus, make my arm move so I can be a great artist." No, you have to paint hundreds of pictures. "Make my brain move so I am really good on the computer." No, you have to study and learn what to do. You have to make your mistakes. "I do not want to make any mistakes, Betty." You are going to make mistakes and you can learn from them.

I have a principal that I use in working with all of the women and men that I train. It is the principal of next time. Instead of getting so angry with yourself, what is something you can say to yourself that will make a big difference? Instead of "Why did you do that? You are so stupid. Why did you do that?", you can say "What did I do wrong, Lord and how could I do it better. Next time I will do it that way." When you are working with people, you can teach them that. Maybe you work in a company and you have people that are under you. Maybe they are trying but they are afraid to really try because they are afraid they will make a mistake and you will get angry. Just teach them to get out there and try, and if they make a mistake, you can talk about it and figure out next time how would you do it differently. When I was starting out as the minister of women at Trinity Fellowship in Amarillo, I had never really been the leader where the buck stopped with me, where everything came to me. I had either co-led with my husband or with another woman, or I had been the second person in command, but I had never been the one that everything came to me. I was so scared. I said, "Lord, you have to help me. I don't have any goals, I don't have any dreams. I don't know what I am going to be doing or how to do it. What if I fail? What if I don't think of anything? God, You have to help me. I am not going to be able to do it unless you do."

There is the most wonderful verse in the Bible, Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now glory be to God, who by His mighty power at work within us is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope or even dream of." I began to say, "Lord, how am I going to do this? What do I do?" An amazing thing began to happen to me. I was out working in my garden and suddenly this little plan came into my head. It was "What is the vision that you want me to do with this group, Lord? What is Your vision for this group?" I was not talking about a supernatural vision. I was talking about what did the Lord see that He wanted to happen with this group of women.

The next thing that began to go through my head was "What would be the purpose of it?" I had to think that out. The next thing that started going through my head was what kind of goals would I want to reach. What would God want me to reach? What kind of goals? I began to think about that and work on that. I began to write them down every time another idea came into my head.

Then, an amazing thing began to happen to me. I began to think, "God, you are so creative. Would you give me brand new creative ideas that no one has thought of to do with these women?" Amazingly, the ideas just flooded in. I wrote down 75 ideas. It was amazing to me. The last one was, "God, would you show me in your word that you want me to do this because I know it is going to get hard and I know I might feel like giving up and quitting. If You will show me in the Word a specific Bible verse that I could hang onto, I will know that I have to keep going because this is what the verse was." It helped me set up amazingly well. I was very organized, I knew what I wanted to do. It took me about three weeks of thinking it out and praying over it. As I began to build the ministry, I began to realize that I wanted to build up, train leaders, and release leaders. I had a lot of women that had never stepped out in leadership. I had women that had been hurt and they did not want to step out. I went to them one by one and said,

"Would you come help me do this?" They would say, "I think I might like to," or "I don't know if I can do it or not." I said, "Could I share with you the plan God gave me and then you do it for what I am asking you to do."

Get a vision of what God wants. Just ask Him what He wants in this particular part of women's ministry.

Give me a purpose. Why am I doing what I do? Give me goals. What do you want done in six months?

What do you want done in 12 months? What do you want done in two years?" For me, when God was doing it to me, He gave me a four to five year plan in the very beginning. He gave me what purpose, what goals. I had Him show me in His Word. Another thing I did was to ask them to write it down on paper. I told them I wanted them to show me the piece of paper and especially when they would bring it to me, I would say, "I want you to be able to prove to me that you know for sure that God has called you to this particular job. Then when it gets hard, you cannot quit unless God tells you that you are through and you need to move on. You will have to answer to God, not me." It worked great. Then I had them teach the women below them how to do the same thing. Out of that, about 200 women were trained as leaders and they are still leading today. It is an amazing thing to watch them. Just by carefully putting God's plan and purpose and dreams in them and in their lives.

What does the Bible say about goals and dreams and plans? Is that what God does? Look at this scripture. It says we should make plans, "Counting on God to direct us". You begin to get ideas of what you want for your life, what you want for your vocation, what you want for your family, what you want for your marriage, and what you want for your own personal dreams. Sometimes you have to wait a really long time before it happens. There is even a Bible verse from God to encourage you in that. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life." It is so true to have to wait and wait. I certainly understand that.

I have always been busy serving the Lord since I was about 26. I have done all kinds of ministries, women's ministries, couple's ministries, jail ministries, high school ministries, college ministries, single's ministries. I have always known in my heart that was not really what God had me designed to do. They were all the preparation. So I kept having to wait and wait and wait. I felt, "God have I done something wrong? Why doesn't it happen?" I began to understand something that maybe will help you. God has plans for history.

There are certain times something big needs to happen and it is bigger than just one person like me. It involves the world. What I was having to wait on, but I did not know it, was for the time that women were released in a really big way all over the world to do great things for God. It was more than just doing little things behind the scenes. God was calling women forth to be generals in His army. God was calling women and anointing them and giving them great and powerful ministries. Look at Joyce Meyer. She is a perfect example. Beth Moore is another perfect example, and Cindy Jacobs. They are all strong, dynamic women of God who are out there doing things that anyone would look at and say, "Wow, that is really big." Yet, what were they all waiting on. They have all kind of risen to the top about the same time. What were they waiting on? Was their hope deferred? I am sure if you talked to them, they would say, "I felt like it was never going to happen." What were they waiting on? Joel 2:28, in the Old Testament, Acts 2:16-17 in the New Testament. They both say the same thing written thousands of years apart, and they did not happen until now 2,000 years after Acts. "In the last days, men and women will prophesy." What does that mean? Prophecy in the Word of the Lord is what it means. In different ways, God is so creative.

Remember, pray for creative ways to do what he has called you to do. Just take the three women I just named. They are all completely different. They have different personalities and they have different callings. They have different ways of communicating. But each one of them is a powerhouse for God.

When you are waiting, consider that maybe He is not only preparing you. There is a set time in the history of the world that it needs to happen.

God is the one who puts these desires in you for goals for your family. Have you ever thought about setting family goals? We have set goals in five areas of our life since 1979. We set spiritual goals every year. We set personal goals, emotional or mental goals, and financial goals. There are all kinds of ways to set goals. You can have as many goals as you want. I asked a man who was teaching on goal setting, "How many goals can you have?" He said, "You can have 100 in each area, provided they were all going in the same direction." Get out a piece of paper and write down these five areas. Let's see what God is saying about how to reach these areas and get something done.

Spiritual is first. That is your personal walk with God. Out of that, if it is done right and growing, everything else falls into place. There are family goals, financial goals, emotional or mental goals and physical goals.

If you have never done this before, you might want to just do three or four for the rest of the year. It does not matter. They did a study at Harvard and they discovered something. I am going to say it and I want you to see where you fit in. Eighty-seven percent of all people have no goals and dreams. Ten percent have thought about what they wanted in these areas. Three percent have written them down. The three

percent that had written down their goals achieved 50 to 100 times more than the ones who had just thought about it and certainly thousands of times more than the ones who had no goal and no plan. A man with a plan cannot be stopped by a man without a plan because you are purposeful and dedicated.

Who are some people in the Bible that set goals and made plans? Moses is one and Hannah is another. God put in their hearts what He wanted for them. They had a little bit of trouble figuring it out, and maybe you have, too. At first Moses did not know what he was doing, and then he got in his heart, "Somehow, some way, I am supposed to help my Hebrew brothers." He tried to do it on his own, and what happened? He got angry and murdered someone. Then he got caught and ran away for 40 years. He missed it. But God was so faithful that He came back to Moses. He talked to him way out there where he was hiding and still made the plan happen.

What about Hannah? She was married to a man and she could not have babies. He had married her sister and that sister had lots of babies. Hannah could not have a baby. It was so in her heart to have one. She prayed to the Lord and she said, "If you will give me a baby, he will be yours." What really happened in the natural. She went to the temple, she went to pray and was crying bitterly before the Lord. The priest thought she was drunk. She was probably rocking back and forth and sobbing. He went over to her and said, "What are you doing getting drunk at the temple?" She said, "Sir I am not. I am crying my heart out to the Lord. I want a baby." The priest said, "Go on home. You will have a baby." And she did. She honored that promise to God. She gave that baby to the Lord just like she was supposed to do. She wanted to raise a godly family. She got a lot of other children, but she got a lot more. Do you remember I said in the beginning of this lesson that God is able to do more than you would ever ask for or dream of or hope for. She got a lot. She got a man that changed a country, a nation, a world, continues to change the world. His story is written in two books of the Bible.

The Bible says in Ephesians 2:10, "We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago." Are you aware that before God even made the world, He had your plan in mind. That was a big surprise to me to learn that. I thought maybe I was just thinking up these desires I had inside me to do what I am doing right now. I thought that was just me. I even had people come along and say, "Who do you think you are that you could do something like that? Why would you want to do that? That is just egotistical." Inside my head I would be thinking, "It isn't either. It is what I want to do. I feel called to it. I am supposed to do it." I made plenty of mistakes getting here. Lots of mistakes, and God still did it anyway. Why? Because long ago, according to that verse, before you even knew it, He had planned what He wanted to do with your life. Is everyone achieving the plan? No, not at all. Some people go their whole life and die and sadly enough they are going to stand before the Lord and He is going to say, "Did you do what I asked you to do?" You know the story of the man that buried his talent in the ground. It made that master angry. He said, "You wicked and slothful servant. I just gave you one talent and you didn't even do anything with that." I have seen people look at people with five talents and say, "I am a one-talent person." That is not very much. There is another way to look at it. What if your one talent is being an artist? That is all you are good at, but you are one great artist. That is good enough. That is God's plan for your life.

Let's talk about goals, dreams and plans. Who are some people who had a dream from God, got the goal, and even got the plan from God? Noah is one, "Build me an ark and get your family in it." Abraham, "I am going to give you a son and your descendants are going to be more than the sand on the beach and more than the stars at night." Joseph, "I want you to be a great leader. I want you to help your family." Moses, "Bring the people out." Joshua, "Take over for Moses. Don't be afraid. Lead the people into the promised land." David, "Kill Goliath." Jesus, "Die."

What does God say to us, what is His goal for us? "Go and preach the gospel to everyone. Make disciples, not just get people saved. Making disciples is a much bigger job. Are you all supposed to be like I am? Are you supposed to be up here? No, you are not. There is still a way for you to go and preach the gospel. I believe personally, because I have experienced it so much, that I cannot do what I am doing if I do not have people praying really hard, entering in with me, preparing that ground before I ever go. There are people praying over this lesson right this minute because they know you are going to be listening to it. They are praying for you and for me. There are people praying and it is vital. Some of you are homebound and you are old and you think "This is the end of my life. I will just sit around until I die." No, you can pray your head off. If you are in a hospital bed and you think, "I am stuck here for six months." Then pray. Learn how to get a prayer life with God that is so intimate and real that every morning God can say, "This is what I need you to pray for today." You can learn to listen and pray.

Another thing that God can do in people, when He says go and preach the gospel. You can give the money for them to go. I have the most generous people helping me. It is amazing to see. I think that God's real people that are really close to Him are very, very generous. Do you think that? It seems like that to me. I see people do things and I think, "You are not doing that for me. You love God so much and

you want to help His ministry so much that you are helping me. I want to thank you. I appreciate it.” Go, preach the gospel to every creature. That means everyone. Do not have partiality. I have discovered that there are all kinds of ways to preach the gospel. For me, I really like big crowds. I am not scared. I get excited. I do not ever get nervous, I just get excited. I am not nervous doing this. It is fun. I have also discovered it is not enough for me. I have to be able to relate to people one on one. I have to be able to just sit down, talk and share Jesus. It takes both for me. Some of you share the gospel in small groups. I can do that, too, but I really do not like it. I am not comfortable in it. It is just not my thing, but for some of you it is. Some of you write very well. You can write and describe what people are feeling better than they can even say it. It takes faith to set goals. It takes action to reach goals. It takes much thought and much prayer. Goals are something you want to achieve.

We have this wall with all of these help signs on it. Pray and ask God, “What are your goals in each one of these areas?” Think about it, it will come to you. Write them down. Remember I said you would achieve more? You can even put dates by them and say by such and such a date I want to be out of college, or whatever your goal is. Make a plan. God can change your plans. You put your goals in concrete but your plans in sand. Once you get out there and start trying to make it happen it can change, but the goal can still be reached.

Another thing you can do is get pictures of what you want and put them up somewhere; your bathroom, visor in your car, kitchen or your computer. There is something about seeing that over and over that your mind begins to think of ways to accomplish it. You begin to move toward it. You begin to recognize it when you see it. I did that one time when I was going on my very first mission trip to Hawaii. I went to a travel agency and got a picture of a church on this travel brochure. It was white with green trim, like the little steeple type church. I put that out and looked at it all of the time. March in Maui. We went to Maui and went over a hill one day and there was that very church. It worked. If you want a home, put up a picture of the kind of home you want. However, as you reach your goal, be sure you set a new one. Once you stop having goals, you stop growing. You are able to do more than you think you can.

Now look at this little saying and remember, “Eight-five percent of all people have no goals and dreams. Ten percent have thought about them. Three percent have written them down. The three percent that write them down achieve 50 to 100 times more than those who have only thought about them.” Set up short-term goal and long-term goals, then go after them. God is for you. He is going to help you. He is going to be excited because you are out there moving and doing something. It is okay to do this. It is okay to go for it. God wants to help you.

Do you have Jesus in your life? Do you have Him in your heart? Have you ever said, “Jesus, come into my life and save me. I need you Jesus.” He loves you so much. Do that today.

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. Consider what situations God has called you to be a leader?
2. List the five areas Betty presented to talk with our God about. Then ask God to help you answer these questions for your situation.
3. How does Ephesians 3:20 give you encouragement?
4. How does the “Theory of Next Time” apply to leadership?

To watch the video on DREAMS, PLANS AND SETTING GOALS, Pillar Six, Leadership Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

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