

How to fulfil your God-Given Dream

Today we're going to take a look at people in the Bible who became **big dreamers for God**. If you once dreamed big for God but have since become disillusioned as to whether or not those dreams can still be realised, the scriptural models we are going to examine should help you to dream big dreams again.

Genesis 15:1 says, *"After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward'."* Another translation says, *"After this the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.'"* In this verse we find four essential attitudes for fulfilling your God-given Dream:

1. **Accept that your dream will need to be tested.**

The first phrase of this verse requires closer investigation. *"After these things."* After what things? What had been happening in the life of Abram up to this point? Let's quickly review the three preceding chapters. In Genesis 12 God calls Abram to leave his home at age 75. So he sets out, not even knowing the precise location of the land to which God is sending him. Shortly thereafter Abram finds himself in the midst of a famine. He's forced to take his family, servants, flocks and herds into Egypt. While he is there he lies about his wife Sarai (saying she's his sister) so that Pharaoh won't kill him. Still, Pharaoh takes Sarai into his harem but God protects her and she is returned to Abram untouched. Notice, Abram was weak - He lied. There's no excuse for his lying. Yet Abram did not stop his journey because of his own sinful failure. He still obeyed God!

* In **Genesis 12** that Abram's dream was tested by FAMINE and FAILURE.

In Genesis 13, Abram separates from his nephew Lot because of a conflict that had erupted between their herdsmen. There wasn't enough grazing land for both their sets of herds and flocks. So Abram allows Lot to take his pick of land on which to graze and Lot chooses foolishly. Sure, he picked the lush land, but it was also connected to the wicked city of Sodom. Eventually, Lot inches his way into the city and his family life is devastated because he chose the wrong priorities in life. Abram could have picked first due to his seniority, but instead, he was completely selfless. So remember, just because you can do something doesn't mean that you should be doing it!

* In **Genesis 13** we see that Abram's dream was tested by CONFLICT.

In Genesis 14 Abram rescues Lot from being taken captive. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, where Lot and his family had been living, lost their battle to a group of Babylonian kings. As a consequence Lot and his family were among the people taken hostage - probably to become slaves. Abram puts together an army of his servants and rescues Lot and his family, with all the other people and goods claimed by the heathen kings. Then the King of Sodom tells Abram that he can keep the spoils of the battle he had just won (verse 21). It seems arrogant to me that this king would offer Abram something he had lost in battle - and Abram had regained. Anyway, Abram refused the offer because he did not want the King of Sodom to ever be able to say, "I made Abram rich" (verse 23). Abram wanted everyone to know that it was his God, not any man, that had blessed him.

He was willing to refuse material goods based on this principle.

* In **Genesis 14** we see that Abrams' dream was tested by WARFARE.

Note, Abram's dream was not only tested by FAMINE, FAILURE, and CONFLICT, it was also tested by WARFARE followed by PROSPERITY.

Back to our opening Scripture... "**After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision (a dream).**" After what things did the Lord appear to Abram in a vision and speak to him?

- AFTER stepping out in faith and leaving his homeland.
- AFTER he'd been through a famine.
- AFTER he'd embarrassed himself by lying to the King of Egypt.
- AFTER he'd had a dispute with a family member - Lot.
- AFTER he'd fought and won a battle with the Babylonian kings.
- AFTER he'd passed the test with regards his possessions.

'*After all these ordeals*' ... God appeared to him in a vision. Most of us would have given up after having gone through just one of these trials. That's often the main reason why so many dreams from God never materialise - we give up too soon! When we realise that our dreams must be tested, we will adopt a better attitude towards tests and trials. And a positive attitude is essential for fulfilling our dreams. Those who see their God-given dreams fully accomplished are the ones who persevere through tough times. They are the people who refuse to quit. Their tenacity and perseverance prevail. This is the biggest difference between winners and losers in any field. In business, sports, marriage and church life, many succeed because they have a superior attitude toward their tests and trials. They simply accept them as a means to an end! The way to fulfilment and accomplishment!

People who achieve their God-given dreams aren't always the most brilliant; not always the most talented; not always the better skilled. And they don't always have the best resources at their disposal. They're just people who refuse to let go of their dream. Some of you are probably thinking, "Why do I have to be tested to realise God's dream?" Because God can't give his precious dreams to people whose minds are cluttered with other things. He needs your undivided attention. Tests and trials are not meant to discourage you - they're meant to draw you closer to God. A. W. Tozer said, "*It's doubtful God can use any man greatly until he's been hurt deeply.*" God will never inflict pain to get your attention. But He sometimes allows hardship to come about so that you can reset your values.

Abram passed every test and trial, so God gave him a vision. The first attitude to fulfilling your God-given dream is this: "realise your dream will be tested."

2. Remember that God offers reassurance.

"The Lord spoke to Abram in a vision." You are never alone! God desires to speak to you. He wants' to reassure you - to remove all doubts and fears. Do you realise that you have it better than Abraham had it? God can speak to you any time of the day, if you will read His Word. You have much more revelation from God than Abram ever had.

Therefore, what will happen when you hear from God? Many great things! One of which is, you will be able to face your fears. Fear is the greatest enemy to fulfilling your God-given dreams. Fear is a dream killer. That's why God's communication to Abram included this next promise... **"Do not be afraid, Abram, I will protect you."** The first thing God does when He speaks to us is, He reassures us! He removes all doubts and fears!

3. **Replace any fear you might have with faith.**

What might Abram be afraid of at this point in his life? The retribution of the Babylonian kings he had defeated in battle? The wrath of the King of Egypt for lying about his wife? No, Abram had already survived those tests. The greatest of Abram's tests was the test of his **faith**. God had promised to make him great and make him the head of a great nation. (**Genesis 12:2**) You know the problem... Abram and Sarai were old and childless. How could God possibly hope to fulfil His promise to Abram now? Yes, Abram believed the Lord (**Genesis 15:6**), but he still wondered "how" God was going to fulfil His promise. Abram suggested to God that his trusted servant Eliezer become his heir (**Genesis 15:3**). Sarai's plan was for Abram to father a child by her Egyptian servant Hagar (**Genesis 16:1-2**). Both plans totally missed the mark. Why? Because both alternatives were motivated by fear.

God wanted Abram's child to be a **child of faith**, not fear. *"Don't be afraid, Abram."* Just because it is humanly impossible doesn't mean it is Divinely impossible!" Jesus said in **Matthew 17:20**, *"...if you had faith even as small as a tiny mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move!' and it would go far away. Nothing would be impossible."* So don't go around and around in circles because of fear and insecurity or timidity! *"If the Son has made you free you are free indeed!"* (**John 8:36**) So, the third essential attitude to fulfilling your God-given dream is - "replace your fear with faith."

4. **Acknowledge that a great reward awaits you.**

Genesis 15:1 in the NKJ says, ***"I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward."*** Which, in itself is a great truth. Our reward is getting to have a relationship with God, not just the fulfilment of our dreams!

The Hebrew word for "shield" is often translated figuratively to denote protection - which, of course, is what a shield is for. Specifically, it is for protection in battle. But once again, the battle in which God wanted to protect Abram was not a physical one - it was spiritual. **Ephesians 6:12**, *"We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world. So put on all the armour that God gives."*

And what is the shield in your God-given armour? **Ephesians 6:16**, *"Let your faith be like a shield, and you will be able to stop all the flaming arrows of the evil one."* In order to win the spiritual battle involving the fulfilment of your God-given dreams you will have to 'gaze' at what you cannot see. **Hebrews 11:9-10** says, *"By an act of faith, he (Abraham) lived in the country promised him, lived as a stranger camping in tents... Abraham did it by keeping his eye on an unseen city with real, eternal foundations - the City designed and built by God."*

When Walt Disney's widow was being interviewed after the completion of Disney World in Florida, the reporter remarked, *"Isn't it a shame that your husband never got to see this?"* Mrs. Disney quickly corrected him saying, *"He did see it. That is why it is here!"* People who keep their eyes on the prize get to see what others cannot see.

Abraham was one such person. Will you be one? If so, you will have to

1. Realise your dream will be **tested**.
2. Remember God offers **reassurance**.
3. Replace any fear you might have with **faith**.
4. Acknowledge the **great reward** that awaits you.

Whatever the dream God has given you, never stop dreaming that dream!