

Dreaming With God

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*Co-laboring With God
for Cultural Transformation*

BILL JOHNSON

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to the “fathers” in my life. They lived unselfishly, seeing the best in me when I could see little of anything. They weren’t always much older than me, but were always more mature and stable. I am forever indebted to them.

To my own dad, M. Earl Johnson. He lived at home as he did in the pulpit—honest, humble, visionary, devoted to his family, a man of character, great compassion, and lived life as a worshiper. He has gone home to be with Jesus, the lover of his soul. Thank you, dad! I am forever thankful for you.

To Chip Worthington. You taught me the value of the life of prayer and trained me to hunger for revival.

To Mario Murillo. You helped me to see that miracles are normal, revival is possible, and that being sold out to Jesus is the only acceptable way to live.

To Darol Blunt. You illustrated the life of grace, and helped me to discover the pleasure of the Lord over my life.

To Dick Joyce. Your commitment to me as a pastor of a small church in a small town established a standard of kingdom principles that I hope to never loose. You illustrated that the normal Christian life is a supernatural life.

To all of you, thank you. A million times, thank you.

Acknowledgements

My special thanks to Dann Farrelly, Carol Reginato, and Allison Armerding for your labor of love in editing my manuscript. This would have been near impossible without you.

To the whole Bethel Church family—you amaze me. Your tireless passion for God and your lifestyle of risk has helped to create the context for the greatest move of God I have ever witnessed. Together may we go to the next level!

Endorsements

Bill Johnson has an appetite for friendship with God, and all the mystery, revelation, power, and glory that comes with it. He can't bear to miss out. He contends for breakthrough, for the impossible, for all that only God can do. And in passion and worship he calls on God to allow us to experience what we thought was reserved only for the future. Bill is living in revival now, and it is a rare joy in this book to let him lead us to higher ground and increasingly taste the powers of the age to come.

Rolland Baker, Ph.D.
Heidi G. Baker, Ph.D.
Directors & Founders of Iris Ministries
Authors, *There's Always Enough*

Bill Johnson is a wonderful friend, a covenant brother, and a revivalist who is moving in extraordinary signs and wonders. He is also a mentor to me through his books and his revelatory teachings concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. I have no doubt that *Dreaming With God* will change your life as his teachings have impacted countless thousands.

Dr. Che Ahn
Senior Pastor Harvest Rock, Pasadena, CA
Founder and President of Harvest International Ministries
Author, *Into the Fire* and *Faith that Heals*

If you have ever wondered what God's ultimate intention and purpose is all about, you'll clearly discover the answer in Bill Johnson's newest book, *Dreaming With God*. When I read it I felt as if Bill was reading my thoughts and my yearnings. I felt like somebody finally had the guts to put these truths in printed form.

While Bill shares about the "tools" of the Kingdom trade as heirs of the Father, I believe this book is perhaps one of the greatest "tools" for accessing the riches of God's grace in the new millennium. When I think about Bill Johnson's life and ministry, one word emerges clear as crystal: Congruence. He embodies the quality and state of being in harmony both within and without. If you have ever heard any of his teachings, there is an ease of flow that is indicative of a life lived in harmony with the One who delights in intimacy with him. Take your time with each chapter and discover the secrets and the hidden mysteries of the indwelling Christ, apply your heart to wisdom, and dream big with God.

Mark J. Chironna, Ph.D
Mark Chironna Ministries
The Master's Touch International Church
Orlando, Florida

Bill Johnson's latest book, *Dreaming With God*, is written for Christian believers who are being "held in abeyance." It's not obedience, it's abeyance. This is a military term describing the hand-picked soldiers a general trains for specialized activity, to win the war. The general keeps them on the sidelines and they are given special training that helps them achieve a readiness for the last battle. When the conflict reaches a certain stage that only the general recognizes, they are sent in fully prepared to win the war and carry it to finality.

While reading Bill's book I was impressed over and over again of his battle plan and how appropriate his explanations are for the final conflict between spiritual darkness and spiritual light. I believe

this book is especially written for those of us now being held in abeyance. We're just waiting for our marching orders to get in and help wrap things up. You'll be spiritually challenged knowing you've been prepared for such a time as this.

Dick Mills

International Evangelist and Conference Speaker
Author, *The Spirit-Filled Believer's Daily Devotional*
and *Marriage Bliss*

Bill Johnson has made a major contribution in his latest book, *Dreaming With God*. It is a brilliant sequel to his previous two books.

The history of this era will record the awesome impact of Bill's thinking and writing. He has given us a report on the Kingdom of God, but that is not all. It is a report that is credible, balanced, authoritative, and laboratory proved. What is happening in Bethel Church in particular and Redding, California, in general, is confirming indeed. Add to this the fact that Bill is found dashing around the planet simply sharing the story and seeing the results of Kingdom preaching, and you have irrefutable evidence of the value of the message.

I asked Bill a few months ago, "What has the fact that you have been preaching the Kingdom message for 18 years have to do with what is happening right now in Bethel Church and Redding, California." His immediate and terse answer was, simply, "Everything!"

Jack Taylor

Founder of Dimensions Ministries
Author of *The Word of God With Power*

For the seeker, this book is a discovery of truths that will challenge the way you think and affect the way you live. It will require several readings to contain and apply the revelation found on every page. For me personally, it brought clarity to unspoken questions,

practical understanding of my own desires and purpose, and passionate increase of love for my Father.

Karen Wheaton
Founder, The Ramp Youth Ministries
Recording Artist and TBN TV Host

Once again my friend, Bill Johnson, demonstrates a clarion call to bring Heaven down to earth. The content of this book is thought-provoking, inspiring, and most of all a clear challenge for Christians desiring to recapture their inheritance in God. Be advised: once you have read this book you will no longer be satisfied with the ordinary. Bill's passion to see the Kingdom of God established in our lives is highly contagious and will stir your appetite for extraordinary encounters with a supernatural God. Refreshing and real, this book will revolutionize your thinking.

Larry Randolph
International Conference Speaker
Author, *User Friendly Prophecy* and *Spirit Talk*

Writer Victor Hugo said, "There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come." The truth is there is one thing more powerful, a God idea whose time has come. *Dreaming With God* is that idea.

Do you wish to live large in Christ in the greatest revival in history? Did you know you could be purpose-driven, talent-laden, and Spirit-powered? Did you know that the Church's destiny is not to impress the world by imitating the world? God has called us to overwhelm the world with original music, inventions, art, and miracles! Not only can we know God and worship God, we can *dream* with Him. This book shows you how to make those dreams a reality.

Original expression is virtually unlimited and as unique as every person God has created. Bill exposes the traditions that have limited

God and devastated our progress. Now we know why there have been so many casualties in spiritual warfare. We sent in only the preachers and told the rest of God's army to cheer us on from the sidelines as tithers.

This book hands out weapons to all the Christians. The arts, business, science, education, politics, and even the media are no longer a safe haven against a new breed of believer.

The common Christian can morph into a fountainhead of excellence, originality, and skills that will overwhelm this present darkness.

Mario Murillo, Evangelist
Founder, Mario Murillo Ministries
Author, *Critical Mass* and *I'm the Christian the
Devil Warned You About*

Bill Johnson has captured one of the most important concepts in human development—how to dream the will of God. His inspiring and insightful presentation of the concept of “desire” and its role in human activity, creativity, wisdom, and personal fulfillment is guaranteed to provide answers to the deep questions of the human heart. I highly recommend this book and hope everyone will read it.

Dr. Myles Munroe
MMI - International
Nassau, Bahamas

Bill Johnson extends to us vital keys that will unlock the latent creativity residing in everyone who is willing to open their hands and take hold of the Kingdom purpose. Every chapter will take you through new thresholds leading you to greater appreciation of the uniqueness of your gifting.

Randall Worley
Founder, Headwaters Ministries
Apostolic Consultant and Conference Speaker

Bill Johnson's newest book, *Dreaming With God*, is great. Great because he has said things others were afraid to say because the statements were so contrary to traditional ways of interpreting Scripture or the traditional opinions of evangelical scholars.

Bill has written a book that is based in grace not law. It is about enjoying God as He enjoys us—not about performing for God. The author gets us to look at earth from Heaven's perspective, and to look at the Bible from a first-century perspective, instead of a 16th-century perspective. I doubt if anyone can read this without having to stop and think through the implications of its statements. *Dreaming With God* does not look at difficulties, challenges, or problems from earth's limitations, but from Heaven's unlimited power. This is not a book for the timid, the doubters, or those who want Christianity to be reduced to a mere moral philosophy. It is a book for those who desire the supernatural aspect of their Christian faith that is consistent with the Christianity of the Bible and the Christianity of the history of the Church that is full of the supernatural exploits of those who believe in Christ.

Randy Clark

Global Awakening Ministries

Author, *God Can Use Little ol' Me* and *There's More*

The *passion-driven worshiper* will always accomplish more than the *purpose-driven worker*. The first is motivated through friendship and intimacy, the latter through fear and responsibility. The Ephesian church was filled with those who persevered and toiled but had left their first love. Paul, on the other hand, commends those in Thessalonica for their labor of love.

Bill Johnson challenges us to rethink our priorities, thereby becoming *passionate partners* rather than *persevering producers*. After all it is those who *know* their God who will be strong and do exploits.

David Ravenhill
Author, *The Jesus Letters*
Lindale, Texas

I always cry when I read Bill Johnson's books. I cry because I am provoked to desire that has no language but tears. It's as if I am on the threshold of a kingdom that my spirit longs for and there is suddenly language and definition to concepts that have hitherto only rattled around in my spirit. As I read *Dreaming With God*, my spirit echoed the final words of the book: "The thought of missing something that could have been the experience of my generation is pure torture. I can't possibly sleep in this atmosphere, because if I do, I know I'll miss the reason for which I was born." *Dreaming With God* inspires me to live with God more deeply.

Stacey Campbell
Cofounder, Be A Hero
Coproducer and Coauthor, *Praying the Bible*

In Bill Johnson's book, *Dreaming With God*, Bill outdoes himself—as usual. In this new brilliant work, we're told that David, of the Bible, set a new "high water mark." But then, so does Bill Johnson. He tells us God is saying to each of us, "The Temple wasn't my idea. David was my idea." If you are, as this work states, one of those who feel "discouraged because their dreams have failed..." please know that Bill has written this book for *you*—because *you are God's idea!* And if that isn't good news, as they say, "it'll do until good news comes along!"

Steve Shultz
THE ELIJAH LIST
Founder, *The Voice of the Prophetic* magazine

The inspired Psalmist said, "the path of the just shines brighter till the perfect day." When the Church breaks through to new revelation, the whole world gets enlightened. The Reformation produced

the Renaissance, and 90 percent of the world's inventions have been created since Azusa Street broke loose in 1906. As the Prophetic movement gathered momentum in the 1980s, another power surge occurred and knowledge began to double every seven years! Apostles are now bringing us into a rendezvous with "the perfect day" as men like Bill Johnson forge a path of revelation that is brighter with each book. As the world creeps into deeper darkness, torchbearers like Bill Johnson open portals to release the knowledge of the glory in language so tangible and accessible it can't help but inspire end-time exploits. It certainly inspires me!

Lance Wallnau
President, Lancelearning Group
International Conference Speaker

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Foreword

Did you know that the stars speak?

They did in Abraham's day! The Creator of the universe gave a direct and amazing word to one of His friends. He told him to go out and count the number of stars that lit up the sky at night. Imagine, counting the stars at night!

So what did Abraham do? He went out and started counting the stars! I suppose it was something like this. Abraham goes out in the evening air after telling his wife, Sarah, good night and goes on a long walk pondering and peering into the heavens. He begins in obedience to count the stars while talking to himself and God. "One, two, four, twenty-seven, forty-five, one hundred fifty-five, two thousand sixty-two, ugh, ugh, ugh...Wow, count the stars?! What do you mean, I cannot count the number of stars—they seem so limitless."

The Lord replied, "Abraham—count the stars." Perplexed a bit as he attempts to mentally perceive what the man upstairs could mean by this strange command, Abraham continues in his quest to follow the direction of the unseen voice. "Three thousand seven hundred and...oh, I forgot—where was I?"

The voice is heard again, but this time offering some inside explanation. "The number of the stars will be the number of your descendants." "What, huh? Did you know that Sarah and I have

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been married for a long time and we don't have any fruit, let alone...?" But the voice of the Master persisted, "Count the stars. How many are there?"

Yes, the stars spoke to Abraham. Perhaps for a while, the voice of the stars haunted him as he would go out night after night staring into the realm of the impossible. But somewhere along the way, something changed. Did the circumstances change? No, well, not yet at least. What changed then? Abraham, like the rest of us, went from mentally assessing to heart believing.

Somehow God's dream seeped into Abraham's heart. After many trials and tests and errors, Abraham reached a point when he went out at night and he rejoiced when he looked up! "Yes, there's a promise! Yes, that one is for me! That star is declaring that God's Word will come true! In fact, that glimmering light right there is saying to me, the promises of God are 'Yes and Amen!'"

Yes, the stars do speak.

You know the rest of the story. It is a true-to-life piece of history that has effected us all. You see, God is a dreamer and He is looking for people who will dream His dreams with Him.

In every generation, dreamers arise. They think outside of man-made boxes and dare to forge ahead. But today a new breed of dreamers is arising. They not only talk of things to come—they call it into being in the here and now. They live their dreams.

Thus, I have the great pleasure and honor of introducing you to a man and a message. The man is Bill Johnson. His message is a dream for sure! It is with utmost esteem that I present to you an example of when a man and his message are one.

Behold, here comes another dreamer! Will you join the growing throng?

Yes, the stars continue to speak!

Wasted On Jesus,
James W. Goll

Cofounder of Encounters Network
Author, *The Lost Art of Intercession*, *The Seer and Dream Language*

Introduction

I write that His Church would rise to her potential and change the course of world history. We do not have an inferior message. It is the only one that can be demonstrated through the transformation of a life, family, and city. *Dreaming With God* is written in response to the cries of the devoted, but unfulfilled. It is to give true believers permission to dream, knowing that God longs for us to partner with Him in manifesting the divine plan.

Dreaming With God was the title of a chapter in my book, *The Supernatural Power of a Transformed Mind*. Don Milam, of Destiny Image Publishing, felt it deserved more attention than I was able give it in one chapter. I agree, and have attempted to expand it in the following pages. Thank you, Don, for the encouragement.

CHAPTER 1

Co-laboring With God

*God has made Himself vulnerable
to the desires of His people.*

The disciples lived in awe of this One who called them to leave everything and follow. It was an easy choice. When He spoke, something came alive in them that they never knew existed. There was something in His voice that was worth living for—worth giving one's life for.

Everyday with Jesus was filled with a constant barrage of things they could not understand; whether it was a demoniac falling at Jesus' feet in worship, or the overbearing, religious leaders becoming silent in His presence; it was all overwhelming. Their lives had taken on a meaning and purpose that made everything else disappointing at best. Oh, they had their personal issues, for sure, but they had been apprehended by God and now nothing else mattered.

The momentum of the lifestyle they experienced would be hard for us to comprehend. Every word, every action seemed to have eternal significance. It must have occurred to them that to serve in the courts of this King would be far better than living in their own

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palaces. They were experiencing firsthand what David felt when he lived with God's presence as his priority.

THE ULTIMATE TRANSITION

Toward the end of His earthly life, Jesus gave His disciples the ultimate promotion. He told the twelve that He no longer called them servants, but friends. To be in the same room with Him, or even to admire Him from a distance, was more than they could have asked for. But Jesus brought them into His life. They had proven themselves worthy of the greatest promotion ever experienced by humanity—from servants to intimates. Perhaps only Esther of old could really understand what that exaltation felt like, as she, a servant girl who descended from captives, was promoted to queen. *“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you”* (John 15:15). With this promotion, the disciples' attention would now shift from the task at hand to the One within reach. They were given access to the secrets in the heart of God.

When Jesus gave His disciples this promotion, He did so by describing the difference between the two positions. Servants don't know what their master is doing. They don't have access to the personal, intimate realm of their master. They are task-oriented. Obedience is their primary focus—and rightly so, for their lives depend on success in that area. But friends have a different focus. It almost sounds blasphemous to say that obedience is not the top concern for the friend, but it is true. Obedience will always be important, as the previous verse highlights, *“You are my friends if you do whatever I command you”* (John 15:14). But friends are less concerned about disobeying than they are about disappointing. The disciples' focus shifted from the commandments to the presence, from the assignment to the relationship, from “what I do for Him” to

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“how my choices affect Him.” This bestowal of friendship made the revolution we continue to experience possible.

TRANSFORMED THROUGH PROMOTION

Several paradigm shifts take place in our hearts as we embrace this promotion. First, *what we know* changes, as we gain access to the heart of the Father. His heart is the greatest resource of information we need to function successfully in all of life. Jesus paid the price of our access to the Father, thereby granting us the *freedom* that comes from the truth we gain through that unlimited knowledge of His heart. Liberty is found in this phase of the promotion.

Second, our *experience* changes. Encounters with God as an intimate are quite different from those of a servant. His heartbeat becomes our heartbeat as we celebrate the shift in our own desires. The realm of His presence becomes our greatest inheritance, and divine encounters our greatest memories. Personal transformation is the only possible result from these supernatural experiences.

Third, our *function* in life radically changes. Instead of working *for* Him, we work *with* Him. We work not *for* His favor but *from* His favor. In this position He entrusts us with more of His power, and we are naturally changed into His likeness more and more.

Fourth, our *identity* is radically transformed. Our identity sets the tone for all we do and become. Christians who live out of who they really are cannot be crippled by the opinions of others. They don't work to fit into other people's expectations, but burn with the realization of who the Father says they are.

A SHIFT IN FOCUS

The classic example of the difference between servants and friends is found in the story of Mary and Martha. Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet while Martha chose to work in the kitchen (see Luke 10:38-42).

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Mary sought to please Him by being with Him while Martha tried to please Him through service. When Martha became jealous, she asked Jesus to tell Mary to help in the kitchen. Most servants want to degrade the role of the friend to feel justified in their works-oriented approach to God. Jesus' response is important to remember: "*Mary has chosen the better part.*" Martha was making sandwiches that Jesus never ordered. Doing more for God is the method servants use to increase in favor. A friend has a different focus entirely. They enjoy the favor they have and use it to spend time with their friend.

To say we need both Marys and Marthas is to miss the point entirely. And it simply isn't true. I've heard it said that nothing would ever get done if we didn't have Marthas. That, too, is a lie. That teaching comes mostly from servants who are intimidated by the lifestyle of friends. Mary wasn't a non-worker; she just learned to serve from His presence, only making the sandwiches that Jesus ordered. Working *from* His presence is better than working *for* His presence. Pastor Mike Bickle put it best when he said that *there are lovers and there are workers. And lovers get more work done than do workers!* A passionate lover will always outperform a good servant in pleasing Him.

THE WILL OF GOD

We usually think of the will of God as something static—fixed and unchangeable. We primarily associate it with specific events at certain times. The element missing in our understanding of this subject is our role in the unfolding of His will.

When God was going to destroy Israel, He told Moses to get out of the way, because He was going to kill the people that Moses had led out of Egypt into the wilderness. Moses then reminded God that they weren't his people—they were God's, and not only that, he didn't lead them out of Egypt, God did! God responded by basically acknowledging he was right, and then promised not to kill them.

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The astonishing thing isn't so much that God changed His mind and spared Israel; rather, it was that He expected Moses to come into the counsel of His will, and Moses knew it. Abraham was another who understood this. These covenant friends throughout history all seemed to have a common awareness of God's expectation that they be involved in the demonstration of His will, influencing the outcome of a matter. They understood that the responsibility rested on their shoulders, and they must act before God to get what people needed. The priestly role of an intercessor was never more clearly illustrated. The primary focus of His will wasn't whether or not to destroy Israel; it was to bring Moses in on the process. His will is not always focused on events; it is focused on His friends drawing near into His presence, standing in their roles as delegated ones. The will of God is as much process as it is outcome—often fluid, not static.

THE BLANK CHECK

As kids, many of us dreamed about being granted one wish. Solomon got the “one wish.” When God appeared to Solomon and gave him that opportunity, it forever raised the bar of our expectations in prayer. The disciples were given the same “wish,” only better. Instead of one blank check, they were given an unlimited supply of blank checks. And this gift was specifically granted in the context of their friendship with God.

Surrounding their promotion to friendship, Jesus gave His disciples this amazing list of promises. Each promise was a blank check they were to live by and use throughout their lives for the expansion of the Kingdom. They are as follows:

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you (John 15:7).

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should

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remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you (John 15:16).

If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:14).

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:23-24).

For us to properly receive what Jesus has offered us in these verses, any robotic understanding of what it means to be a follower of God has to change. God never intended that the believer be a puppet on a string. God actually makes Himself vulnerable to the desires of His people. In fact, it can be said, “if it matters to you, it matters to Him.”

While much of the Church is waiting for the next word from God, He is waiting to hear the dream of His people. He longs for us to take our role, not because He needs us, but because He loves us.

FAMILY REUNION

My mother’s side of the family had a family reunion in the early ’90s. Around 160 people came from all over the world to the campground we rented in northern California. Astonishingly, they represented 48 different pastors and missionaries.

It had to be one of the most highly unusual reunions on record because of the extraordinary number of ministers involved. But it was even more unique because it was so much like a formal conference. There were meetings, panel discussions, and the like. I was even asked to write a song for the event, taken from the Old Testament Book of Zephaniah. It was a great time of celebrating the grace of God upon our family.

On one of the evenings, someone had scheduled a square dance as a recreational activity. Now, I don’t dance, except in worship. It

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doesn't matter to me if it's square dancing, or if it's on some night-club dance floor, I simply don't dance. I find it to be an embarrassing activity. In junior high, I got out of square dancing by telling the teacher that my church didn't believe in it (which was partially true). And here at this reunion, this embarrassing behavior was scheduled as a family activity. Wonderful!

When Beni, my wife, asked what I was going to do, I told her emphatically: "I don't dance!" She already knew my thoughts and wisely chose to not attempt the impossible, which was to talk me out of such an idea so that I could join in the family fun. (One of the strengths of my personal makeup is that I don't change my mind easily. It doesn't matter who is challenging my position. I just don't move. One of the weaknesses of my personal makeup is that I don't change my mind easily.)

We went to the hall where the party was in full swing, as entire families were attempting to dance together. It was fun to watch. It was also obvious which families actually knew what they were doing, and which ones didn't. We laughed and watched as people stepped on each other's feet, awkwardly attempting to learn such difficult moves so quickly. Then the unexpected happened. My daughter, Leah, then about 10 years old, asked me if I would dance with her.

I am known for being unmovable. Some family members call it stubborn; I call it commitment. Yet in that moment I felt like I had been ambushed. My feet were solid, my resolve firm, and my argument was steadfast. But daughters, especially 10-year-old daughters, have a way of getting in under the radar. To my horror, I found myself without a will saying, "Yes." Where was my toughness? What about my resolve? Where did my gift of stubbornness go when I needed it most? To this day I don't know. I had been "brought to my knees" by a little girl. Moments later I was on the dance floor, attempting what I knew better than to attempt. But the look in my little girl's eyes told me all was well. Her pleasure more than made up

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for my embarrassment. And I understood again how fathers willingly make themselves vulnerable to the desires of their children—and how God joyfully makes Himself vulnerable to the desires of His people.

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

There is no question that spending time with God changes our desires. We always become like the one we worship. But it’s not because we’ve been programmed to wish for the things He wants us to wish for; it’s because in friendship we discover the things that please Him—the secret things of His heart. It is the instinct of the true believer to search for and find, that which brings pleasure to the Father. Our nature actually changes at conversion. It is our new nature to seek to know God and to please Him with our thoughts, ambitions, and desires.

Those who have the greatest difficulty with this line of thinking are those who consider this to be an assault on the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. There is no question; God is sovereign. But His position of rulership is not denied by our assignment to co-labor with Christ. One of my favorite quotes on this subject comes from my dear friend Jack Taylor. He says, “*God is so secure in His sovereignty that He is not afraid to appear un-sovereign.*”

ALL DESIRE HAS A FATHER

A good way to remember the intent of the word *desire* is to break it down by syllables. “De” means “of.” And “sire” means “father.” All desire is “of the father.” The question should not be, “are my desires from God?” The question should be, “With what, or with whom have I been in communion?”¹ I can commune with God or with the enemy. If I take time to ponder an offense I experienced some years ago, and I begin to wonder if God ever judged that person, the desires of vindication and retaliation will stir up in my heart.

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Why? Because I have been fellowshiping with the *father* of bitterness, and those desires are the *children* formed in my heart.

If fellowshiping with evil can produce evil desires in us, how much more should it be said that time with God forms desires in us that have eternity in mind and ultimately bring Him glory? The thing to note is this: these desires are not there by command; they are in our hearts because of our fellowship with God. They are the offspring of our relationship with Him.

The main purpose of this book is to teach and encourage believers to live from the desires that are born in them through their intimate fellowship with the Lord. Many believers discount their desires, automatically trying to get rid of everything they want in order to prove their surrender to God. Their selfless approach overshoots the will of God and actually denies the fact that God is the Father of the dreams and abilities within them. It sounds good on the outside because of its selfless religious appeal, but it works against God's purposes on the inside. Most still don't see the difference between the entrance *to* the Kingdom, and life *in* the Kingdom. We enter on a straight and narrow road, saying, "*Not my will but Yours be done.*" The only door is Christ Jesus. The only way to find life in Christ is to come in complete abandonment to Him.

But life in the Kingdom, which is past the narrow entrance of salvation, is completely different. It's bigger on the inside than it is on the outside. It is here we find the Lord saying to us that we're no longer servants, but friends. It's in that context He says that the Father will give us whatever we want. The emphasis is on *what you want*. Granted, we can't forget the context, or we'll just create more selfish people who confess Christ. Just as the Cross precedes the resurrection, so our abandonment to *His will* precedes God attending to *ours*. But the opposite emphasis also has dangers—if we never become people of desire, we will never accurately and effectively represent Christ on the earth.

THE TREE OF LIFE

“...*desire fulfilled is a tree of life*” (Proverbs 13:12 NASB). Solomon gave us this amazing statement. If there was anyone qualified to discuss *fulfilled personal desires* it was Solomon. In Second Chronicles 7:11, it says, “*Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart....*” We can’t allow his disobedience later in life to deter us from the profound lessons learned through his obedience early in life. He experienced the power of having his heartfelt desires accomplished.

Solomon’s words revisit the subject of the tree of life found in Genesis. It connected Adam and Eve to eternity. (After eating the forbidden fruit, the angel of the Lord guarded the way to the tree of life so that Adam and Eve could not eat its fruit; it made eternal whatever it touched. It would make their sinful condition permanent—an eternal, unredeemable state.) Here we are told that a believer will experience the tree of life as their desires are fulfilled. This implies that those who taste the wonder of fulfilled desires in Christ will be given eternal perspective and identity through that fulfillment. The process of surrender, personal transformation, and fulfilled desires is the training ground for reigning with Christ forever.

In John 16:24, it says that God wants to answer our desires (prayers), “...*that your joy may be full.*” No wonder there’s been so little joy in the church. Joy is the result of our redeemed heart reveling in its participation in God’s unfolding plan for the earth through prayer. More specifically, joy comes through having our prayers answered.

Answered prayers, especially those that require supernatural intervention, make us happy! And happy people are fun to be with. Perhaps that’s why Jesus was called the friend of sinners (see Luke 7:34). His joy exceeded all those around Him. Moment by moment, day after day, He saw His prayers answered by His heavenly Father. His joy was what many would consider extreme. In Luke 10:21, it says, “*Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit.*” The word *rejoiced* in that context

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suggests “shouting and leaping with joy.”² Even proximity to Jesus brought joy. John the Baptist leapt for joy in his mother’s womb because Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, entered the room. Jesus’ joy is contagious, and must become the mark of true believers once again.

DAVID SETS A NEW “HIGH WATER MARK”

An extraordinary example of fulfilled dreams is illustrated in Solomon’s building of a temple that his father, David, had planned. The building and consecration of Solomon’s temple is one of the most significant events in the Bible. Yet at the temple’s dedication, Solomon said,

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, ‘Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.’ Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel (1 Kings 8:15-17).

God said that He didn’t choose a city, He chose a man, and the idea for a temple was in the heart of the man. God basically said: The temple wasn’t my idea. *David* was my idea. Incredible! David’s creativity and desires helped write history because God embraced them. David gave us many Kingdom principles, which set the direction in which we are to live. It is as if he said, “Dreamers! Come! Let’s dream together and write the story of human history.” You are God’s idea, and He longs to see the treasure that is in your heart. As we learn to dream with God we become co-laborers with Him.

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ADAM—THE FIRST CO-LABORER

God assigned Adam the task of naming all the animals (see Gen. 2:19). Names had much richer meaning in those days because they represented the nature of something. I believe that Adam was actually assigning to each animal its nature, its realm of authority, and the dimension of glory it would enjoy. In reality, Adam's assignment was to help define the nature of the world he was to live in. This co-laboring role was a creative role, complimentary to God the Creator. God brings us into these situations, not because He can't do it Himself. He delights in seeing all that He made come into its identity in Him by embracing its divine purpose. To embrace the privilege of creative expression is consistent with being made in the image and likeness of our Creator.

THE TOOL THAT SHAPES HISTORY

The King James Bible highlights the role of our desires in the way it translates Mark 11:24, "*Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*" We are to pay attention to our desires *while we're enjoying the presence of God in prayer*. Something happens in our time of communion with Him that brings life to our capacity to dream and desire. Our minds become renewed through divine encounter, making it the perfect canvas for Him to paint on. We become co-laborers with Him in the master plan for planet earth. Our dreams are not independent from God, but instead exist *because of* God. He lays out the agenda—*On earth as it is in Heaven*—and then releases us to run with it and make it happen! As we grow in intimacy with Him, more of what happens in life is a result of our desires, not simply receiving and obeying specific commands from Heaven. God loves to build on our wishes and desires, as He embraced David's desire for the temple.

This truth is risky from our perspective because we see those who live independent of God and only want Him to validate their

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dreams. True grace always creates a place for those with evil in their heart to come to the surface through increased opportunity. But the richness of this truth is worth pursuing in spite of the perceived danger, because only this truth enables the Church to come fully into her destiny through co-laboring with the Lord.

This divine destiny was announced by the Psalmist long before the blood of Jesus made it a possible lifestyle. “*Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart*” (Psalms 37:4).

DREAMERS WELCOME HERE

We were born to create, to build, and to advance. This requires an ongoing display of supernatural wisdom to succeed. Wisdom, and its unique expression, is the focus of the next chapter.

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ENDNOTES

1. Quotes from Lance Wallnau.
2. Footnote in the Spirit-Filled Life Bible.