Purpose and Destiny



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CONNELL MINISTRIES

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Purpose & Destiny (2011)

Desire, Dreams & Destiny (1 of 7) God has put eternity in the heart of man, so no matter where you're born in the world, no matter what culture,or education you've received, something in the heart and spirit of a man knows that we have come from somewhere, we're going to somewhere, there is a purpose for our life. There's a desire to make our life significant, or to count, and a desire that somehow we wouldn't end in the grave,

Destiny Hurdles (2 of 7) You have to run the race that God has set before you. This is your life and you only have one of it. This is your destiny. This is your life that you're running right now and as you place value on your life and value on the time that you have, you'll start to consider more carefully I wonder why I'm here and what I'm really called to do with my life? No one wants to die with an empty life or a life that's been unfulfilled in some kind of way, so it's like a marathon race.

Desires & the Will of God (3 of 7) You don't need God to tell you everything. He wants you to use wisdom, common sense. God doesn't want you to be a slave, so you've got to connect with your heart, and you do your homework. You've got to identify your desires, and make plans, seek counsel.

The Cross and the Kingdom (4 of 7) The common misunderstandings people have is that somehow there's some force that forces everything to work according to a certain pattern and you have no control over it. Sometimes people have this idea God is sovereign, God's in charge of everything, so whatever happens God's to blame for it and we can't really do much about that. Now these are very wrong concepts. In fact although

God has planned a life and things for us to accomplish, He gives within it a great deal of creativity for us to partner with Him, rather than just be robots and slaves.

Dream Killers - What to do About Them Complaining is the sign of a loser. You are losing because you can't see what the purpose of the difficulty is, and how it's not meant to destroy you, it's meant to help you grow. When you start complaining, you're dying and perishing and losing. You see if you complain, you're saying this; God, I don't trust you to use this for my good. God, I don't believe you'll help me. I'm just ticked off. God does not choose that outcome, you do. if you don't develop character, you'll never fulfil that thing God put in your heart.

Dream Thieves - Delays & Disappointments Hope deferred makes the heart sick. In other words when you have a dream, an expectation, something you're looking forward to and it's continually delayed, put off, doesn't happen, your heart grows sick. That means to be weak or be in grief. When our heart is in grief it affects all of our life. It affects your motivation, so whenever we have a dream and then it's delayed, we begin to wonder about what our life could be like.

The Holy Spirit & the Will of God (7 of 7) what is the will of God? How many people have wondered that? God, what is Your will? Oh God, what is Your will? There's so many decisions we face - God, what do you want? You don't know what He wants, because somehow it's very quiet. Paul in Colossians 1:19 says he was praying that we'd be filled with knowledge of the will of God, so clearly it's God's plan you know his will and two, that you actually be filled with understanding and have a sense of knowing what to do at any point in time. Yet that's not what most of us experience, so I want you follow - so how can I find the will of God?

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1. Desire, Dreams & Destiny (1 of 7)

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In Ecclesiastes 3, Verse 11, it says He has made everything beautiful in it's time - and here it is - He has put eternity in their hearts. So God has

put eternity in the heart of man, so no matter where you're born in the world, no matter what culture, what country, whatever and no matter what education you've received, something in the heart and spirit of a man knows that we have come from somewhere, we're going to somewhere, there is a purpose for our life. There is somehow an invisible God that one day we will meet, and in the heart of every person there's a desire to make our life significant, or to count. No one wants to get to the end of their life and die full of regrets about what they could have done, or should have done, but there's a huge journey in getting from that place to to fulfilling the destiny that God has for us.

I want to talk a bit about that today, so this desire that your life would count, this desire that somehow we wouldn't end in the grave is written into you by God. It's a God-written thing. It's written into your whole DNA, that life does not end at the grave, that somehow there is an eternity, and within every one of us there is a longing that somehow my life would count, that I wouldn't just accomplish nothing with my life. So you have a destiny and people have - when I use the word destiny there's all kinds of concepts people have, so I want to look at concepts that people think. When you think the word destiny you think destination, some place I'm going, so I looked it up and essentially the majority of people have an idea of destiny's something like this, that destiny - they look at it in two ways. They look at it, destiny is a future that was predetermined for you. In other words someone, somewhere, had this plan, they called it destiny, and it's sort of a plan for your life. It's all worked out, and you don't have much to sort of - it's just going to happen, no matter what.

Sometimes people use the word destiny, they think it's some kind of force, an impersonal force, and it's controlling your life, and somehow this is your destiny. You know in the movie Star Wars, Darth Vader talks to the guy Luke, and he says this is your destiny, you know, as though somehow he's got no choice about it. So in the presentations, often you hear from the world perspective, destiny has something to do with an impersonal force that runs your life, so they use words like fate, or they use words like karma. There's all kinds of words to describe it, but the thinking behind it is that somehow, something, somewhere, has got something worked out for you, and basically you'll be kind of, almost like

a puppet walking your way down, and no matter what you do, it's going to happen out anyway. The consequence of that thinking, first of all it's completely wrong. There is a personal God, but the second consequence of it is of course, is that people tend to become a bit passive, and they get oh well, que sera sera, whatever will be will be, you just kind of journey and do your best, and then it's all over.

Now that kind of passivity, that kind of thinking, is totally ungodly. It's without God in it anywhere. It comes very much out of a Greek thinking. Now the problem is when people become a Christian, they bring into their Christian walk a mixture of belief systems from the world, and then bring it in upon their Christian walk, without really understanding what God says. When we do that, we have something like this, and unfortunately many of the thinking that Christians hold is rooted in Greek thinking. The Greek thinking was that there is this impersonal force called destiny, and no matter what you do, you're going to end up working this thing out, or walking this out. There was a movie that came around a little while ago, in fact I think there were two or three of them, about these guys and somehow they cheated an accident, but destiny eventually caught up with them all. It's a way of thinking that there's this impersonal force runs your life, and makes decisions, and you can't do much about it.

So when people become a believer, we then begin to get immersed in some like spiritual language, and we don't ever stop to think through whether what we believe really is what the Bible says, or whether it's just thinking patterns that we've always got used to. Sometimes the teaching that people receive is not balanced, and it actually reinforces this view, so when a person becomes a Christian, we would understand all Christians would believe that God has a plan for your life, so we'll call that plan destiny. God has worked out - I'm going to show you this in a little more detail shortly, but God has worked out a destiny for your life. For some Christians it's limited. They would think well I'm going to heaven, that's my destiny. No, no, no, no, no. No, that's where you finish this apprenticeship, and you go on into your destiny, see? So right now, you're on the apprenticeship for your destiny, and what you do is very, very important, so people come up with this idea that God is sovereign. How many know God is sovereign? God rules over all! God is in control!

How about that? You know all of that? All agree with all of that. Now just follow the thinking down a little bit, because you'll see where this ends up.

I believe the Bible teaches very clearly, that the kingdom of God rules over all of men, that God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. No matter what rises and falls, God rules over it all, but you've got to think through what that means, and how you apply it to your life. So when people say God is in control, or they use the words God is sovereign, they think something like this: He's the one who causes everything to happen, so whatever happens, God caused it to happen. Now this is really bad thinking, and it's totally incorrect - or they think: He's the sole originator of all thoughts, and decisions, and actions. So if something goes wrong, you notice even the world will say, they call it an act of God, in other words, God is to blame when things go wrong. We don't give Him credit when it goes right, but we will blame Him when things go wrong, so again, many Christians bring into their Christian walk this concept that God is in control of everything, and therefore I can just trust Him. I don't have to worry about what I do.

Actually that's only a part of the truth. A part of the truth can be just as wrong as if you got the whole thing wrong, because what it leaves out is the part you and I must play, by relating to God, and exercising faith. So if we're going to walk into our destiny, we have to understand what God has done, and then we have to understand our part in it. If you don't know what God has done for you, you'll live your life without any sense of how precious it is, how important you are, and how precious every minute of every day is. If you don't understand what part you have to play you'll pray, I leave it up to God, put it in God's hands. It sounds wonderful, but it absolves you of responsibility to co-labour and walk with God as a friend.

In our early years of Christianity, we came in and had quite some teaching, and it was all correct, but it was unbalanced, and so it left you at the end of the day, you just lay down everything, and you just served this plan that God's got worked out for you, rather than understanding what we have got is a loving Father with a destiny planned out for His children, which we have a vital part in fulfilling, and not every detail of it is worked out for us. We have to actually participate in the working out of it.

When you start to clear these thoughts, you'll begin to start to be able to understand, that there's a connection between what God has planned for us, and what He has hardwired into us, and I want to over the couple of weeks show you the connection between the will of God, and what is already hardwired into you, otherwise you'll find you'll reject what God wants to do in your life, because you're driven by what you want to do, or you'll forget what's the desires of your heart, in order to lay everything down to do something someone is telling you to do. All of this does not lead to happy people at all, so we want to help in that.

So in Jeremiah 29:11, God says something like this. He says now I know the thoughts I have for you, plans for good, not evil, to give you a future hope, something to look forward to. So this is when people are in bondage, and God says even though I know you've sinned, even though you've done all these wrong things, I know that the reason you're in this mess is because of what you're done; nevertheless, my thinking to you is all good. I don't think evil towards you at any time. I think good. The thoughts I have for you are good, not evil. The plans I have for you are good, not evil. Why? So that if you understand God is continually planning good for your life, not evil, you'll stop blaming any evil that comes as being caused by God. It's a tendency for us to blame God when stuff goes wrong, so if you're a Christian who strongly stands on the sovereignty of God, you'll do something like this: well I can't understand why that's happened, well it must be the will of God, and it must be something to do with my character, and I must need to grow through it, or some kind of thing.

Now all of those things are partly true, but what we need to understand is, God expects us to vitally participate in the outworking of His plan in the earth, and so that kind of religious concept, it breeds passivity, and a kind of well, I'll pray and God will work it out, and somehow God is in control. Yeah, God is in control, but God has delegated responsibility, and if we don't realise that we are called to be kings in the earth, we're called to be stewards of the gifts of God, and He requires initiative and participation, then we'll just miss - we'll be passive and shut down, and not discover the joy of all the possibilities that could come about as a result of your life. You're not here to sit and fill in time you know, you're

here to make a great difference in life. So God does have a plan, and a purpose, and a destiny. I want to show it to you very clearly, so you would absolutely be clear in your mind, that God has a destiny, and here's the thing that's interesting to find out, that the destiny or the plan or the purpose God had for you, He formed that before He formed you.

Let's go and have a look at a few scriptures on it quickly. Have a look in Judges, Chapter 13. So you may have all kinds of ideas and issues about how you came into this world, about your family and about your background. God says that's your perspective on it, which is a limited perspective. From God's point of view, He had the plan, He knew how you were going to arrive. He said I knew all about it. It's not a problem to me where you come from, because I had a plan figured before you even came, and it was no surprise when you came, or how you came, what family you're born into, what country you're born into, what situation happened. None of that was any surprise to God. In fact actually He says it's within this kind of framework of things being negative, I can raise you up and demonstrate My glory. See, so have a look. We won't go into these in detail, I just want you to read each one so you see it. In Judges, Chapter 13, Verse 3; The Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said her, you are barren. You're barren. You've got no children. You will conceive and bear a son. Notice this is future, she hasn't conceived yet.

Verse 5 - and behold you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor will come on his head, the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb. He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. Now notice this - before His parents have even had anything happen, not even a conception yet, God already knows who the guy is. God's set him apart and God has a plan, an assignment, something for him to accomplish in the day he lives. So the assignment came before the person, so before they were even conceived, before mum and dad have even got busy, this person has already got a plan written in heaven for them to accomplish in the earth. Okay, now have a look at another one. Here's one in 1 Kings, Chapter 13. So you think well that was just a coincidence, perhaps just one guy like that. That wouldn't apply to me. Well let's try another one, 1 Kings, Chapter 13, and we'll read down in Verse 1; And behold a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the Lord, and Jeroboam

stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar, and he said by the word of Lord, Altar, altar! says the Lord. Now notice this - Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David, and on you shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones will be burnt on you. He gave a sign that this would be so.

Now, you've got to realise there were 630 years between him saying that, and Josiah appearing. There's no one alive who remembered the prophecy. The parents wouldn't have remembered, so 630 years before Josiah turns up in history as a reformer, God already has got the destiny - I've got a man coming, he's a reformer, and his name will be Josiah, so God knew his name, God knew his destiny and God had it all worked out at least 630 years ahead of him coming into being. So do you think your arrival was a surprise? [Laughter] Only to your mum and dad. [Laughter]

Have a look in Jeremiah, Chapter 1 - so for all of you who had surprises, we had heaps of surprises, wonderful surprises - seven of them, one named after every birth control method that didn't work [Laughter] but all beautiful, and all welcome. So Jeremiah 1, Verse 4; Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying to Jeremiah - now notice what He said - Behold, before I formed you in the womb, I already knew you, and before you were born, I already set you apart, and ordained you to be a prophet to the nations. Now notice this - before he's created, before God formed him, so God actually claims He is responsible for the shaping and forming of the person in the womb. The parents have a part to do in that of course too, but there's also a part that God plays. God hardwires into them desires, passions, certain kinds of gifting, certain kinds of areas into their life. Why? Because He's already got a plan worked out, so before the child's born, God's already genetically put into him some of the things, that will put into him the desires, to fulfil a certain course in his life. If you think about it from God's point of view - we'll get to this in a moment - if I've got a plan sorted out for you, how on earth am I going to get you into my plan, especially since you've got a free will to choose what you want to do? So God outwits us completely.

He anticipated sin would come in and we might have a mind of our own, but He planned for that still, and so what He did was build into our

genetic DNA, aspects of desire, passion, gifting, and orientation of our personality and life, that would incline us towards what He had for us. That's why you can't ignore those things. You can't put them down, because they're part of how God wired you, to make you a specific gift, with a specific destiny to fulfil see, but there's another part to it of course; if I don't connect with God, I'll find my own way of expressing that, and it'll be a lot less than what God has. So God says, my ways are higher than your ways, my thoughts are higher than your thoughts, so we're going to see how the two need to come together, what's in my heart that God has hardwired, and my connection or prophetic revelation from God, need to come together and then to be worked out.

If you don't understand that, and just go God's sovereign, God's in control, you won't know what to do with your desires and dreams, so you'll suppress them, and be unhappy, and live like a slave, waiting to be told by God what to do with your life. Think about that. Okay then, so God created us, so He imagined you, and He imagined your life, and He worked out what you could accomplish with your life, far more than you realise, and far more than the people sitting next to you can see. People around us see us only as we are, and where we've been. God sees what you could be, so when people looked at Peter, he's just a rough coarse fisherman that swore and all that kind of stuff. God said, I see a rock on which I can build a church! I see a man, who can preach to multitudes. See, when people saw David, he was so unimportant they didn't even invite him into the meal with the prophet, so they just saw a little shepherd boy. God said, I see a king, and it'll be such a great king, he'll transform a nation. Others just saw a little boy. You see, God's destiny was already worked out for this young man.

Moses - Moses was an angry man and a murderer, but nevertheless he had something in him. There was something in him, something burned in him. You see, God saw a deliverer. Others saw him as a criminal, so the problem is that life, and people, tend to not see the perspective of God for us, so you have to be responsible for your life, to discover what God has put into you, that no one else but you can accomplish. You are responsible. Now we'll see the role of the church in just a moment, but church has a part to play in it, but the church is not the kingdom. The

church grows people to participate in kingdom life and fulfil destiny. Think about it, so wrong thinking about the church and it's role, will cause you to settle down and deny what God has called you to do, and put into your heart to accomplish. Now of course we take a big risk if we fire you up with all this stuff, then what on earth will you do? Well isn't that good - what on earth might you do?

You might find yourself doing things you never thought of doing before, just suddenly the dream came alive, and hope came back again. So we're in a season now, God has done a lot of adjustments in the church. We're in a season now where dreams and desires and hopes and aspirations are going to start to emerge. I want you to just - I'm not going to hurry it, I'll just take it long enough so that I can feel you start to rise inside, and begin to see man, I can do more with my life, and it's up to me to do something - then the how to's of course the thing we need to - what do you do to get from here, your desire to your destiny.

Okay, have a look a look now in Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verse 10. This is a great verse, and it says we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus under good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. So who's he saying? We. Who's talking? Paul is talking, we are believers so believers - so make it personal - I am His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that I would walk in them. Notice three things that come up in this. Number one is identity; God says who I am - I'll explore that in a moment - I am not a nobody, a nothing. I am God's workmanship, and everything God works on, He says it is good. You are good. God's working on you. He's recreating you, forming you. He says you're good. You do bad things at times, wrong things or have immaturity of course, but God says you're good. Why are you good? You're My workmanship. I ain't finished on you yet, you're a work in progress, so there's a part of our destiny that is connected to our identity, who we are. God's plan is to conform us to be like Jesus so we can represent Jesus to the world, so He is interested in our growth and our maturing, and if you don't, you can't come into your destiny. So the first thing He talks about is identity.

The second thing He says is, created for good works. That's the works, the things I'm called to do, so notice this, that God prepared them before

you came into the world, and the funny think about them, they're works only you can do. I don't know what the works only you can do are. That's your job to find out, but they're ones only you can do. Why? Because God prepared them for you to do, not for me, so every person sitting in this church, and any other church, God has prepared things for you to do. It's your responsibility to connect with God, and discover uniquely what you're called to do, and then go through the journey of the preparation and application of what's needed to accomplish those things. That, as you do it, becomes your destiny unfolding. It's not controlled by God who's sovereign and telling you everything to do, He gives freedom in it. Neither is it you're waiting around for something to happen. Next time I preach, I want to share with you some mindsets and view points that totally stop you going forward in this area, and I want to share with you some things that would stop you progressing even from this point, going on into your destiny. The Lord was just downloading them into me just at the beginning of the meeting, so He must figure it's pretty important.

The other thing too is, Psalm 139, Verse 16 - because the question is, what is it? What is it God wants me to do? Well don't ask me, you're the only one that can find it out. Okay, let's read in Psalm 139, Verse 16. Now notice this, David's writing this. This is what he says; now your eyes - that's God's eyes - saw my substance being yet unformed. In other words, when I was just an embryo in the womb, you saw me. Now he says, you saw my substance. Of course there's not much substance is there, just a seed, but in the seed there's the tree, so when people see a seed they dismiss it, but everything in the kingdom comes by seeds, everything. Jesus said the parable of the sowing of the seed, everything in the kingdom is about seeds. You think how you get a word of knowledge. You just get a seed thought. The moment you begin to speak it, it opens up, you get more and suddenly heaven comes into the earth. You get a prophetic word, you just get a seed, you just focus on it, give yourself to it, it begins to open and expand, becomes a tree.

Everything in God starts with a seed. Life begins with a seed. Everything God has for you begins with a seed, and so don't despise the smallness of what is there. So most people dismiss the smallness, because they're waiting for the supernatural spectacular, and then miss the little that's in

you, that could be a tree of destiny. We'll share some about what holds that back, so you notice what he says; And in Your book they were all written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. So God has a book, and what is written in the book? The days on earth that God fashioned, shaped or created, within which you would fulfil your destiny, and you weren't even born yet, and God already had a book with every day of your life written on it. Think about that, see? Just read it again, because I see some of you are gasping about that one.

Your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed. Now of course, that really raises the thing - what was the substance that God saw? Was it something physical? I don't think so. See? Faith is the substance of things hoped for, so He saw from the realm of the spirit, what it is you're created and designed to accomplish, before it actually took on any formation in the earth, so God saw the substance. See, we tend to think of substance being this, this is substance, that's substance, the building's substance. From the realm of the spirit, just look from a different view, so by looking from the earth point of view, this is substance. I've learned all my life that's substance. Now I take a view from the point of view of eternity. From eternity's point of view, if you can see it, touch it, it's temporal. It'll pass away, therefore it's not substance. From the eternal realm, what is substance is the things that are eternal, so what is substance is your spirit man, and your soul, because they will go on for eternity.

The house you're in will disintegrate. It's temporal, therefore from a spiritual perspective, it's not substance, so God saw my substance. He saw my spirit man, with it's DNA and design, before any formation of a house to put it in took place, He saw my substance. Then it says, and in your book were written all the days that You fashioned, or prepared, or moulded into shape, like a potter moulds the clay, so in other words - see every day of your life is important. Every day has been fashioned by God, as an opportunity to grow, and move forward into destiny. That's why we should treasure every day. Money comes, money goes, time just goes by and you can't get it back, so time then for us is very important, because it's the season within which you can accomplish preparation to fulfil your destiny, so don't waste a day. Don't waste a moment. Why would I waste

a moment? Because I don't know what I'm called to do, and I'm just filling in time being distracted and feeling good.

See without focus of destiny, purpose and a clear direction to get there, we just fritter away the opportunities. We consume them up, and it's like money burning, except I can't get it back, just can't get it back. How many older people here wish you could get your years back? The reason we wish we could get our years back, is because we've learnt a lot more in that time we've been alive, and we think man, I'd love that chance again, I'd have done much more with my life. So what we're really saying is, I regret I didn't accomplish more now, based on what I see. How important it is then, for those who are mature people of God, to then mentor the younger generation to come into their God-given destiny, instead of doing what we did, frittering away years of our life on unproductive activity, so part of your destiny is mentoring the next generation into theirs, based on what wisdom you've gained. Getting the idea?

Okay, we just better finish - I'll give a little bit more. Are you getting that? So you notice you've got some days fashioned. Dear God, you don't know how many days you've got left. How many think they've got a lot? Oh, that's right, okay. Well read the paper and you'll find a lot of people there in the obituaries thought they had a lot too, and it wasn't a lot. Here's the reality; unless you know what God called you to accomplish, you can't at all be sure of that, but when you know the things God's given you, you know today - I'm not going to die today, I'm not going to die tomorrow, and I'm not going to die on this next trip. I'm not going to die. Why? Because there's too much for me to accomplish that God has set in place.

That's why Paul could say, don't worry about the ship sinking, I've got too much yet to do. God showed me I'm going to preach up in Rome, so no matter what the ship looks like, I don't care if the ship is sinking, and the storm is overwhelming. God has told me what I'm doing with my life, and I have yet to appear in Rome! See, so he's not worried about what's going on. Everyone else is thinking, it's over for us - no sense of destiny, no sense of purpose, no connection to Almighty God. So having that sense of destiny causes you to walk completely differently. You're not fearful, and afraid, and ashamed, and all that kind of stuff.

Okay, I'll give you a few more things, then I'll finish. So Ephesians 2:10, let's go back into there. I want to throw a couple more things out and then we'll finish - Ephesians 2, Verse 10. So you notice in Ephesians, Chapter 2, of course it's a part of a book of six chapters, none of which were there. That's all been added in afterwards, so when you have a look at it Ephesians 2, Verse 10 is right in the middle of statements like, God chose you, Chapter 1, Verse 4. God destined you, so you've got all these statements like, God joined you to His spirit, put His spirit in you. You find as you look through, you see the things God is doing. First part of it - and it says, God wants you to have a revelation of the hope of your calling, what you're called to do with your life, so Paul is talking about all the things that God is wanting to do our life.

In Chapter 2 he says, now He's raised you up, so you now access the realm of heaven, so he's full of excitement about the great things God has done. Then Verse 10 comes, and then if you follow after that then he says, now also you're part of a family. It's called the family of God, the house of God, the bride of God, the army of God. You're part of a family - oh, and guess what happens in there? Ephesians 4:11, there's people there to help you to do what? Get fed every week so you get fat? No! To discover what work you're called to do. Not do the work. The work you're called to do, Ephesians 4:11, oh - then what comes straight after that? See, that sets it all up, then straight after that's what comes. Now you need to learn how to walk with God and fight a fight, because if you're going to accomplish your destiny, you're going to have to walk with God, and fight a fight, because every devil in hell will try and keep you out of what God has for you. For many of us, perhaps he's already succeeded, and you're living with a lie, living some kind of mental barrier, some kind of hurts, some kind of disappointments, some kind of habit, some kind of issue, and some devil's got a hold of you, because he can see your destiny, so I've got to stop him! I've got to stop him! So you have to learn to walk with God, and fight the fight. That's why we teach you how to walk in the spirit, and fight the fight of faith. If you don't, you can't fulfil your destiny. You want to learn how to do this!

Let's just finish in this area of workmanship - so you're His workmanship. That word means something beautifully created by God. Another way it

goes like this, it means to bring into existence something that's unique, and is designed for an assignment that could never take place by itself, so you are something uniquely created by God, especially for a unique assignment, and this could never have taken place accidently. You are a creation of God, absolutely unique. Your DNA is unique, your fingerprints are unique, there's many aspects of you are completely unique. Why is it so hard to think that my assignment and destiny are unique as well? So you get into a group, and into a church, you want to be like someone next to you. Why would you want to be like someone next to you? They've got problems you can't see anyway, got issues, you know? Anyway, what they're called to do, you're not called to do, so mind your business, focus on your business - trying to copy someone else and be like someone else. I've seen people cloned, they end up talking like the person. You think what happened to you? Where did you go? I don't know. [Laughs] I don't know who I am! I'll copy Lyn and be like Lyn and speak and preach like that, all that kind of stuff, see? Or like Ian or like this one - you're called to be yourself! You can't be successful at being someone else. Have a look at Peter Sellers, he ended up crazy at the end, because he acted so many parts he didn't know who he was. [Laughter] Just lost sight of who he was. Like many people isn't it really?

So you're His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. So notice this, that God ordained before, in other words, God made all the preparations before you were born, that you would have what you needed to fulfil your assignment, works that God prepared for you, that's you, each believer, God has prepared an assignment, things for you to accomplish. No one else can do it but you, and God took a lot of time to think through what it would it would be. You know why it suits you? Because it's wired to your background, it's wired to your DNA, it's wired to the desires of God for you, it's wired to the desires in your heart. It's wired to your passions, it's wired to your giftings, it's wired to everything that's unique about you, and He prepared it for you. So destiny is about discovering why God has placed me in the earth, what He's uniquely called me to do, and there are two aspects to that - or many aspects I suppose, but here's the thing.

Notice it says that you should walk in them? Now it doesn't say that God is going to bring it about automatically. It says you've got to walk in these

things. Walk means you must take personal responsibility to co-operate with God in His destiny being outworked in your life, that you would walk in them. It's a day by day choice to connect with God, and begin to unravel and outwork in our lives what God called us to do.

So for that there are two things that are needed; number one, you need to connect with God and listen to God. Why? Because otherwise you'll be very, very limited in what you accomplish with your life, because you'll think at too low a level, but the moment you connect with God we then find a place of empowerment in Him, of connection to Him, of endorsement from Him, of bigness of thinking from Him that we wouldn't normally have - but the other place you've got to look, is in your own heart, how has God wired me? What desires are there? What dreams are there? What passions are there? What things are in my heart? In other words if I could accomplish anything I really wanted to accomplish what would it be? What do I desire more than anything? We'll go into those aspects, and how you outwork that in your life, and how you connect the desires of God with the will of God, so it's neither one nor the other. God knows what He's got for you, it's bigger than your thoughts and your desires, but within it He gives you room to have freedom to create.

Here's one of the things you'll learn with God, although He has the big design for you, and He knows the details of it, and foresees the details, He gives to you responsibility for initiative. What is called initiative is faith; I actually get to do something, and make decisions, and make choices, and make plans, and commit my plans to God, and outwork my plans. So you notice - we'll just finish with this quote - in Luke, Chapter 19, when the king went to the far land to return with his kingdom, there's a picture of Jesus Christ coming again, He gave something to all of the servants, and notice what He said to them to do. Occupy, be productive, take initiative until I come, so if the master says take initiative, why do you have to ask Him to tell you what to do all the time? Only young believers have that issue, because they're having to learn to obey. As you walk with God more and more, you are in touch with what's in your heart and in the heart of God, and you delight yourself in the Lord, and the desires in your heart He begins to give you. That's how it all works together.

Father, we just thank You and that You have designed us for greatness. Some of it is in this life, and most of it is going to be in the ages which are to come, but today is a great day for every one of us, an opportunity to connect with the living God, to discover what you put in our heart, to develop those things and to find a way to fulfil that call. Father, I ask that every person in this congregation today would feel the stir and challenge of Your spirit, to awaken and listen to the desires of the heart, to begin to awaken to the dreams, the possibilities that you will put into us. We open ourselves Lord to break out of limitations, religious limitations, theological limitations, cultural limitations, background limitations, world view limitations. We open ourselves to break out of all of those things. We want You to expand our vision and dream, and lift us to a whole new dimension. Father, I just pray that you would in this next few weeks begin to stir a fire that would burn for people to draw near to you, and to begin to discover and search what is in the heart.

Just while our eyes are closed and heads are bowed, the first journey to destiny is to recognise that God has put eternity in your heart, and to make a decision to receive Jesus Christ. You may watch it on television, you may be sitting here today, but today is a day for you to make a decision to receive Jesus Christ. When you receive Jesus Christ you are forgiven, you are connected to heaven, the spirit of God is within you. The kingdom of God has begun like a seed in your life, to be nurtured and to be grown until there's a manifestation in a great way, of the life and kingdom of God through you. What a day to make that decision right now. I'd like you to follow me in a very simple prayer. This prayer is the sinner's prayer, and this prayer would help you to make the first step in a change to walk into your destiny. You've already taken some steps but didn't know it, but today you could make the most important step to begin partnering with God who designed your destiny. I wish someone could tell you what you're made for and what you're called to do, but only the one who made you can really do that. Why don't you join with Him today?

Let's just pray the sinner's prayer together. Father in heaven, I come to You in Jesus' name. I thank You for loving me, for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sins, for preparing a destiny for me. I turn away from sin, a life without You. I turn to You, the living God. Jesus, I receive You

as my Saviour. I receive forgiveness for all my sins. I receive Your spirit into my heart and I give You my life today. Before heaven and earth I declare Jesus Christ is my Saviour and Lord and my friend forever. Amen.

Summary Notes:
1. Introduction
Ecc.3:11 "…He has put eternity in their hearts…"
God has built into the heart of every person an awareness of eternity.
People long for a sense of purpose, destiny – to make their life count.
God has written this desire into the hearts of men.

2. You have a Destiny

(a) Common Ideas of Destiny
Destiny = a future that is predetermined for you and you cannot change it.
Destiny = a power that determines the course of your life.
e.g. "Fate", "Karma"; Star Wars Movie "It is your destiny".

(b) Christians have their own idea of destiny
Many of the ideas, thoughts Christians have are rooted in Greek ideas.
God is Sovereign = the one who causes all things
= He is the sole originator of all thoughts, decisions,
actions
= When something goes wrong God is to blame.
If God orchestrates every detail of our life then all we can do is align with His instructions to be told what to do = passivity or reaction.
God is a personal, loving, caring God.
Jer.29:11 "I know the plans I have for you, plans for good not evil to give you hope".
God has a plan, purpose, a destiny for us – but He invites our participation and initiative in this plan.

3. God's Destiny for you was planned before you were born

(a) Samson – Destined to be a deliverer
Jud.13:3-5

(b) Josiah – Destined to be a reformer
1 Kg. 13:2 – Destiny foretold 360 years ahead of his birth.
2 Kg. 21:24

(c) Jeremiah – Destined to be a prophet
Jer.1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, I ordained you".
God created us long before He forms us.
God imagined trees – created seeds – every seed is potentially a tree.
Before Jeremiah conceived – a destiny was formed by God for him.

(d) You and Me – Destined by God for greatness
Eph.2:10 "We are His workmanship – created in Christ Jesus unto good works which

God prepared beforehand that we would walk in them”
Note:
· Identity – who I am
· Works – what I am called to do
· Time – a period of time to accomplish works. Ps.139:16

4. You were created by God for a Purpose
Eph.2:10
Notice the background or context for this verse:
(i) Chosen by God (ch.1:4)
(ii) Destined for Son-ship (ch.1:5)
(iii) Joined to Holy Spirit (ch.1:13)
(iv) Needing revelation of calling (ch.1:17-19) + purpose
(v) Raised to realm of Kingdom (ch.2:6)
(vi) Belonging to a body/people – church (ch.2:19) (4:12)
(vii) Needing to learn how to walk with God (ch.4:11)
(viii) Needing to learn how to warfare for destiny (ch.6:10)
“Workmanship” = 4161 = something uniquely created by God.
“Created” = 2936 = to bring forth, construct, fabricate.
= to bring into existence something that is unique, is designed for an assignment, that could not evolve by itself.
You are uniquely designed by God to represent Him and advance the Kingdom.
“Before Ordained” = 4282 = to make all the necessary preparations ahead of time.
Before you were formed in the womb and birthed into the world God made all the necessary preparations for you to fulfil His call and purpose.
“Should Walk” = 4043 = to tread all around, to walk at large.
= to be occupied with, to fill your life accomplishing.
= to trample on path, tread underfoot, conquer a territory.
We are called to walk out daily our destiny.

5. You are “Hard Wired” for your Destiny
How does God get you to your destiny?
(i) God speaks to us – must learn to hear, respond, walk.
(ii) God has hard wired us with desires, passions, dreams.
Prov. 4:23 Out of heart flow issues of life.
You must choose to believe what God says about you.
(i) You are a King (Rev.5:10)
(ii) You are one spirit with God (1 Cor. 6:17)
(iii) You are a winner in life (1 Jn.4:4, 5:4)
(iv) You have power (Acts 1:8)
(v) You have an inheritance – territory to possess (Jn. 14:12)
(vi) You are blessed to bless others (Gal. 3:13-14)
(vii) You must take initiative (Lk. 19:13).

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2. Destiny Hurdles (2 of 7)

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Alright, let's read in Hebrews, Chapter 12, so we're going to speak today on destiny hurdles. I could have talked blocked destiny, or challenges in destiny. I thought destiny hurdles, and you'll see why. Just have a look at this verse here; Therefore since we're surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that does so easily ensnare us, and let us run with patience or endurance the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy, the desire, the dream, the destiny set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Let's pick up the thought there, let us run the race, or run the race with endurance that is set before us, keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord. So your life and my life is likened to a race, a long distance race. For some it may be shorter than others, people like Bill it's been over 90 years, but the real race only began about 65 when he got saved. But there was a race through his life, and there's a race for all of us. All of us, we saw last week that God, before we were actually conceived in the womb, already had a destiny, a plan for our lives. We shared with you many scriptures that are very clear, before you arrived, and no matter how or why or what the circumstances of you getting here, God already had a destiny planned for you. It was worked out, and we saw - we're going to go to this verse again in Ephesians 3:20, that God has things for us to do. So our life then is like a marathon race. Here's the thing about the marathon race - only you can run your race.

I wish I could run your race for you, but I cannot. You have to run the race that God has set before you. This is your life, and you only have one of it. This is your destiny. This is your life that you're running right now, and as you place value on your life, and value on the time that you have, you'll start to consider more carefully, I wonder why I'm here, and what I'm

really called to do with my life? No one wants to die with an empty life, or a life that's been unfulfilled in some kind of way, so it's like a marathon race. Now the thing is that in that marathon, I kind of was thinking about a hurdle race, and I was thinking have you ever seen racers running a hurdle race? There it is, you've got this big track. Usually it's a long race, quite a long distance they've got to run, but as they run around it, every now and then you'll come across a hurdle, and this hurdle has been set up and here's the thing. If you don't jump the hurdle, you won't complete your race, so it's quite a funny thing to watch. They're running there and suddenly AAGH! and they're straight up and over the top, then they run, run, run - AAGH! up over the other one and you watch and it's quite hilarious to watch it.

I was thinking about it, and I was thinking well, what happens if you don't clear the hurdle? You go kadoompah! flat on your face, and so I began thinking about our life, and our destiny being like a race which has got hurdles on the way. So rather than look at all the blocks to our destiny, I want us just to consider the hurdles you must jump if you're going to run your course, and the goal of running your course is that you run and finish it well. Saul in the Old Testament came to the end of his life and he said, I have played the fool. He realised that he'd made serious mistakes and gone right off course. Paul, at the end of his race in 2 Timothy said, I have run my course or I've finished my race, I fought my fight, and now there's a crown made up for me. So you notice that Paul had an eternal perspective. He was thinking not just of the things that happen in this life, but he was thinking things happen in this life have a bearing on eternity, and so running your race well, fighting your fight to win, is crucial for your destiny to be fulfilled.

I can't run your race, and I can't fight your fights. It's your race to run. These are your fights to fight. All we can do is help, so I want to identify today some of the destiny hurdles, some of the things that will present themselves. I started to look around, and started to research, and I thought what I'll do is, I'll write down what I have observed over many years of ministry, that I have seen people who started well fall, because they failed to jump these specific hurdles. I hope it'll be helpful for you. It'll be quite practical, and so let's go into Ephesians 3 and Verse 10. I want

to just pick up a little bit about Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verse 10 and I want to just go back there into the whole connection between your desires and your destiny, because this is an area of great confusion.

Last time we talked about understanding that although God actually is the king of kings and Lord of Lords; although Jesus is the king of kings, Lord of Lords, although He actually sovereignly rules over everything, He calls upon us to engage with Him proactively. So if you get a concept that God is in charge, God is control, you tend to slump to passivity; well whatever happened I guess God meant it, and you know, my grandmother used to say something like this, well, it was meant to be - which is a fatalistic, passive, lacking faith response to life. A lot of things, it's not meant to be. It's just, this is what happens in life; how are you going to respond to what happens in life? So in Ephesians 2 and Verse 10 and I know the verse. It says that we are His workmanship, created in Jesus Christ under good works that God prepared beforehand, that we would walk in them. So we see there, that you are a unique creation. We looked at this last week, how you are a unique creation. How are you unique? Well your DNA for one, the genes, the genetic design and code that makes you up, is absolutely unique. Your fingerprints are unique. Your voiceprint is unique, your eyeballs are unique. They can identify you by any one of those things. See, you are absolutely unique. There is not a copy of you.

When God made you, He said I won't do that again, I'll just break the mould and make something different, so you're absolutely unique. But there's other ways you're unique too. You and I are unique in that God has designed something only we can accomplish. No one else can accomplish it, because no one has the sphere of influence that you have. You have your network of friends, connections, contacts, where you live in the community, where you work, all those kinds of things. You have a unique call of God into that area or region to do something. No one can fulfil it for you. I can't fulfil it for you. This is something God placed you in that job, placed you in that community, placed you in this area. He placed you, and because within that placement, lies something He wants you to accomplish.

It's always to do with things He's wired into you, and it's always to do with representing Him, and advancing His kingdom, so notice we are His

workmanship; He is working on our lives to shift, change and enable us to be Christ-like, so love flows out of our heart. We're actually loving people, and nice people, and people like to be with you, because you've developed a nice nature walking with God. But it says also, His plan works for us to accomplish, only we can do them, so the first thing then to realise is, God has created a unique destiny, notice it says these works that we would walk in them. That implies this; you are responsible to be proactive in walking with God, and discovering what you're called to do. It's a walk. It's a way of living. When we use the word walk, we're talking about getting somewhere, going on a journey, so let me just say this again. It is your responsibility to discover how to walk with God, and what God has uniquely called you to accomplish.

I wish I could help you discover it. I can give insights, we can get prophetic ideas and directions, but ultimately it's your responsibility to discover what God called you to do. Why did He place you in that school, in that class with those people? Well only God can help you answer that, and part of the key to that is hearing God, but part of it is discovering what He's put inside you already, because I believe that you are already hard-wired. That means God designed you so that you would naturally gravitate to what you're called to, see? How does He do that? Well He puts in you desires. How many have got desires, things you'd really - oh, I'd love to do that? I would just love to do that. We've all got them, see? Got dreams - oh man, dreaming these things. So how many of you have got passions, things when you do that whoa! That's me! Come away, I'm energised, you know? Of course if you compare your passion with someone else's it'll be foolish because you've just got your passion. That's what God gave you. He didn't give it to anyone else, so if they don't get fired up about your passion don't worry.

You may be passionate about making magnificent cakes, and you wonder why no one shares that passion. It's because it was given to you. You've just got to decide why God gave you that passion, and how to use it to represent Him, show the loving nature of God and to fulfil your destiny. Maybe you'll have a cake shop, and make the best cakes of all, and make a fortune selling cakes, who knows, but that's the part you've got to discover. What God puts in you is the passion, and when you start

to flow in what you're passionate about, YOU ENERGISE! You just come alive! People say how can you do that for so long? Oh, it's easy, because as I do it, I come alive! See? Now unfortunately, I can't tell you what makes you come alive. You've got to find that out. It's part of your responsibility in life.

See, your family and God's family can help you, but you've got to discover it, and when you discover it, then THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE CALLED TO DO! DO IT MIGHTILY, with all that's inside you, and be enthusiastic, and everyone you get to talk to, talk about those magnificent cakes, and how people would want those cakes, how lovely those cakes - just be overindulgent with enthusiasm, about what you're excited about it. See? People love to see that. You talk with Colleen about art. Man, once you start talking art with Colleen ooh oh ooh! You can't believe what she's passionate about. She's passionate about art. I mean I'm hopeless at art, really that's not what I'm gifted to do - but Colleen, I've watched her grow into it, become a [wizz] like that. So it's wired in. It's already hard-wired in. Now here's the thing is our future is open. In other words, God has not worked it all out. You've got to walk with Him, and discover how to journey this journey. What you're going to find in a moment is, it gives you a lot of freeway in it.

Now when people say well, God told me to do this, and God told me to do that, God told me - I think well, what the heck's wrong with you? Why don't you grow up? God doesn't need to tell you what to buy at the shops. This is ridiculous. Search the cupboards, make up your list, go to the shops - God doesn't want to be telling you to do little things. That's what you tell kids to do. Here's the list, go do everything. When they grow up, they can go check the cupboards, find what they need, make up their own list. They don't need God for that. God gives us room in our life to be responsible, be creative and show initiative. In fact, what you'll see is that God expects you to show initiative, so God gives a huge amount of space, and here's the thing. Although God has a destiny and a plan for your life, actually you're the one who makes the choices as to whether you fulfil it or not. It's your choice. You choose and you choose every day.

So okay, here's the second thing then, that God wants to co-labour with us, not control us. God wants to co-labour. In Genesis 2, Verse 19, you

notice that God created the animals, brought them all to Adam, and He brought them to Adam to see - notice what the word says, to see what he would name them. Now Adam had been given by God dominion over all the animals, so God made all the animals, and brought them to him to see, what are you going to do? Here they all are. Now I've done my bit, I've made them. Now you name them, because that's what you have dominion over, so you ascribe a name to them, and you represent them by that name, so you bring your creativity to this whole animal business. Lion, elephant, giraffe and so on - so in other words, place your own creativity on what I've created, and then that's how we'll work together. It's definitely a co-labouring. He didn't bring them all and say now Adam, I want you to sit down. I've got a lot of animals here, and I want you to listen up and I want you to remember that is a giraffe, that is a lion. He didn't do that.

He said I want you to have a look at them, and come up with creative ideas on what they would be called. Calling something is to have dominion over it. Think about that - so within the realm of God's destiny for you, there's this huge scope of creativity. God expects you to co-labour with Him, not ignore Him, nor wait to be told everything to do, but to be creative, to take initiative. Quite surprising isn't it really? Okay then, so God brought the animals to see what he would name them. That word see is this; so God brought all the animals to Adam - you know what it is? To see means, to look on with great enjoyment, so God wanted to look on how Adam would participate in this process, and what he would bring to the process of dealing with the animal kingdom.

Now if you think about your destiny, God brings to you, or puts you in the place, puts you in the arena, puts you wherever in the family, in the place He wants you to be. Now He wants to see what you will bring to the table. What will you bring by way of initiative? If you have an area of ministry, if you wait to be told everything to be done, then you're not showing initiative. God wants you to bring your creativity, your initiative to what you do. Okay, so there's another example, and it's found in the Book of Mark, last verse of Mark. There's the Great Commission. The Great Commission we know, go into all the earth, preach the Gospel, make disciples, and these signs shall follow them that believe. Notice believing.

Now at the last part of that, the very last verse it says this; and the Lord worked with them. Now that's an interesting thing. That word means to co-labour, or to work alongside in partnership with someone, so God set out, this is what I want you to do, reach the world. Now come up with some initiatives, and my part will be to bring the supernatural bit in. Your part will be to get engaged with people, and start up some initiatives.

Well I'm waiting for God to tell me what to do. He already told you what to do; go, preach the Gospel. Well it's not my ministry. We've really got a problem here, because we're not actually understanding, we're called to co-labour with God in this world to change it. You understand? It's a way of thinking. Okay then, so we see then God worked with him, so God does the supernatural bit. That's His bit. The creative bit is your bit. You've got to become creative, and think how you can innovate. How are you going to do that? Well of course, it'll be your desires - I just love to do this! Well maybe God is in that. So for example in Acts 7, Verse 23, now we know the story of Moses, and your desires help guide you, or position you, in the path of your destiny. That's why they're so important. Your desires are really important. Now we can have some bad desires, but they're usually pretty obvious, but there are other desires, which are either neutral, and they're just have some fun in life, I'd like to do some skiing. Great, go skiing. You'll feel much better afterwards. I'd love to do some jet skiing. Oh, I love it! Do it! Just do it! What's stopping you? Well I might fall off the boat if I... you know, all that kind of stuff. Just go out and do it! Don't live such a dull life, that you do nothing that really challenges you.

Joy and I got on a jet ski. We went around the bays, we travelled kilometres on the jet ski, mostly at full rap. [Laughter] She was on the back, I was on the front, and we were screaming! It was great. I want to do it as soon as I can again. I love it. Now that kind of - do they advance the kingdom? No, but they're having fun with God, they decide, they're quite alright. Don't be so spiritual and religious you can't just enjoy life. Go out and enjoy life and have some fun you know, and see a lot of Christians are so boring, because they don't actually - they've got things they'd like to do, but they're too timid to actually get out and do them, or even identify what they are.

But life is for living! Jesus come to give us abundant life, so there's some things you'd love to do. Well don't die without doing them! I just wish I'd done that. Well that's foolish, why didn't you? Oh, I don't know. So I'm sure Andy and Janine will help you pull some of those things out. So notice here in Acts 7:23, that when Moses was 40 years old, notice this statement - it came into his heart to visit his brethren. He wanted to visit Israel. Notice where it came; it didn't say God told Him. He just got it in his heart. Something that was inside - I'd really like to go down and - and we've got to remember he's living in a palace, he's trained as a soldier, he's trained in leadership, he's trained in communication. One day he's got this little desire in his heart, I'd like to go down and visit these slaves, and see how the slaves are doing. Where did that come from? It was in his heart. Why was it in his heart? It's part of the wiring that God put in him, to lead him inevitably to what God had planned for him, so if you ignore the little promptings, the little desires, the little things of your heart, how can you ever discover who you are, and what you're uniquely called to be? You can't ignore the little things inside you.

Here's the thing; in the kingdom of heaven everything begins as a seed, everything is little - a little desire, a little urging, a little longing, a little this or that. If you just bury it and squish the thing down, how can you ever discover what you uniquely are, and what you're called to contribute to life? You're loaded with all kinds of stuff, and the world is here, and you're to bring forth all of you. Now of course you need a little bit of modifying on the way, because I think we're a bit selfish in it, but on the other hand you notice this. See your desires, your passions, your gifts are all a part of who you are, and part of the destiny God has for you. There's only one of you, so don't hide it all. Discover it all. Develop it all and deploy it all. See, you've got to think about that - so if you don't, you'll be waiting like a slave to be told by God what to do next, and He doesn't want to operate that way. He wants to operate as a Father, not as a slave master, so you've got to come to the table with yourself. That's what intimacy with God really is about. You can bring you and your stuff to the table with God, okay?

So you notice in Psalm 37, Verse 4, it says delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Well how about that? He

will give you the desires of your heart - but the first condition is delighting yourself in the Lord, and that delight means to be pliable, to be soft, to be yielded. In other words have a relationship with God where you're sensitive and open to Him, you're walking with God. To be yielded or pliable means you're walking in a relationship with God, and what happens as you walk with God, you begin to find out who you really are, what you really desire, you get those desires out, you have to identify them. The Bible says God's okay about giving you desires of your heart. If you don't think God can give you desires of your heart, or wants to give you desires of your heart, then you better scrub the verse out, and a whole lot of other verses with it, like Mark 11:23, when you stand praying, whatsoever things you desire when you pray. Better scratch that one out too, make it something like this: when you stand praying, whatsoever things you've discovered is totally the will of God for you, and the sovereign will of God for you, pray for those things you get them.

Notice He talks about our desires. We are very important to God, so what our desires and our passions - sometimes I've prayed some of the things, oh, I'd really like that Lord, and just like that, without even verbalising it, God just brought it, and it happened. I really love that. I really like that Lord, I just thought it. Other things, nooo! Didn't come - and that always frustrates me but however, I have learnt that the simple little prayers I pray sometimes, and God will just do it, because He likes to do it, He likes to make you happy, likes to enjoy us. Now notice this, here's the thing about our desires. You do have to own your own desires and longings, and then walk them through in relationship with God. It's interesting, in Philippians 2:13, it says, now God is at work in you, or energising you - notice this - to will, and to do, of the things that really please Him. See, that first word will means to desire, and to decide, or determine, or long in your heart for, so God is already at work in you in the area of your desires and longings, to bring them to align with the things that He's really happy with.

As you walk with God, you should expect more and more the things you desire, have really got some significance to them, have got some value to them and that actually God is working in you to bring these desires up, otherwise you bury all the desires, you just grow weary of walking with

God. You actually end up rejecting God, and becoming fallen away from God, and not passionate about Him. Why? Because you've had to lay down all your desires, so all His desires could be done. That's not a really good deal. That's a slave mentality. Getting the idea?

Okay, well you're all quiet. Now here's the thing. God raises our thinking. In Isaiah 55 and Verse 9 it says this; as the heavens are higher than the earth - is heaven high? Yeah, high high! Okay - so are My ways higher than your ways, and also My thoughts than your thoughts. Here's the thing. Notice that God's saying - He says ideas and His scope of thinking. Let's put it like this - My perspective is really much higher than yours. That's why you've got to be expanded in your thinking, because you're not going to think high enough, and you're not going to think big enough. So if I just leave you to yourself, you won't think big enough. Let me just show you how to connect it. I'll give you a few examples I just felt come to mind.

First of all, when Moses went down to Israel he saw a guy beating up one of the slaves. His desire was to deliver the man. God's desire was to deliver a nation. He was impulsive, and he was not prepared to deliver a nation, and so he really blew it on the first one, but nevertheless God still had his plan, and never forsook him, got him there in the end. Hannah - think of Hannah. Hannah desired a son. She really wept, she really cried, she really went all through the sweat about not having a child. God wanted a prophet for a nation, and as soon as her desire and His lined up, woo! She got the son - actually she got heaps of sons, and God got the prophet to the nation. So that's how you collate it with God. God has got something He wants to accomplish through you. It's connected to your desires, but His perspective is a lot bigger. That's why you always want to connect with Him. He's got a bigger perspective, not destroy the desire, but give you a bigger scope of realising it.

Think about Peter. Peter really had a desire to catch fish. He loved catching fish. He went out, he had a business fishing in the end. God wanted him to catch men, so Peter wanted to catch fish, God wanted someone to catch people. So He took the man who caught fish, and raised Him with a bigger vision. Oh man, fish, fish? Even I can buy fish in the market. People - that's eternal. This is big stuff. Peter's thinking, I'd

love to just feed my family, and make a bit of profit here, and do up the house, add some things on, get a nice chariot. God's thinking man, I want to change your world. You see how God took the desire, just lifts it to another level. Here's another one. Think about David. David desired to be a shepherd. He wanted to shepherd sheep, just walk with God and shepherd sheep, but God's desire was for a shepherd for a nation, so God took this guy who's training as a shepherd, and has raised the level of his shepherding up. Ooh, never thought of that did you! My ways are higher than your ways.

Here's another one; Abraham. Think about Abraham. Abraham desperately wanted a son and an heir. He wanted someone who could inherit all he'd got. God wanted a whole nation who could inherit, so how does He get together? Well God just eventually works with Abraham, and Abraham's desire and God's desire gets connected together. Next thing you know, Abraham's got his desire, and God's got His desire. Abraham gets Isaac after messing around with Ishmael, but God gets a whole nation to inherit the nations of the earth. So I see it that God's perspective is higher than ours, but He doesn't ignore ours. He takes into account our desire, and out of intimacy with Him, it comes up in many instances to something far greater than we would ever have thought of.

See, I remember talking with one lady, and she liked knitting and making up these little beanie things, then she ended up making heaps of these beanies for people who were orphans in another nation. So God's plan was to provide for the orphans by providing warmth and covering; her plan was to make some beanies, and God got the two linked together. Next thing you know, she's passionate and she's doing something that actually is a wonderful thing in the kingdom of God. You see how it works? But you've got to front up with what you are, and who you are, and what you've got going on inside you.

So what are some of the things that would hinder you going forward in your destiny? I've come to the conclusion there's never one cause of success, and there's never one cause of failure. There's heaps of them, so let me just list a few of them. I'll just list them out there, won't go into a lot of them, but these are some of what I call the destiny hurdles, that when you come to one, you have to JUMP IT, or you'll fall on your face,

it's as simple as that. So here we go, I'll just give a few of them. They're not in order of importance, but they are definitely things I have observed over years that have stumbled people I know. Okay, I'll just go through them one after the other, and they're not a list of do's and don't s. They're just things that I would say, this is a hurdle; when you come to face this hurdle, see it as something to jump over. It's not a big deal. It's just something you have to make the decision to elevate and move over that, not pretend it's not there, or take another course. You have to do this. Get the idea? Okay then, so don't react as we give you some of these.

Number one, you must take full responsibility for your life. [Inhales sharply] No! I just wanted to put it all in God's hands, and leave it all up to Him! No, it's your life, you've got to run it. Sure, put it in the Lord's hands, but you've got to take full responsibility. What does that mean? You've got to own your desires, own your passions, own your gifts, own your thoughts. They're your thoughts, they're your thoughts. Own your feelings, they're your feelings. Own your choices, they're your choices. I take full responsibility for my thoughts, feelings, choices, desires, how I come through in life. See the problem I've noticed is, many have a victim mentality. They don't take responsibility, so whenever anyone challenges them over how they're coming through in life, or how they're behaving, it's poor me, you don't understand, it's not my fault. It's my father and my mother's, my background, I'm Maori, I'm Cook Island, I'm Pakeha, I'm Irish - it doesn't really matter what it is, it's just a lot of foof, foof, foof, foof, foof.

The first hurdle - [sound effects] If you won't take responsibility for your life, who's going to? I'll tell you - the devil's really ready there, to gain access to your life in every area you won't take responsibility. So number one, you've got to own and take responsibility for your life. No one else is to blame. You are what you are, you are who you are, you are where you are, because of choices you've made. Don't go blaming God, don't go blaming the devil, don't go blaming anyone or anything. Take full ownership; I'm here, and this is who I am, and I'm going to own it all, then I can do something about it, okay?

In Romans 14:12 it says we must all give account of our lives to the Lord. I guess then, you need to plan and set goals. I know some of you won't

like that - but I flow. Well, everywhere in life success comes about by planning, and being specific in your plans, knowing exactly what you want, and having a plan to get there, and some steps to get there. That's how life works. Why does it work that way? Even unsaved people know it works that way, and even if you haven't got them all written down, people who are successful have always got them anyway. The ones who are more successful, usually write them all down. Ecclesiastes 5:3, a dream comes through much activity. Proverbs 16:9, a man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps, so here's the thing. The man's heart plans - we have to plan our way, so if you're going to develop or go anywhere in life, plan your finances, plan your relationships, plan your career, plan your studies, plan, plan, plan, come up with a plan. Set some specific targets and goals in mind. Why? Because if you don't have them, you'll swerve off course and get distracted, so goal setting, planning is a hurdle to jump over. If you fail to do it, you will waste the journey. You'll do a lot of things that actually never got you where you really needed to get.

Here's another one. I told you these would be a bit practical. I'll get the spiritual one towards the end, because I know you just need this more than the other. Here's one; work hard. Oh! Work hard! That's a good one isn't it? A lot of people don't understand hard work. Proverbs 13, Verse 4, the soul of the lazy man desires - I've got all these desires and dreams but nothing's happening - but he has nothing. Why does he have nothing? He's too lazy. It requires work to get anywhere in life, hard work. Hard work. Proverbs 21:25, the desire of the lazy man kills him. He refuses to work. Notice this - a lazy person is someone who won't put in the effort. They won't put in the hard yards to develop their life, have the discipline, do the study, lose weight, gain strength, whatever they need. They just won't put in the hard yards. Now did God abandon them? No, God didn't abandon them. God still love them? God still loves them, God's just a bit disappointed. You could have done more - I mean you're better than that. I had much more for you, do a bit more, do a bit more. What you actually engage in is, faith without works is dead, so true faith, true trust in God, actually shows up by you doing something and usually, from my experience of years of ministry, it's a lot of hard work. Hard work, hard work.

Here's another one; persevere. Don't quit! Never quit! Don't quit. Hebrews 10:35 to 36 it says, don't let go your confidence, you have need of patience, that after you've run your race, and done the will of God, then you'll get the promises. So one of the things I've learned in life is, just don't be a quitter. Be a finisher. Whatever you start, finish it. The road to ruin is paved with people who never jump the hurdle of perseverance - just wouldn't quit. I think thank God for the grace I never quit. I got real close to it many, many times but just never quite did. Couldn't bring myself to quit. [Laughs] Couldn't quit do it. I wrote a resignation one time, but then God didn't answer it, so then I couldn't quit you know? God called me into ministry, and I resigned from it and said well there it is, you know, but it didn't do any good. I woke up the next day and I'm still there, still the Pastor, so He didn't listen at all. He knew I was capable of better things than that. See, don't quit.

Here's another thing, now this is another hurdle. Now I'm going to get a bit more personal now, so here's this. You need to resolve personal issues from your past. You must resolve issues in your life. Over the years, of all the things I have noticed that stumble people is, they get to a point of pain in their life, where there is some personal stuff to deal with, and they quit. Listen, I don't care how much pain it takes, or what it takes; if you've gone through abuse in your life, you've gone through some kind of issues in your life, unresolved pain and hurts and bitterness, they all have an impact and here's what they do. Bitterness will stop you building relationships where you trust, and as you'll see in a moment those are the kinds of things you need to succeed in your destiny. So bitterness will always keep you reserved, guarded, emotionally distant and safe in relationships. It defiles your relationships, in fact, so my observation over years - Lyn would bear witness to this as well, as well as would Joy - over many, many years we've watched many, many people and I can tell you this, that the most common reason they did not succeed in life was because, when God brought them to the point of facing a painful issue in their life, they actually ran from the pain, rather than face it. They ran from the pressure to resolve it, rather than actually come up with a plan, or get some help to deal with it, so you need to do it.

Now I'll give you an example. There's a woman - David's wife, Michal, is a classic example. She was destined to be a queen, destined to rule with David over a nation, and leave a legacy of children to the nation. Did she? Well she got to the queen bit, but did she leave a legacy? No. Bitterness stole away all her marriage joy and love, and she remained barren, queen but barren, there but no legacy. These are things to learn. They're in the Bible everywhere, but I'm just laying them out, because these are things I've observed with people.

Here's another hurdle. You need to develop your core belief system. You need to develop your beliefs about yourself, and about life. We all have beliefs, in fact the Bible tells us Proverbs 4:23, it tells us that out of our heart flows our life, so what's in your heart, is what will really turn up in your life. What you believe about yourself, about various things in life, that will eventually be what you attract, and what you outwork. I can tell you now. I've learnt it. I become to realise that I was attracting undesirable things into my life, because of what I believed about myself, for example if you have been shut down, suppose there's been a very, very bad, harsh, severe family situation, and you were just always bossed over, dominated, pushed down, you will, in the pain of it, come to believe certain things about yourself.

I realised in my own background, that some things that had happened to me had caused me to believe I am of no value. Now, you put that in a religious environment where you lay your life down for the Lord, and there came with it huge difficulties to connect with my desires and hopes and longings and yearnings. Why? Because they are of no value. So if you believe I am of no value, your desires won't be either, your dreams won't be either, your needs won't be either, nothing about you will be of value, and you'll always put someone or something before. It may look good in a religious or church setting, you're doing these wonderful things, but actually in God's eyes, He sees that there is a core belief driving you, which is unhealthy. Now I could give you many other core beliefs like that, but core beliefs like that will ultimately sabotage you coming into your destiny.

Think about this - if I'm of no value, therefore my desires are of no value, so I'm waiting to be led, or I'm doing what I should do, but the thing would

create the passion, the energy and the fire, which is the desire, is not being explored and developed and grown. Think about that one. Think about that one. Okay, so we need to develop our - I can't give the details of this today of course, but I'm just giving you the hurdles to jump, so one of the things that it will require of you, to become that person God dreams of and wants you to become, is you must shift your internal core beliefs to become that kind of person; I am a generous person. I am a valuable person. I don't let people devalue me. I am a loved person, and I love people. I'm an accepted person, and I can accept people, but I don't let people walk over me. Understand? So your internal life is incredibly important, or you live by external duty, and the law, or what's expected by the crowd, or the church culture. You've gone really quiet - feel a bit uncomfortable now. [Laughs] That's alright, I'll give you the last couple, the last two or three.

Let me just give them to you now, and one of them's going to hit you. Another one is, you need to develop your skills and talents. You must invest in yourself. If you're going to fulfil your destiny, you must pay the price of investing in yourself, whether it be by reading, by study, by going to a course, by getting teaching. Whatever it takes, you are responsible to invest in yourself. No matter how talented you might be as a musician, if you don't develop your gift, you can't realise your full destiny. You have to do something to develop yourself, and so that's an important one.

Here's another one; develop supportive relationships. None of us can make it into our destiny without the help of other people. The sooner we realise that, the better, hence why I need to resolve issues of the past that would stop me forming relationships where someone can speak into my life. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Do you have a friend that can wound you in love, and help you grow? See, if you've got that, then you are a blessed person. If you haven't got that, it's possibly because you have such walls of distrust and bitterness around your life, you don't trust anyone but yourself, you won't let anyone get that near to you, and you become defensive if they try and talk. I'm sorry, you just fell over a hurdle. The trouble is with these hurdles, no one sees them, you just fall and wonder why you're down, and not getting anywhere. Here's the last two.

Develop a devotion and delight in the Lord. Develop deep relationship with God, where you love Him, and delight in Him, and enjoy Him, and enjoy His word, the word of God. You can't just live off a buzz on a Sunday and some great meeting and experience of God. We've got to delight in His words, and delight in Him, and build something around our life of that, because my destiny ultimately will be very limited if I just follow the dreams and desires of my heart. They'll get me so far, but they won't take me to the bigger perspective that only God could give. And here's the last one. You need to develop a kingdom world view. Let me just do it very briefly. A kingdom world view - a world view is the way you look at life. Now you've all got a way of looking at life, you just may not know what it is, and so to have a kingdom world view is to understand that the kingdom of God is here now, the kingdom of God is advancing, we're called to advance the kingdom of God in the earth, and one day the kingdom will come in full manifestation.

Now many people in church have different viewpoints of that. Some of you may have come from a background of what I call the rapture teaching; we're waiting for Jesus to return, and there's many verses about us waiting eagerly for His return, expecting His return. There are many scriptures like that, but the core of it is this. We are waiting. What are we waiting for? That great day when Jesus returns. Now there's an element of truth in it, but here's the problem. If that's your perspective, you'll just be waiting, and you'll not only be waiting, you'll be waiting for God to whip you out, and you'll be waiting for the world to be burnt up and judged. You will be irrelevant to changing the culture. See, you can't fulfil your destiny which is in the earth, if you actually reject the people of the earth, and the people in the world. We can't do that. If we see them as sinners, and we see them as God's judgement on them, God's going to burn them, and then there's something happens, there's some prophetic declaration - the judgement of God - I wonder what God do you serve? It's more your own judgemental heart that's come with that kind of stuff.

Here's another thing. I'll just share this one carefully, because I've been a part of it for so long. [Laughs] Another one is what I call a revival mentality, and here's what we do. Now there's many things about the

Lord pouring out His spirit, and we see Toronto, we see a whole range of places around the world. Here's what comes up. Here's what you end up doing - our great hope in what we are waiting for is, one day God will move. What a great day that will be when God moves, so what will we do? Well we'll pray. We'll wait and we'll pray and we'll pursue God. What about the world? Well when revival comes, lots of things will happen then, but our hope is revival coming. Now listen, all of these perspectives have an element of truth in them, but here's God's perspective. Jesus' message was the kingdom is here now. The kingdom of God is within you! It is here now waiting to break out into the earth, through men and women who have discovered their desires, discovered their passions, discovered their giftings, discovered what's in them, and aligned themself with heaven to enjoy the journey of advancing the kingdom and representing our wonderful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and enjoying the journey!

Now any time you come up against one of these hurdles and don't leap the hurdle successfully, I'm afraid you will find yourself on your face, a bit flat and wondering why you're making no progress. It's hard to progress on your face - better jump the hurdle! Here they are again: jump the hurdle, take full responsibility for your life, start to plan and set goals, start to work hard and apply yourself to grow, develop, to be a better person. Persevere, don't quit when it's hard, tough, people criticise you, people against you. Resolve your issues. Face them, get them sorted out, go to a retreat, read a book, get some help. See, develop your core beliefs. Develop a belief system that supports you being fully who you are. See, develop some supportable relationships that will help you get forward.

You know, the "Lone Ranger" is a weird stranger, I'm afraid. Really, he's probably got a Tonto somewhere around too, Indian fellow there, following him around, but listen. You don't want to be one of those. You want to be a wonderful kingdom person - develop your devotion to the Lord, and develop a kingdom mindset. Go and search the scriptures about the kingdom of God, and what it means to live in the kingdom, how the kingdom operates, the principles of the kingdom, the values of the kingdom, and when you go out you're a kingdom ambassador, a kingdom

representative and my, you're walking into your destiny! Why? Because you've started to own it and started to walk and live in it. We say Amen [Amen!] Amen.

Father, we just honour You today. We thank You for what You're teaching us. We thank You Lord that although there are many destiny hurdles to jump You have said You'd help us every time, if we'll just step up in faith. Our stepping in faith means we make some choices, and make some decisions. Listen, I want you just to close your eyes and bow your heads right now. If there's any person here who's never come to know Jesus Christ personally, never given your life to Jesus Christ, I can tell you, you can't fulfil your full potential separated from the God who made you, who wrote your destiny for you. A great decision today would be a decision to receive Jesus Christ. What is holding you back? What is stopping you? Is it your friends and what they'll think? Listen, they're going to think whatever they think. Your destiny's not in their hands, or in what they think; your destiny's in your own choices.

Listen, what's stopping you? Jesus said everyone who received Him, He gave power to become a child of God, even those who believe on His name. Listen today, why don't you make that decision I'm going to believe and trust my life to Christ? I will give my life to Jesus Christ. Well you may say, I've just gone to church for a long time. Listen, going to church isn't where it's at, it's about a relational connection by faith. Are you born again? Has Jesus Christ come into your heart, you put your life in His hands, and started that great journey of your destiny with Him? If you haven't, today would be a great day to start. Raise your hands and let me know Pastor, I want to give my life to Christ today, I want to give my life to Jesus, I want to become a Christian.

This is an important decision to make, put your life in God's hands, to trust Him, and then walk with Him and discover what you're called to be and do. I wonder if there's any today, and you realise that boy, one of those hurdles you've fallen over big time, and you realise that you're just on your face after that hurdle, and you hadn't even realised what you'd stumbled over. You just stumbled. You say God, I just know I've stumbled. I've sort of stopped going forward, and now I realise exactly why I've stopped going forward, and I'm just saying today Lord, I'm just

turning to deal with that issue. I'm going to choose to face that issue today.

Well Father, I just pray for each person here that made a choice to respond to You. I ask Lord for Your grace to come upon their life. I wonder if there's anyone here today when I said that core belief, I'm of no value, boy that really hits you, and you realise man, that's in my life. It's really stuck inside me and it's hindering me. I need to address that. We want to just pray, I believe God wants to help us. He wants to help us. You are of great value.

Would you follow me in this simple sinner's prayer. It's a prayer to receive Jesus. Father in heaven, I come to you in Jesus' name. Thank You for loving me. Thank You for accepting me. Thank You for valuing me. I believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins, and that He rose again from the dead. Today I turn away from sin. I turn to You, the living God. Jesus, I receive You as my Saviour. Please forgive all my sins and failures and give me a fresh start. I receive Your spirit into my heart. I give You my life today. Before heaven and earth I declare Jesus Christ is my Saviour and Lord and my friend forever. Amen.

Summary Notes:

1. Introduction

Heb.12:1 "..Let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking to Jesus …"

- Our life is pictured as a marathon race with a prize to be won at the end.
- Every person born into the world has a unique God given destiny and a race to fulfil it.
- Hurdle = a barrier in a race that each contestant must leap over in order to complete the race.
- Today we want to identify some of the "Destiny Hurdles" to recognise and leap over.

2. Your Desires and Destiny are deeply connected

(a) God has created a unique destiny for each of us

Eph. 2:10 "You are His workmanship – created in Christ unto good works which God prepared beforehand that you should walk in them".

We are uniquely designed by God to represent Him and advance His Kingdom.
God planned out a unique work for each of us before we were born.
"Walk" = we have a responsibility to co-operate, co-labourers with God.
Our future is open – no all predetermined – we have the power of choice.

(b) God wants to co-labour with us not control us

E.g.Gen2:19 Adam

Adam was invited by God to create and place names on all the animals.
Naming = given responsibility to have dominion over.
"See" = to gaze on with enjoyment, to discover, to have an enjoyable experience.

E.g. Mk.16:20 apostles – “God working with them”
The apostles took initiative – Faith always takes initiative – never passive.
Balance of taking initiative and being yielded to the Holy Spirit e.g. paul Acts 16:6.

(c) Your Desires help position you to fulfil your Destiny
Act.7:23 “…Now when he was 40 years old – it came into his heart to visit his brethren…”
A desire arose in Moses heart .. that desire was connected to his destiny.
Your desires, passions, gifts, are all part of who you are and what you are called to do.
Ps 37:4 “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart”
Delight = 6026 OT = to be soft, liable, easily shaped.
Without a connection with God our desires and dreams are self oriented.
Connected to God our desires have a totally new perspective. Phil.2:13

(d) God raises our Vision to Align with His Plan
Is.55:3-9 “As the heaven is higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”.

E.g.
Moses desired to deliver man – God desired to deliver a nation.
Hannah desired a son for herself – God desired a prophet for the nation.
Abraham wanted a son for an heir – God wanted to raise a nation to inherit.
Peter desired to catch fish – God desired to catch multitudes of men.
David desired to shepherd sheep – God desired a shepherd for a nation.
All these men had desires and dreams that were connected to destiny.

3. Leaping over Destiny Hurdles
There is never one cause of success – or one cause of failure.
God is able to make every aspect of our life work for good when we exercise faith.
Here are some Destiny Hurdles:

(i) Take Full Personal Responsibility for your life (Rom. 14:12)
· Must discover and own desires, passions, thoughts, actions, mistakes, feelings.
· Victim Mentality – someone else is responsible, someone else is to blame.

(ii) Plan and set goals
· Ecc.5:3 A dream comes through much activity.
· Prov. 16:9 Amos heart plans his way but the Lord directs his steps.
· Without focus of goals we become distracted and sidetracked.

(iii) Work hard – apply yourself
· Prov. 13:4 “The soul of the lazy man desires but has nothing …”
· Prov. 21:25 “The desire of the lazy man kills him for he refuses to labour”.

(iv) Persevere – Don’t Quit!
· Heb. 10:35-36 You have need of endurance.
· Persevere when there is pressure, pain – keep focussed on dream.

(v) Resolve Personal issues from your Past
· Heb. 11:15

· Unresolved hurts, grief's, bitterness hinder destiny.
· E.g. Michel – David's wife was bitter – failed to enter destiny as Queen.

(vi) Develop Your Core Beliefs
· Prov.4:23 "Out of heart flow the issues of life"
· Prov.27:3 How/what you believe determines how you interact with life.

(vii) Develop Your Skills and Talents
· Invest in yourself – in training and personal development.
· Mt. 13:24 Kingdom of heaven like man who sowed.
· Everything starts small – must be nurtured.

(viii) Develop Supportive Relationships
· Prov. 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend".
· Need relationships – connections to fulfil destiny.

(ix) Develop Devotion and Delight in the Lord
· Ps. 37:4 Delight self in the Lord
· As we take delight in Him and meditate in the Word of God – blessing and favour.

(x) Develop a Kingdom World View
· Mt. 11:12 Kingdom of heaven suffers violence – violent possess by force.
· Rapture/Revival mentality = people waiting for God to move.
· Kingdom is here now – we must advance it in our area of influence.

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3. Desires & the Will of God (3 of 7)

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Today I want to just talk about your desires and the will of God, your desires and the will of God, how these things work together. Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verse 10 - we are His workmanship, created in Jesus Christ for good works, that God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Every person longs for a sense of purpose. We all want to have meaning for our life, and being disconnected from God it's very, very difficult for people to find a purpose for their life that satisfies that deep

need in the soul. That's because disconnected from God, we can never really discover and enter into the fullness of what we were designed and created for. There's an emptiness, which can only be met by relationship with God, but you notice in here it talks about things that God created beforehand.

It talks about destiny. Your destiny is not just a fate, something that happens, a power that moves and you can do nothing about it, that it's just going to happen anyway. A lot of people have that passive Eastern viewpoint that you know, destiny is just going to work out. There's a plan been worked out for you, and you have really nothing except to just find yourself in the middle of it, and try and understand it. That's definitely not a Christian position. Many Christians also are waiting for God to tell them everything to do, so we need to try and find the balance in this whole area. Notice in Ephesians 2, Verse 10, it says that we are created by God to do something, to do something that's got eternal value and benefit. We're created for things, and the Bible says, God prepared them before we were born, and it's a walk, it's a lifestyle of walking with God, we will begin to discover the things we're called to do, and some of those things are very natural.

So some are called to be a wife, a mother, a husband, a provider, a teacher. There's a whole range of very, very natural things, and all of that is part of our walk with God. We tend to think of the works of God being some great thing, but mostly the works of God are just worked out in our life quite easily, but here's something for you to see. If you look up in Verse 1, 2 and 3, it says - of Ephesians, Chapter 2 - it says God has made you alive, you were dead in trespasses and sins. So before we came to Christ we were cut off from God, dead in trespasses and sins, so the power of sin gripped us, and with that, self-centredness. Now watch this - it says, and once you walked - now notice we've just read how our destiny is walking with God and discovering what He wants for our life, but before we come to Christ, we walked a different way. What was the way we walked before we came to Christ? It says here we walked according to the course, or the track of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

So notice it's saying that, there is a course, a path that everyone in this world follows. It's got many different aspects of it, many different pictures, but it's still the same path; I do what I want, it's all about me. So it says that, that is the course the world follows. It's a self-centred, all about me and about my welfare, that's the way that we all walked, and notice it says that there is a spiritual power influences all people who live without Christ, to walk the same way, so no matter how good people look, you'll find nevertheless they are still walking, and there's a self-centred dimension around their lives. Then it says, and we also walked, and we once conducted ourselves among them in the lusts of our flesh, or desires of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind. So it says that the way we used to live was one, we just copied the way the world lived. We had the same value systems, pretty well sought after the same things everyone else did, we were just like all following like a herd down the same path. There was a spirit operating over that, and the way it worked was in the desires of our flesh and our minds.

In other words, there's an area of desires that control the way we lived before we came to Christ. We wanted something, just went to pursue and we wanted to do what we wanted to do. So notice it says that, we walked according to desires, so what you desire you're going to seek after, and if you're seeking after something, it's because you really desire it. So if we watch how we live and walk, pretty soon we can find out what we really desire, so coming to Christ, something needs to change, and here's where you get a little bit of confusion around this area. So I want to talk a little bit about your desires and the will of God. How are your desires connected to the will of God? Secondly, how can you discover the will of God in your life? Alright, so the first thing to understand is this. I'll read a verse here in Proverbs, Chapter 4, Verse 23. It says keep your heart with all diligence. Why? Because our of your heart flows direction, the value system, the emphasis, the priorities, the goals, the activities of your flow from whatever is in your heart, good or bad. Whatever is in your heart will direct how your life goes, so the Bible says to guard our heart.

So here's the thing. God has wired into your heart certain desires, certain giftings, certain passions. There are some things before you were born God hardwired into you, and they are to help you begin to discover what

you're here to do. You see when we're born into the world we're without God, but we still have desires, passions, gifts. Not all of them are bad, and not all of them are good. Some are good, some are neutral, some are bad, but some things God has wired into us, and as we begin to pursue our desires and our passions, we begin to find ourselves moving in a direction in our life, and you notice if you go into a walk with God, one of the things you will need to do is to discover what He's wired into your heart. Why? Because it's out of heart your life will flow. God is not going to tell you everything to do. He wants you to own your life, connect with what He's put inside you.

If you have a passion, a desire, a gift or some kind of thing, it was put in by God to enable you to fulfil His plan for your life - so some are creative, some have music. You know it's wonderful you have a gift of music in your life, but you do know you never earned it. You never learned it. You actually got it. It was gifted, and then what you had to do was to own that I have a gift, then begin to develop the gift, and begin to put it to some constructive use. So one easy way - there's several easy ways you can find some of the desires of your heart. What is it you really love to do? What is it you really love to do? You'll find there are some things you love doing. Now don't dismiss as though they're not important. If you love to do it, it's because God's probably wired it into your heart. Some people love cooking. Well whatever you love to do, if you love cooking, then make cooking the way you love people. Use it to love people with. Some people are great at helping, and they love to help. Well then love people by helping them. It's not really complex or complicated.

What sorts of things get you very angry or upset or stir you up? Well those are probably things you're called by God - He's wired it in you to do something to change those things, so don't put your hand up in the air and say, why isn't someone doing something about it? Maybe God called YOU to do something about it, and the fact you're reacting is because God wants YOU to step up, and do something about this thing that others don't feel anything much about. Maybe it's - what do you feel passionate about? When you do the thing that God's wired in you, you start to fire up, you become passionate, you get enthusiastic and you begin to find yourself being highly energised when you do the things God has put into

your life to do. Some people, you see them and they just come alive when they're doing what they're called to do. It's just the energy flows, and they can go long hours, doesn't seem to drain them, because they're flowing out of what's designed and what's built inside them.

So what is it that you're good at? Sometimes the things you're good at give you a clue to what God's wired in your life. What do other people say you're good at? Those can give you a clue to some things that God has put in your life that you should recognise, develop and this is part of discovering what God has for your life. It's quite simple and quite natural. What stirs your compassion? Do you weep over anything? Do you feel strongly about something? Probably God called you to move into something in that area, and to do something about that area. Now you notice we haven't talked about prayer yet. We've talked about you engaging your own heart, because in your heart God has already hard-wired some of the things that will outwork in fulfilling His will in your life, and many times many people have such a low esteem that they don't value what's inside them, and don't take the time to discover, recognise, draw out and develop what God put in their heart. Out of your heart flow the issues of life, so there'll be some things you desire which are really good - those are the things to cultivate by focussing on them. Some things you desire may be of the flesh. They need to go to the cross, need to just deal with them by not focussing on them, bringing them to death on the cross.

So separated from God, we tend to be very self-centred, and even when we come to Christ, most of the time we start off thinking what's in this Christian life for me? What am I going to get out of this service? What am I going to get out of the message? What am I going to get out - in other words, the orientation when we come to Christ still often is very similar to what it was before we come to Christ. We're just looking what's in this for me, what do I get out of it? How can I get blessed? And if we don't change that way of thinking, then what happens is we become incredibly immature, and never fulfil the course of God in our life. So here's a scripture for you, in James 4, Verse 1 to 4. James says where do wards come from? Where to conflicts come from? How come we've got conflicts in marriage, and conflicts in relationships? Then it gives you the answers,

because you lust or desire and you don't have, so you fight to get what you want. So self-centred desires always lead us into conflicts with people. We end up in conflict, we end up in difficulties. Without Christ, we tend to be quite self-directed, so we're really looking after our own interests.

Look at this scripture here, in Matthew, Chapter 16. This is true of all of us. We come to Christ, what can God do for me? Then gradually we come to the point where we say, what can I do for God, and how can I heal my life ,and discover what He wants for me to do? So there is a connection between the desires God's put in your heart, and the will of God, but if you just follow what you want to do, you'll never find the will of God and if you just wait for God to tell you, you'll never find all that He has for you either. You actually have to become responsible to walk with God, and bring your part to Him, some to be put right and sanctified, and some to actually enhance because that's how God wants you to fulfil His purpose for your life. Look at this in Matthew, Chapter 16 and Jesus, Verse 21, from that time Jesus began to show His disciples, He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. So Jesus is quite focussed all His life, what He's called to do. He knows exactly what He's called to do. Did He show creativity in it? Yes, He did, but He knew all the time what He was called to do. He had a very clear focus for His life.

Now you notice here, He's just announcing that I'm called to lay My life down sacrificially for the cause of God, and immediately there's a response from Peter. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying have pity on Yourself, or save Yourself, this shouldn't happen to You. Now notice what Peter is doing. Peter is with Jesus. Peter is walking, He's enjoying ministry, enjoying the miracles, enjoying the crowds and then Jesus begins to explain actually there's a death I have to face, and it'll be followed by a resurrection. This is the path of God's plan for My life, and his immediate thing is, if Jesus dies, what happens to us? So notice what he does. Straight away he tries to press on Jesus to change the plan and he says have pity on Yourself, or hey, save Yourself or look after Yourself, and Jesus saw exactly where that kind of thinking come from. Notice the rebuke that Jesus gives Peter. He says

get behind Me Satan, you're an offence to Me. So Jesus identified that feeling sorry for yourself, protecting yourself, saving yourself was a demonically inspired impression or thought, that was trying to take Him off course.

I have found of all the things that have been hardest in fulfilling the call of God on my life, is people have come with that kind of thinking. It is the hardest of all, when your life is committed to lay your life down, to sacrifice for Christ, and others encourage you to take an easier path and avoid the cross. There's no resurrection life without the cross, none whatsoever. If there was an easier way for us to be saved, Jesus wouldn't have had to die, so not only is the cross the power of God to bring salvation. The cross is actually a principle at the heart of God, Jesus lay His life down for the Father's purpose. The Holy Ghost served Jesus and fulfilled, empowered Him to fulfil the Father's purpose. You notice in all of it, that God is working, and the principle of the cross worked right through Jesus' life. If we have a Christianity with no cross, I guarantee you haven't got a Bible Christianity. You've got to help yourself, do good, feel good, gospel which has no power to change lives, so notice that. So let's have a look on - so connected to God, then our desires change. In Psalm 37, Verse 4, it tells us this. Delight yourself in the Lord. Delight in the Lord and notice what do you do? He'll give you the desires of your heart. Now that's an amazing thing. Many, many scriptures, God says He'll give you the desires of your heart - but you've probably got lots of desires and haven't seen any of them come about.

Well notice the thing that comes first, He says delight yourself in the Lord. That word is to remain pliable, soft, like Bluetack that you can squeeze and shape and move it around and make it into a shape. In other words, have a relationship with the Lord where you are soft and yielded and you have His interests at heart, and out of that relationship with Him, He will ensure the desires of your heart get fulfilled - maybe not the way you think, but He certainly will enable it to happen. So He tells us then to delight in the Lord, and as we delight in Him and are soft in His hands, then we begin to discover what parts of our desires are interacting, connected exactly to what He wants us to do. The most amazing thing - so how can you discover the will of God? That's a key question isn't it?

You look at Jesus' life, in John, Chapter 5, Verse 38, He said I've come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of My Father, so He was very clear that His whole life was centred around advancing the kingdom of His Father. In John 17, Verse 4, he says I've finished my course, or I've got to the end of my life. I've glorified You or honoured You with my life - notice this - I have finished the work You gave me to do. Now that is a key to a successful life. I honoured God, and finished the work God gave me to do. Notice, it wasn't the plan of people.

Jesus many times stood in conflict against the desires of others for Him, His core driver to be a success in life, His core driver to be successful was, I want to advance the kingdom of My Father, My life is fully available for that. My resources are fully available for that. This is what motivates Me. That is the core of the gospel. That is the core of a successful life. Listen, you may look successful to the world, but how do you know that you're successful? Because you did what you wanted? Because you achieved these great goals? Because you fulfilled these great ideas? No, no, no. Jesus said very clearly, He said I've brought glory to My Father. Why? Because I discovered and found what He wanted Me to do, and everything He gave Me to do, I've done it. That is success in life. So you can look good in church, you can look good in a ministry, you could look good in business, you can look good in all kinds of things, as though you're successful, but only God really knows what He planned for you to do, and it's only by connecting with Him, and discovering that work He called you uniquely to do, you can really find success. The world, remember, has got it's own way of measuring success. For the world success is money, but Jesus died with no money, so He wasn't a success, see?

The world's thing of success is popularity and position, but Jesus died as a criminal, so I don't think He was a success there either. The world's concept of success is, you know, people are following you, responding to you, you've got lots of friends, but Jesus' friends all abandoned Him, so it doesn't look like He was much success does it? You notice the world's concepts of what success looks like, are absolutely contrary to God's idea of success, and only God can speak into your heart, and help you discover what success will be for your life. Now motivational teaching will

encourage you, and you can read - I've read lots of books. I've got a whole shelf there of books of motivational speakers and motivational teachers of all kinds, and they're all very similar, and they all encourage goal setting, dreaming. They all encourage a whole range of things which are incredibly effective and practical and I can tell you now, if you want to make some movement in life you do want to get a hold of some of those things and get to start to practice the principles. They work.

Here's the problem. You'll notice in all of them, they have one thing in common, apart from how to succeed, and how to set goals, how to manage your time, all that kind of thing. This is what they have in common: it's all about me. There's no cross, there's no Christ, there's no eternal kingdom. It's about me, doing what I want to do with my life, and the Bible says, notice we read that verse in Ephesians 2, that we once walked in that path before we came to Christ, fulfilling the desires of heart, being under the prince of the power of the air. Now we're under the influence of the spirit of God, we go through a transition process of sifting our desires, sorting out our goals, sorting out our motives and priorities. Why? Because now we're citizens of another kingdom, there's another value system, there's another way of doing things, there's another set of priorities, there's an eternal reward. Everything begins to shift, and there is a process in doing that. There's a journey to maturity in doing that, and part of that is discovering the desires of your heart, setting goals, making plans - as we'll see in just a moment. Getting the idea? Alright, you've gone all quiet now about it so [laughs] I must be hitting it very clearly.

I had some dreams inside. You know what I wanted to do, because I was really keen to be a teacher, trained to be a teacher, and did the kind of training that meant I could get a job anywhere I wanted. What I wanted to do was get a job in Warkworth, which I love the boats up there. I love the boating up there, I love the harbour up there, I love the whole area up there. I love the climate up there. I just wanted to live there, get a boat, fish and enjoy my life.

So left to myself, my desire, I would be up there, and I'd be still teaching in one of the schools up there, and I would have a boat, and we'd be out there - and I'd be wasting my precious life. See, but God had something different, and so when the will of God and desires of God came into my

world, I had to start to realign my desires and my will, and to not let go what I liked, but to actually yield to God's bigger plan, and within that I'd be able to find the things that God called me to do. Getting the idea? Okay then.

So how are some of the ways you can find the will of God? I'll give you a few. We all want to know the will of God, and it's so hard to find sometimes, and so I'll give you some practical keys. They're pretty simple keys, and it's not all of them. One or two of them will be enough to do it, but you know there are a lot of things that the Bible doesn't tell us, like it doesn't tell you what job to get. It doesn't tell you where to live, it doesn't tell you who to marry. It's got lots of things it doesn't tell you, and those are things you really want to know, and it's - you go and open your Bible, you're looking everywhere and what job, you know? It doesn't say anything about computers in here you know? I can't find an answer to the things I really need, and so there's a confusion lots of people have, over just discovering the will of God. It's not that easy at times, and that's partly because God doesn't just tell you everything. When people say God told me this, God told me that, God told me this, see that's just nonsense. That's immaturity. You're acting like a little baby, who's been told what to do. You go do shopping, make a shopping list. You figure out what you need. You don't wait for God to tell you what to buy, just go figure it out for yourself.

So often we hear people say God told me this, God told me that, and it confuses us, because they put the authority of God over their own decisions and choices, as though somehow God has endorsed it all, and there's often confusion around this. I just think it's much easier - we'll just give you a few practical things, and then I want to give you a couple of areas that can really hinder you discovering God's will for your life. Now these are quite important ones too. I'll just give them out one at a time then. So first of all, one of the practical ways, what's the passion and desire of your heart? One of the things you've got to do is, discover what's in your heart. Now if you just want to go out and just do all kinds of stuff and look after yourself and spend money on yourself, this desire needs to come to the cross at some point. You need to learn to live bigger than that, but you know Moses, it came into his heart in Acts 7,

Verse 23, it came into his heart to visit the people of Israel. In other words, it was something he felt in his heart, a stirring he had in his heart.

In Judges 14, Verses 1 to 6, Samson felt it in his heart to go down and get this woman to be his wife. It says here that his parents didn't approve of it, but they did not understand God was using this to provoke a fight with the Philistines. Now how did he get to find the will of God? He didn't hear anything. He just had something in his heart - I like that woman, go get that woman for me - but he found himself in the will of God, following just that desire of the heart. Jacob in Genesis 30, Verse 30, said I'm sick of working for wages, you rip me off. I have a dream of providing for my household. I want to actually go out and be an entrepreneur. How did he - he had it in his heart. So many of the people in the Bible were motivated by just a desire of the heart. Sometimes we make it all very complicated.

Jesus, in Luke 2:49, He was down there at the age of 12 in the temple, and the parents said to Him, what are you doing here? He said don't you know, I must be about My Father's business. He had a desire in His heart to learn the word of God. I don't think there's any big spiritual thing. I think it's just desires of the heart, and so you've got to learn to tune in to your heart. So if you block your heart off, and block what goes on in your heart, and block because of all kinds of things, issues of your heart, you won't ever hear what it is God's put in your heart to do. Who knows, you might be called to something really great, that no one else has ever done before, but you're the only one could ever know that. How would you know it? It must have been put in your heart by God, so sometimes God will directly put it in, sometimes it's just a desire. Then you find when you flow in your desire, you just can't help but do it, it's just part of you. It's who you are. So one thing is the desires of your heart.

The second thing is, here's a good question to ask, what is the desire of my heart? Here's another one you can ask, what does God expect me to be responsible for? Now I'm not going to tell you about everything in life. He expects you to think it out. Which school should we send our children to? Well go and have a look around, find what's a good school, get some report back from the parents, commit your decision to the Lord and make a decision. You don't need God to tell you everything. He wants you to use wisdom and if we don't grow in wisdom - another word for wisdom is

commonsense - that God doesn't want you to be a slave, so you've got to connect with your heart and you do your homework. You've got to identify your desires and make plans.

Notice this in Proverbs 16:9, in his heart man plans his course, so you are responsible to plan your life. Don't just wing it, make a plan. Plan your finances, plan how to build a good marriage, plan how to build a good family, plan, plan, plan, plan. You're called to plan. God's not going to plan for you. He wants you to plan, set goals and that comes out of know what you want. What do I want for my marriage? What do I want for my family? What do I want for my life? What do I want in our finances? You've got to ask what you desire and then form a plan, use practical wisdom. Don't wait for God to tell you everything. You've got to do your part. Another scripture like that in Proverbs 16:1, to man belongs the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue. In a heart man plans his course, but the Lord directs his steps, so God expects you and me to plan. He will actually direct whether the plan goes according to plan or not, so you need to have a flexible plan, able to adjust.

Paul had a plan where he was going. He announced to everyone, I'm going on a mission, and imagine this; we have a missionary, and we announce they're going to a particular country, and then they get over there, and they say no, God changed His mind, we're going somewhere else. So God does change the plan. They had the plan, God changed the plan. Why? Because God's perspective was bigger, so you've got to be flexible enough having made your plan, to get God change it on the way, and adapt it on the way. This is quite straight forward. Here's the thing; does it agree? Does what you're planning agree, or contradict, the word of God? Now there's many things in the word of God, it tells you exactly what to do, what not to do. Don't lie, don't cheat, don't have sex before marriage, there's so many things it tells you what to do, why would you need to hear God personally about that, when the Bible tells you what to do? Husbands, love your wives. Don't pray about this, and about that, just love your wife.

The Bible is very - in everything give thanks. You don't have to pray about it, or complain, just do what the Bible says to do, so that's why you've got

the Bible. It's to help you make wise and good decisions. There's a lot of wisdom in there, and then of course there's some situations there's no answers at all, but God can use it to speak a quickening for you. So do your choices align with the word of God? Here's another one. Do you have peace in your heart about the thing you're choosing to do? Colossians 3:15 says let the peace of God rule in your heart, or be an umpire in your heart, so if you feel agitated, a reserve of some kind - notice when people get married we say, have you come here freely, no one made you, and without reserve? In other words, this is the time to say if you're having some second thoughts.

Most people overlook the reserves, men particularly. Men get so excited about the project, that when their wife raises a little reserve, they just shout it down, and usually later that little reserve turns out to be a major problem, and men find it very hard to say, you were right and I was wrong. That's just one of the things in life I've observed. [Laughs] So the peace of God in your heart, so if there's a lack of peace, or if you're husband and wife and you wife has a lack of peace, then I guarantee something's wrong with it. I tell you now, something's wrong with it because God called you to be one. If the other half is feeling unhappy, don't go ahead, you'll regret it. [Laughter] See, the will of God. See, I haven't even brought God into it very much, have I? I'm just teaching how you discover the flow of the will of God in your life, it's not so hard, but it is challenging at times. Most of us overlook these kinds of things.

We had a group of women who were unhappy with their marriages, had unsaved men, and we asked the question, did your father have any reserve about that marriage, and every one put their hands up and said yes. Well therefore, you should then repent, because there was a lack of peace, and you refused to get wisdom and counsel from someone else, so that brings us to another thing. Have you sought counsel from someone, or opened to get counsel from someone else about your decision? Proverbs 11:14, where there's no counsel people fall, and the multitude of counsel is their safety.

Here's a good one, Proverbs 12:15, the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he that heeds counsel is wise. So this is what amazes me - Christians who've been around Christians for years, they ask the wrong

people. How stupid! I've watched over and over again, people ask the wrong people for advice. If someone has no track of financial success, do not ask for help from them about your finances. Someone's got no spiritual track record of any commitment, steadiness, perseverance and faith, don't ask them what to do. You're just being ridiculous, you're being foolish. I'm amazed how many people make decisions without consulting, and getting spiritual wisdom from someone who has the experience, and cares about their welfare. Many times people will come and they'll, oh well, I've decided to do this, what do you think? What I think is, you've decided to do this. Simple as that. You haven't come asking for any advice, you've actually made your mind up, and what you're trying to do is get my fingerprints on the smoking gun. [Laughter] It's true. That's what goes on, and people make foolish, foolish mistakes, over and over and over again, financial mistakes, relationship mistakes, marriage mistakes, family mistakes, because they don't seek counsel.

Counsel is just that, it's advice. You're still responsible. I'm not talking about counsel that controls you, that's not counsel at all, that's ungodly. So here's another thing you could ask yourself, even just two or three of these if you've got them lined up, you'll probably get the right decision. How does this, or what is the impact of your desire, or plan, upon others? Now that's an important one. What is the impact of your plan or desire on others? So if you're planning that I've got a great dream, I'll go and climb Mount Everest - how much is that going to cost your whole family, you doing that? Have you thought about the impact of that desire? Now have another think. If it's going to have all that impact, really, should you be doing that? In other words, we're not to live our life for ourselves. We're called to liberty and freedom, but not to use it as an occasion in the flesh, but by love serve one another, so when you have all these desires, and you're fulfilling all these desires, and doing your own thing, and the family finances are running down while you just go out and do your thing, that is ungodly. It's self-centred, it's selfish, and it won't build good relationships. It's not very wise either. Getting the idea?

And of course, you could pray and ask God to tell you. Sometimes He does, and sometimes He doesn't. Most of the time, He'll just give you peace in His heart, but sometimes He'll give you a rhema, a quickened

word, and you'll know it's exactly what I'm called to do. Listen to this. There has not been a single major decision I've made in my life - now you don't make many major decisions in your life. There's never been a single major decision I've made since I've come to Christ, where I did not get a rhema from God. If it was big enough to be a major decision, I always figured I'm not smart enough to see the consequences, I need God to speak to me. So that's where, at the core there's this thing, where I'm here to fulfil God's purpose, but I've got to participate wholeheartedly in it. I've got my part to do, and see many Christians are waiting for God to tell them what to do, or they think God's telling them what to do, and it's really their own thing, but there's a balance of human responsibility, and I've given you some what I call practical steps of how you discover what God wants you to do, a whole range of very simple things.

I'm going to give you a few things, and I want to just throw this out, because this will set you off course every time, and I won't develop them. I'd like to, but I won't develop them. Here's the first one. These are hindrances to discovering what God's called you to do, or wants you to do. Number one is, you ask God, but you have an idol in your heart. You ask God for direction, but you've already got your intention made up. This is what makes it difficult when you're asking God about a marriage partner, because often you've already got your own idea made up, and you're not going to listen anyway, so all you want is - and here's what the Bible says in Ezekiel. God's speaking and He says, now they have idols in their heart, so this is what He says, so when they come to me asking for direction, what they will hear is the idol in their heart. If you come to God looking for direction, and you've already got a mindset, your mind made up, you've already got something you've determined to do, He is not fooled one bit. You're not coming to ask Him for direction, you're coming already with your mind made up, or something in your heart you want to do, and you never hear the will of God in that, or rarely. What happens instead is, you hear what you want to hear. You hear the voice of your own idol.

There's a great story in the Bible and you can look it up in 1 Kings 22 of King Ahab. King Ahab wanted to go down to battle, and so Jehoshaphat came with him, and they got together, two kings sat in their thrones and

Jehoshaphat said, shouldn't we get a word from the Lord? So Ahab brought all the prophets together, and the prophets all said oh, and they did these great prophetic actions, and they got these bullhorns, and they woo, you're going to go there, and you'll beat up the Syrians, and you'll knock them all down, and you'll smite them. You'll come home victorious, and they all did the same things see - king's very happy. But then the king said well listen, what about a word from the Lord? Is there anyone else who's a true prophet of the Lord? So they bring out Micaiah, and before Micaiah comes on, the man says to him listen, all the prophets are saying man, the king's going to have a victory. He should go down to the battle - so make sure you bring the same word. Now notice this - the king had already made up his mind what he wanted to do, so when the prophet came, you know what? The first word he heard from the prophet, according to the idol in his heart. The prophet said go down, you'll succeed. How about that?

In other words, when you come to God for guidance, and you've already made your mind up what you want, you don't get guidance. You just hear from your own heart, you hear the idol in your own heart, because you have not just yielded to God, and come to a place where whatever God was directing you, and you're happy with it either way. I've found the hardest thing in major decisions, is to come to a place where your personal agenda is, you let go of it; the grief of letting go of something, you let go, and you come to a place where you can just be at rest, whatever God wants to direct you into you're happy with that. When you come to that place, usually you hear very quickly from God. When I came to come up here, I did not want to come here. I did not want to. I came here, I cried all the way home from seeing the church, and the terrible mess it was in. All the way home I cried. I said God, I do not want to go to that place, it's miserable and I hate Hastings. I'm from Napier - and so that's it. [Laughter] So that was my seeking guidance.

So I decided it really was a major thing, and so I decided I better take time to seek the Lord. What a good idea! So we went away for a couple of days to the beach to pray, and here's what seeking the Lord consisted of: most of the time, weeping, and being willing to let go, and listen to God. Feeling the pain of loss. If God was to speak in a certain way, and

in spite of feeling the pain, being willing to let go, lay everything down, put everything on the altar and say God, I'm your servant. What you want, I'll do it. It took me at least a day and a half. The moment I came to place of surrender, immediately I heard the voice of God, immediately, and I'm glad I heard it, otherwise I'm still in Dannevirke, and I wouldn't have a son in Pakistan, and I wouldn't have a church here, and we wouldn't have mission things all over the world. We wouldn't have all of those things. Understand? So you've got to get your heart clear, and this is a big challenge for us.

The second thing is immaturity. If you're just immature, you often don't hear God right, that's why you need some counsel. In 2 Timothy 4, Verse 3 it says, in the last times, people heaped to themselves teachers, having itching ears, following the desires of their own hearts. So very simply put, it was like this. It's saying in the latter days, people have itchy ears. You got something itchy, you want to scratch? So what they're saying is this; people want to hear a certain thing that pleases them, and so they'll go to the people who'll tell them what they want to hear. I've had people come to me, and they get my advice, and then they go find someone else, until they find the one that tells them what they want to hear, then they follow it. That's what the Bible - itching ears, following their own desire. In other words, they're just wanting to get what they want.

Last couple of things that'll hinder you is - an important one, is the influence of a controlling relationship. If you are in a relationship with someone who's a very strong controlling person, the soul tie to that person, and the control over their life, will influence your thinking, and you don't think clearly. I'll give you a classic example of that. King Jehoshaphat, who was with Ahab said, I want a prophet of God, so the prophet of God came. He said go up, it'll do well, and the king said to him, I've told you you tell me the truth. You're lying to me - tell me the truth! The guy said okay, you're going to fall and die in the battle, and it's going to be a major defeat. Oh, I knew it! You never said anything good about me! Now notice this. The truth has finally come out, the true word of the Lord. This is going to be a failure, this whole campaign, and Jehoshaphat was closely allied in relationship with Ahab, who was married to Jezebel, and therefore under a controlling spirit. You know

what? He's a godly man, but he went to the battle anyway, and nearly lost his life. So you notice this; he heard what God said, but the influence of the controlling relationship hindered him responding to God's direction, and he nearly lost everything. Very sobering that, isn't it? It was only because he cried out to the Lord in the heat of the battle that he survived.

I've seen many people that are in controlling relationships, and when they come to trying to hear God, there's too much confusion in their life, until they resolve the issue of control in the relationship. Getting the idea? Okay, well I think that's probably enough, we've covered enough. [Laughs] But the last one is, you can't be passive if you're going to find the will of God. How are we going to discover the will of God? Look at the passions, desires in your heart, the things God's put into you, the things that move you, create stirrings of passion, whatever in your life. You want to find the will of God, well what does God expect you to be responsible for? Lay your desires out, set some goals, lay some plans out, and then bring your plans before the Lord. He doesn't want you to be a slave. Does this agree with the written word of God? Have you sought any counsel on this? Do you have a peace in your heart about it? Are you open to consider that the timing may not be right? A lot of people say, I got called to minister, called to ministry! Yeah, yeah, I did too, and you know it took me years to ever fulfil it. You know calls of God, there's a preparation time. Don't think because God called you, you're going to jump up and do something great tomorrow. Start with something little today. Okay then.

Consider how the impact of your desires will affect the people around you, and also, are you open to the counsel of people? These are good things to learn aren't they? So desires and the will of God, the will of God is deeply connected to the desires of your heart, but you have to learn to bring your heart into alignment with God's heart, and then you'll eliminate some desires as being trivial. Some things, which car you're going to buy, hey - you choose! But if you borrow too much, you're going to be in trouble. It's as simple as that you know? Which house you're going to live in, where you're going to live, in Havelock, Flaxmere? Well how much have you got in the bank? Use wisdom. There's a lot of decisions in life

are about actually using wisdom, and then listening to God's word deep in the heart, or direction on the way. Amen. [Amen.]

Summary Notes:

1. Introduction

Eph.2:10 “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”.

People long for a sense of purpose – destiny. God has written this desire into our hearts.

Destiny: Not fate, karma, something that is predetermined and you cannot change it. God invites us to relationship with Him and to discover what He has called us to do.

God has prepared unique works for you to do – it is a walk with God representing Him.

Eph. 2:2 “You once walked according to the course of this world … fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind …”

Before we came to Christ we lived and walked in the values, lifestyle of the culture. This culture is influenced by demonic spirits. We did what we wanted – desires of flesh and mind. Now we are joined to Christ we begin to develop new values, new desires, world-view.

2. Your Desires and the Will of God

Questions

How are your desires connected to the will of God?

How can you discover the Will of God for your life?

(a) The Will of God is connected to your heart’s desires

· Prov.4:23 “Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life”.

· God has hard wired desires, passions, gifts into your life.

· Discovering desires, passions and gifts = discovering who we are – what designed to do:

· e.g. What do you love to do

What are you good at?

What are you passionate about?

What do others see in you?

What stirs you up – makes you angry?

What stirs compassion in your heart?

· Don’t argue with how God has made you – He didn’t make a mistake.

(b) Separated from God our desires tend to be self centred

· We tend to protect self, avoid painful experiences, memories, emotions.

· We tend to be self centred

Obtain our goals/desires at expense of others – Jam.4:1-4

Put our interests/welfare ahead of others – Mat. 16:21-23

Resist unexpected demands on time and resources.

(c) Connected and Yielded to God our desires change

· Ps.37:4 “Delight yourself in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

· Delight = 6026 = to be soft, pliable, yielded, easily moved or shaped.

· Walking with the Lord brings change in desires and priorities.

· He delights in giving us our hearts desires – our responsibility is to monitor desires.

· Col.3:1-2 “Set your affection on things above not on things of the earth”.

· Our journey our walk with God requires we change our world-view – way we see life.

· Our Desires
o Can be just matters of interest/preference – wisdom.
o Can be destructive and harmful to self or to others – bring to the Cross.
o Can be deep motivations for life's purpose – cultivate.

3. How to Discover the Will of God
This is a key question for every believer.
Jn.17:4 "I have glorified you on earth, I have finished the work which you have given me to do".
Jn.5:38 "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me"

Practical Keys
(i) What is the desire, passion of your heart?
e.g. Moses Act 7:23/ Samson Jud.14:1-6/ Jacob Gen.30:30/Jesus Lk.2:49.
Find what you love – make it how you love.

(ii) What does God expect me to be responsible for?
God doesn't want you to be a slave – wants you to be a Son.
Connect with heart and identify desires, make plans and interact with God.
Prov.16:1 "To man belongs the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes reply of tongue".
Prov.16:9 "In his heart man plans his course but the Lord directs his steps".
You cannot remain neutral or passive – Mt 25 – Talents – initiative.

(iii) Does this agree with/contradict written Word of God?
Many choices in life are laid out in principles of the Word of God.
Act. 7:11.

(iv) Do you have a peace in your heart?
Col.3:15 "Let peace of God rule in your heart".
Rule = 1018 = to arbitrate, govern, be an umpire.

(v) Are you open to consider timing, readiness, preparation?
You may have a desire but preparation is needed.
Prov.3:3-5 "Trust in the Lord".

(vi) What will be the impact of your desires/plan upon others?
Gal.5:13 "You are called to liberty, but do not use liberty as an occasion of the flesh but by love serve one another".

(vii) Are you open to the counsel of wise men?
Prov.11:14 "Where there is no counsel the people fall – but in multitude of counsel there is safety."
Prov.12:15 "Way of a fool is right in his own eyes but he who heeds counsel is wise."

4. Hindrances to Hearing the Will of God
(i) Having an Idol in your heart – mindset! Ezek. 14:7, 1 Kings 22:4-22 Ahab.
(ii) Immaturity or disobedience - 2 Tim.4:3.
(iii) Influence of Controlling Relationships - 2 Chron. 18:1 – Jehosophat.
(iv) Personal agenda – Self Preservation - Mt. 16:21-23
(v) Passivity – waiting for God to do something - Jer.29: 13-14.

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4. The Cross and the Kingdom (4 of 7)

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I want to share today a message called The Cross and the Kingdom, The Cross and The Kingdom. We've been doing a series, and the series has been about the area of desires, dreams and destiny. We looked at the area of destiny, and the common misunderstandings people have is that somehow, there's some force that forces everything to work according to a certain pattern, and you have no control over it. Sometimes people have this idea God is sovereign, God's in charge of everything, so whatever happens, God's to blame for it, and we can't really do much about that. Now these are very wrong concepts. In fact, although God has planned a life and things for us to accomplish, He gives within it, a great deal of creativity for us to partner with Him, rather than just be robots and slaves.

So last week we looked at the area of desires and destiny. In Psalm 37, Verse 4, we found, delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart, so clearly it's God's joy to give us things that are in our heart, the things we desire. We found that in discovering God's purpose for your life, one of the keys to it are, what are the desires that you have in your heart, what sorts of deep longings, deep desires, what gifts do you have? What passions do you have, what yearnings do you have? What is it that fires you up, and gets you really going? This is most likely connected to how God has wired you for what you're called to do with your life. Most people, if they begin to discover what they really desire and are passionate about, and begin to do it, their whole life comes alive.

We found also God not just leads us by the desires of our heart, but also He will speak and give revelation, so He speaks to us - for example, I love teaching, and so I got to teach in a high school, until one day I was mowing the lawns, and God spoke to me. God interrupted my plans, and my desires, and all the things I was thinking about, and He spoke about calling me into pastoral ministry. It was quite a clear voice from heaven. It

was God speaking, saying I know you've set the course out where you're going, but I've got something higher for you, you wouldn't have thought about. So God, by revelation, can enlarge our thinking, so we think out of the box, and higher than we would normally think.

So one guide to direction in your life are the desires and dreams that you have in your heart, the dreams, the passions and gifts. Another is listening to God, and having God speak to you, but you have to operate out of both, because as many of you would realise, God doesn't talk to you all the time. It doesn't seem so anyway. Most of us, there's a bit of time between God saying one thing and saying the next. It's not like He tells you all the things you have to do. He gives room for you within that to do. Then the third part of finding direction in our life is applying the principles of wisdom. In other words, God doesn't want to tell you everything. He wants you to learn wisdom from the word of God, and apply yourself, so you run your life according to sound principles, so you're not always needing a miracle all the time - not good to run your business needing a miracle all the time. You need to run it on wisdom. See, you need to build your marriage on wisdom.

We need to build our life around wisdom, which is found in the principles of God, and God says if you lack wisdom, you don't know what to do, or how to handle the issues of life, come to Him. He gives freely wisdom for every situation in life, and He gives it freely, but in James it tells us that in Chapter 1, it says ask in faith, not doubting - if you doubt, you don't get anything. So we need to be confident that all that we need for life, God makes available, and if I'm not sure what to do, I need to ask Him sincerely, and as I ask, believe He will give me the insights I need. Many people pray and ask, but they don't persevere in believing God will give them the answer they need. We'll talk about that in another session, I'll talk about answered prayer. So that's how God guides us.

Now within the will of God, God gives us great freedom to take initiative, and right through the Bible initiative was always encouraged. I want to go and talk about what I'd call a key issue. I have read lots of motivational material, and I found it's all very good, very positive, but there's one thing runs right through it, and that is it's all about me, and it's about me getting ahead. There's no place for Christ and his kingdom, or the cross at all, so

today what I want to do is, just as we're looking at the area of desires, dreams and destinies, I want to just highlight for you the place the cross has in all of this, otherwise you'll get very disappointed, because you won't understand why God isn't doing what you expect or - and He seems to be frustrating you, or you're waiting around and nothing much is happening, or you get out there, and you find after you've done all these things, that your life is quite messy, and you've got no idea why.

So I want you to have a look with me in Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verse 2. I want to just talk a little bit about the kingdom of self, the kingdom of self. We're all part of that kingdom of self, we've all got a part of us that likes to be a bit selfish - I want the biggest bit. That looks good, I'll have a second one. We've all got that part that likes to be a bit selfish haven't we, and - tell the person next to you, it's you he's talking about. I'm just not like that. I'm so sweet and loving, I would never be like that. Reality is [laughs] I grieve over how selfish I am at times.

Okay then, notice this. It says - Verse 1, now He's talking about how we've been changed by coming into relationship with Christ. Now you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins - so we once were cut off from God. Because of sin, and because of errors, and doing our own thing, we cut off from God completely. Now I want you notice the lifestyle of a person cut off from God. There are many verses on it, I'll just use this one. It says, in which we once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, whom we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling desires of the flesh and mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

So what He's essentially saying is that the world is governed by a certain principle that operates. Notice He said, the course of the world, that's the world, the age of this world, the order of this world, and it operates a certain way. It's quite interesting to notice this. He points it out very clearly - the world operates a certain way, and it's governed by the principle of self-interest. What's in this for me? What do I get out of this? So you find if you look behind a lot of the political dealings with nations, where a generosity often has an agenda behind it, and it's all about advancing me. So you find often help and aid that's given into nations

looks like it's very kind, but behind it actually there are strings attached, and the true agenda is it's being used to get some nation ahead or to gain influence, so the principle of the world - it doesn't take you much to figure this one out. Children are pretty selfish as they grow up. It's all about me. They learn that when they're one and two, and it's hard to get it out of them, the rest of their life [laughs] isn't it aye? Me! No! I do it! So you find there's this whole thing as children grow, it's all about me and my world, and somehow in your life you need to learn it's not all about you.

Much of the modern child training, centres the whole child training around the child, and it's needs. What folly is that? That's the course of the world, it's not the course of God. It's not the course of the kingdom, and it produces a terrible fruit in people's lives. So you notice it says - I want you to see two things here, that the world is governed or runs on a principle of self-interest, what's in this for me, what do I get out of it. That's how it thinks, and most decisions are made around how can I advance myself? What can I get? How can I get ahead? How can I advance myself? That's not entirely all wrong, however it says that there's a spirit that is at work in that thinking, so self-centred thinking is governed by a spiritual power, and when you look at people and how they run their lives, you see most of them are pretty self-centred and self-directed and basically they run their life around the principle of what's in this for me. If there's nothing in it for me, then I'm not going to do it, so there is a spirit behind that. That's called the course of this world, and there's a spiritual power, and there's a reason that spiritual power is there.

Notice it says here, that spirit power that works in the children of disobedience. That word works means to energise, so self-centred thinking is energised by demonic powers, so this is not how God designed man. We were never designed to operate that way. This is the current fallen condition of the world. Now if you go through the education system, you'll find there's a whole generation coming up now, and their whole frame of thinking is, what is in this for me? What can I get out of this? How can I use you to get ahead? I'll connect with you, you can help me, then I'll get ahead, then I'll leave you - and all of that kind of thinking is totally contrary to the principles of building a sound and successful life

according to kingdom principles. It just doesn't work. What it does is, it uses people to promote ones self, and when you use people to promote yourself, you actually increase self-centredness in your life, you don't tap into the supply God had for you, and you hurt people on the way.

It's horrendous. People get hurt and used and people say I feel used, so we have to deal with that kind of stuff. So where did this culture originate? You find it's found very clearly in the Garden of Eden, so found in Genesis, Chapter 3. In fact, it actually began earlier than that, but let's just see it manifest in Genesis, Chapter 3. So you notice that Adam and Eve had everything they could want, and they were placed in a garden. They were given room and responsibility, given great privileges, they were given great opportunity, but God said I want you to respect My right to rule creation by not eating the fruit of that tree. Everything else you can have - that one you can't have. It's like saying don't touch the wall, there's something in us wants to touch it [laughs] so that was the deal.

Now you notice how the devil came. It says the devil came like a serpent. Verse 4, the serpent said to the woman hey, don't worry, you won't die if you eat that fruit. Now notice this, notice this: God knows in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, you will be like God, you'll know good and evil, and when the woman saw it was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took it's fruit and ate, and gave to her husband with her and he ate. Then their eyes were opened. They changed. They saw things that they were never intended to see. Now I want you to notice that the devil was the originator of this whole self-centred process of thinking. It's found in Ezekiel, where he said even though I'm an archangel, I will arise, I will ascend, I will exalt my throne above the throne of God. In other words, he refused to accept his place in the kingdom of God and self interest, he sought to advance himself.

Now here he is in the garden doing the same thing, and notice the thinking. Here's the thinking in here; you can't trust God to supply your needs. If you're going to get ahead, you've got to look out for number one, you've got to look after yourself, so don't worry about what God says. Don't worry about Him talking about sin and consequences, that's a lot of nonsense. You're not going to die. Here's the deal; God is holding

out. You can't trust Him with your provision for life, you need to rise up and begin to act in your own interests. You need to look after number one. This is the core of the fall, so the core of the fall is not just about sins and some bad things. It's actually about the whole self-centred way of life, rejecting God's right to rule. Instead the kingdom of self emerges; I will rule myself. Now this is where it originated. Now when you come to Christ, it doesn't mean necessarily that automatically all of that changes. In fact when people come to Christ, they've come into experience a new life, but the problem is most of the way we think and run our life and operate out relationships and everything are still shaped by the old model of thinking, paradigms we were in, so it take a while to shift, and start to understand the principles of the kingdom of God, that lead to a happy life, relationships and fulfilment.

So really the core of it was, what's in this for me? How do I get ahead? You can't trust God. It's all about me and my interests. That is the core of the fall. Now you understand that getting saved is not just about getting your sins forgiven and getting back to heaven. Getting saved is about changing the core of your being, from being a self-centred person, to being a love-centred person, where you can reflect what God is like. His kingdom is a kingdom of loving and serving, of advancing the interests of others. That's His kingdom - so selfish ambition always is a gateway for demonic spirits. Let's have a look in James, Chapter 3. So whenever people don't address this issue, they find themselves with all kinds of problems in their life, so you could be a Christian, still have havoc in your life as we've so often observed.

In James, Chapter 3, Verses 13 to 16; Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works that are done in meekness of wisdom. Now you notice here it is - but if you have bitter envy and self-seeking, self-centredness, selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast, don't lie against the truth. That does not come from heaven. It does not come from above. Rather the self-centred way of life, what's in it for me, it's all about me, what can I get, how can you get me here - it says it's earthly, it's sensual and it's demonic. Very simple. When you go down that route, no matter how nice it looks, it opens the door for demons - for where envy and self-seeking exists. Envy, that means we

look what others have, and we want what others have. You have a look at the advertising, advertising works on that principle. You see other people are happy, the conclusion is if you want to be happy you buy that, and so we begin to want what others have. Then we begin to do things financially that create stress in our lives.

If we have a look at the world economic system, it's stressed out, because people out of envy, just ignored basic success principles in finances. You spend more than you've got coming in, then you're going to have some trouble. It just makes sense doesn't it really? Okay, notice here it says that confusion in every evil thing are there, so the fruit of selfish ambition is confusion in all kinds of activity, and the core of it is that I believe that I can rule my life better than God can, so I'm going to run it my way rather than run it God's way, see? Now have a think about for example in Genesis 13, Abraham and Lot. Now Abraham was told by God, see this whole land, I'm going to give you the whole land. Now did he have the whole land? No, he didn't, but God said I'm going to give it to you, so he had a word from God, had a promise from God. So he had his nephew Lot come along with him, and in the end they were so blessed and everyone was being blessed, then there come a quarrel between Lot's herdsmen and Abraham's herdsmen, because they'd been so blessed there was now conflict over resources.

So Abraham, notice how Abraham deals with it. He says let's have no conflict. Let's not have conflict. Conflict comes - in James it says - when you desire but don't have, and then you fight for it, so he said let's have no conflict. He's a man of peace, so he said here's what it is. Now listen to this. This shows you him operating in kingdom principle. He says see, you choose what you'd like and you can have that, and I'll have what's left. Lot, not understanding kingdom principles, looks down and what looks best to him he takes, that and ends up destroying his whole future. If he'd walked in the principles of honour, he'd say something like this; Abraham, that's very kind of you but I realise I'm blessed because of the blessing of God on you. I will defer, and let you make the choice, and show me what you'd like me to do.

In other words, he did not operate out of the kingdom, he just operated out of what's best for me, and it looked good but it cost him his marriage,

his family. It cost him his character, cost him his finances, cost him his reputation, so the self-centred way of life looks good, seems right to a man, but ends up impoverished in various ways. Getting the idea? It's all quiet today, goodness me. [Laughs]

Have a look in Matthew, Chapter 16 and you'll see again how Jesus exposes that, behind the self-centred way of life, there is a demonic power. I want you to have a look with me, we referred to this the other day, Verse 21 in Matthew 16. So Jesus spoke, and from that time, Jesus began to show to His disciples He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, be killed and be raised on the third day. So notice what He's saying; I'm going to suffer. I'm going to die, and then I'll rise from the dead. That's quite a good deal isn't it really - if you focus on rising from the dead. But here's the thing. Peter, as he heard Jesus say that, immediately his mind goes into overload, what will happen to me? So this is what he says. He said pity Yourself Lord. He began to rebuke Him, he took Jesus aside and said now listen, don't You go talking cross. Don't You go talking about death. Don't You go talking about suffering, be it far from You Lord, or pity Yourself Lord, this shall not happen to You. Now notice behind it there's an agenda, because if Jesus dies, what's going to happen to Peter? His whole plan of being next to Jesus in the kingdom is going to be ruined, so he looks at Jesus' clear statement of the will of God, and it's just foreign to him, because when we walk in the ways of God, they just are crazy compared to the self-centred way of life.

You know in the world you grab as much as you can, save as much as you can, hold on to as much as you can, you'll get ahead. The kingdom of God, it says learn how to sow, learn how to give, learn how to be generous, and it'll be given to you. No, well that doesn't make any sense at all, so for the natural man thinking from a natural perspective, he will run his life totally different to the spiritual man, who thinks from a kingdom perspective. Our challenge is, as believers, to shift and trust God, and begin to learn to live out of kingdom principles. Okay then, so notice what Jesus says straight away. He turned and said to Peter, get behind me Satan, you are an offense to me! Now notice, what Peter is doing is he's advancing his own agenda, and Jesus says what's behind that is

demonic, and it's a stumbling stone to me, because it's so easy to go down that route. So He said, if I listen to you, if I listen to your good plans about saving myself, and come up with an alternative plan, I will miss totally why I'm here. This was a major destiny question for Jesus; I know what I'm called to do, and if you're trying to tell me to feel sorry for myself and back up, you are a stumbling block to me.

When you set out to seek God and to walk with God, there will be times when people near to you will quite oppose the decisions you make. They will be just appalling to them, because their frame of reference is completely different to yours. You would think that when I left school teaching and become a Christian school teacher, Dannevirke Christian School, that people would be very happy with that. They were not happy. The ones around me, family, were not happy at me doing this. When I got called into pastoring they were not happy about me pastoring, not happy at all. Their perspective was, this goes against how we see life ought to be done. We're not thinking from a kingdom of God and eternal perspective. Getting the idea? Okay, so you all know someone who has this kind of issue don't you aye?

So what Jesus did was, He revealed that the cross is at the core of the way of life of the kingdom of God, that when you walk to fulfil the things of the kingdom of God, there'll be times when the purpose of God crosses your will, clashes with your will and you have to choose whether you'll trust God and yield to a bigger plan, or whether you'll just do what you want. Now was this difficult for Jesus? Yes, it was difficult for Jesus. We read in Matthew, Chapter 27 and also in Luke 22, it said when He went into the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed like this, and He said Father, if it's at all possible, let this depart from Me, I don't want to die. So how did He feel about suffering and death? I don't want to do it. He said Father, strengthen Me, if this is the only way that You can accomplish Your purpose, then not My will, but Your will be done. So you find there, right in the Garden of Gethsemane, a huge clash over the desire to save self and to look after self, with embracing the will of God, which at times involves suffering and death.

You'll find every one of us who walks with God, there'll be times when we face painful situations, and everything in you wants to back up and then

it's a matter of well who's will, who's kingdom with prevail? Will I save myself, or will I trust God and yield to Him, and go through a painful experience, trusting on the other side of it is His resurrection life, because crosses, it never ends at the cross. The other side is resurrection. We want the resurrection without the cross - but there isn't any way to get that, so we have found, and I've noticed in like say for example, a principle in the world; in the world it will tell you, you can have it now, pay for it later. In God it never works that way. In God it's exactly the opposite; you pay now, and the blessings come later. It's just so totally different, so in God's kingdom it works completely different to the world or secular or self-centred kingdom. We have to understand that.

So - you're all getting really quiet - so the cross then, is a key to walking in the kingdom of God. We can't escape the cross. Jesus said in Matthew 16, He said if anyone's going to follow Me, he will have to deal with the issue of self, take up his personal cross, face the challenges that will come into his life through following Me, and then follow Me. So how about this? We want a Christianity which is blessed, and good, and everything's great, but we keep the cross out of it? But there's no way you could keep the cross out of it. The cross is central to the life of discipleship. What does that mean? We don't have to go and hang on the cross like Jesus, He's done all of that for us. What we have to do is face that the cross is where my will, and my ambition, and my desires, come into conflict with what God is revealing He wants me to do, and I surrender and yield and do what He wants me to do.

Anyone who's been a Christian for some years would understand, this is a part of walking with God. If any man, any man wants to follow Me, he must deny self, take up the cross, and come follow Me. That doesn't mean you let go all your desires, and your dreams, and all the things you've got in your heart, and now there's nothing left. No, it's not that at all. What He's saying is, there'll come a point where your ambitions will conflict with God's plan, and you need to learn to yield. Getting the idea? So here's the thing. If I just get you all revved up about desires and dreams and destiny, get you all excited, and now you'll be getting up all kinds of ideas, and coming up with all sorts of things, and away you go and you're on your track now. See the problem with that is, it's all driven

by ego and self, so just because you've got a lot of desires, and got a lot of dreams, doesn't mean that God really wants you to go down that route. There might be a cost, a disastrous cost to fulfilling it. What we have to do is apply wisdom and revelation to it, and that may mean I have to yield up some things I like, in order to live the life God called me to live. It's not either/or, it's just that there is an embracing of the principle of the cross. The cross is central to the kingdom of God.

Listen, God so loved the world He gave - notice the cross is the whole core of the kingdom of God. The Father loved, and He released His Son, sacrificed His Son. The Son loved the Father, He sacrificed His life. The Holy Spirit yielded His life to make this all happen. This is the core of the godhead is sacrificial, self-sacrifice and giving and generously serving. That's the core of it. Think about it. Jesus is having His last meeting with His disciples, and He bows down and He washes their feet, and of course everyone's saying well You're the Lord, You're the big shot. You shouldn't be doing the foot washing stuff. He says no, no, no, no, no, you don't understand the kingdom. In the kingdom, if you want to be great, you have to serve. If you won't let Me engage you like this, then you haven't got what it takes to advance the kingdom. Foot washing is part of the nature of God. Jesus said, I do what the Father says, so when Jesus washed feet, it was the Father washing feet. Imagine God washing your feet. It's hard to understand. How can someone so big and powerful descend to such things? Because it's the nature of the kingdom, it's not about me, it's about love being manifest.

Now you see you've got to understand that our whole culture, including much of the church culture, is filled with self-centred, self-advancing, self-promoting agendas. Now we've got to come to a decision that this is not biblical Christianity, that if it has no cross in it anywhere, and just a historical cross of Jesus, something is missing in the core of the message. The cross is the power of God to salvation, so when I yield at the cross, that's when God's power is released to me. So what are some things that we can yield, and let go at the cross?

Now I'm not going to look all these verses up, I'll just give them to you to have a think about, but the Bible says that Jesus was crucified on the tree. In the Bible there are exactly seven references to what's called an

oak tree. The word oak or terrapin means to be strong, strength, to have strength, to be mighty. So I went through the Bible and I began to look at every reference to an oak tree in the Old Testament, and when they referred to the oak tree, usually something happened at the oak tree. The oak tree is quite a picture prophetically for us of the cross. It's the tree where our will intersects with the will of God, and we yield, and things leave our life, and we receive something from God. The core of it is I must trust if I let go, God will fill me up. If I yield to Him, He will supply for me. If I surrender to Him, He will give to me. It's an issue of trust, so here's a few of the things. I want to throw them all out for you and I'll just list them and then we'll finish up this message.

Okay, here's number one. Number one, in Genesis 35, Verse 4; the first mention of the oak tree was the place where idols were buried. An idol is a substitute for God, so one of the things that the cross does is, it's the place where we make a decision to let go the substitutes for God. If your career is a substitute for God, you need to come and put this thing before the cross. I remember I used to love old cars. Man, I was into V8s big time - I still love them. I turn my head every time I hear a V8. I love V8s. I love it, it's still in me - I'm a petrol head see, and I love it, but there was a time and I had an old V8, 1934 V8. Boy, it was a great beast, but it was a beast, and God said it's actually an idol.

He said you've got to deal with your idol, because at this season in your life, this is not going to help you in your serving Me, nor in your marriage, nor your family, nor your finances. It needs to go - so I had to bury the idol, and it just meant going to the cross. It meant kneeling down, saying God, I'm so sorry I've let this be the substitute for You. Lord, I embrace Your plan for my life, I release it and let it go. I said God if You, you know, You just bring someone in. I'm not even going to try to sell, just bring someone to me. Within four days someone walked in and said I heard you've got a '34 Ford V8, can I buy it? I said yes, you can, one condition. Everything I got with it goes. Oh really? So yes, throw out a price. He threw out a price, it's gone, and it was just like that. I never regretted it, but there's a place of burying idols, things that have got in our heart, that are substitutes for God.

In Genesis 35, Verse 8, the cross is also the place of grieving over disappointments and losses. The world is full of disappointment, and loss, and broken dreams, and shattered expectations, and there's a real pain. When you have pain in your heart from those things, you have to come to the cross. It takes something from you to admit that I'm hurt, and broken, and grieving, and in pain. It actually crosses our world, because we really want to look good, but when you come to the cross, it really deals a blow to self to just say God, actually I'm hurt, I'm broken, I'm grieving, I feel deeply disappointed, and release those disappointments at the cross, weep them out and receive His joy, His strength as a replacement.

The third thing about the oak tree is in 1 Chronicles 10, Verse 12. It was where Saul was buried, and Saul had great potential but he failed because he just followed his own will, his own way. He just did what he wanted to do, so the cross is also the place to bury our failures. We all have failures, but if you don't deal with your failures, then they just continue to remain a source of eroding confidence and strength in you. We need to take our failures to the Lord, so we come to the cross and admit, actually I really blew it. It's really hard to say I'm sorry sometimes. It comes against your self will. It comes against your pride, but that's what the cross is about. I come and say Jesus, I'm so sorry I have failed, I really blew it. I really said things I shouldn't have said. I was acting hasty Lord, and I bring and bury my failures at the cross. He'll never bring them up again if I bring them at the cross. The cross is core to success in the kingdom.

See, here's another place in 1 Samuel 17, Verse 9 and it's the place, the Valley of Elah meaning the Valley of the Oak Tree, was where David slew Goliath. See, now what was the problem with Goliath? Goliath was a giant that intimidated everyone. Everyone was afraid, and so what did they do? They all looked after themselves and fled. David slew the giant of fear, so it's a place of facing and overcoming our fears, and trying to preserve our life. See, so there are some times God will want you to do things, and you're afraid to do them, so we come to the cross, we just admit God, I'm afraid, I'm afraid of what will happen to me. It's all about me - so you begin to yield your fears to the cross, and draw strength from

Him. So the cross is the place we can deal with our fears, and bury our fears, slay our fears.

Here's another thing, in 2 Samuel 18, Verse 19. Absalom was slain, and he was in the oak tree. Now Absalom was a man full of pride, but he was full of self ambition, and what Absalom did was this. I've known people over the year who do this to me. It's a very, very painful thing but it's just part of the walk with God and you've got to learn to handle it, and that is Absalom stood by the gate and he said oh, what's your trouble? He said oh, man, that's a big problem isn't it. Well it's too bad the king hasn't really got a provision for this, but you know if I was king, then I could actually deal with this for you. So what he was doing was he was promoting himself, and speaking erosively of King David, and eventually he created a huge sedition in the nation of Israel, and many lost their lives as a result of it. So Absalom speaks then of pride and hidden agendas, trying to promote yourself. Now there are times we've just got to come to the cross and say Jesus, I need to deal. I've been trying to really get ahead. You see, get this - if you intend to be a Christian leader of any kind and don't deal with ambition, selfish ambition, you will use God's people to further your ambition. This is not the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is about me loving people, and helping them fulfil what God called them to do, not about me using people to fulfil my vision and ambition. There's a huge challenge I think, facing the church in the western world at the moment, over models of church, and style of church, that actually uses people to fulfil something, but actually doesn't activate and release people to fulfil the call of God in their life. I believe this is one major issue. I've had many contentions with various leaders in different places over this kind of thing, and I believe that God is calling the church to prepare people for their destiny, not to use people to build some great thing. That make sense to you? And so there is a point where our hidden agendas need to come to the cross.

Over the years and particularly now, it's a lot easier because I've got very strong prophetic people around me, and I've got a relational team where we can talk openly about things, but hidden agendas don't ever - they're not really a big problem now, because the prophetic people around me can spot them a mile off, just speak, hey, this is what's going on there, so

that's wonderful. It's very secure to have that, but hidden agendas are where a person comes to you pretending to be something, and says all the nice words and the right things, but actually what they have is a plan to use you to get somewhere. Now this is the spirit of the world, and when we do that, that's deceptive, and it betrays relationships. We should have no agendas except to honour Christ, to honour His kingdom and that means I've got to bring my selfish agendas just to the cross. I've got to trust God to sort them out, got to trust God to work them out. Will I apply myself? Yes, I'll apply myself, however I've got to trust that I'm not going to ever have to use people to get where I want to get. I can actually love and serve people, and God will help me to get where I need to get.

Okay then, the last couple then, in Joshua 24:26 the cross was the place where Joshua covenanted that they would be the people of God. So the cross, we come and we make commitment; God, I will be Your child. You will be my God, and I will honour You with my life. Now you see selfish ambition has only a very temporary perspective. It's what can I do to get me ahead, whereas covenant relationship with God, I'm looking at eternity. The life is just going to go by real quick, and then there's eternity. I want to build right while I'm building my life; build my marriage right, family right, business right, finances right.

And the last place in Judges 6:11, guess what? Gideon encountered God at the oak tree, and God spoke to him and said, you're not going to be doing this threshing wheat anymore. I have a destiny that's much greater than that. So it was at the place of the cross, surrender to the plan of God, that he discovered what God had for him, and even though he was afraid, he rose, and he touched a whole nation. So the cross is core to the kingdom of God. There's no advance of the kingdom of God without embracing the principle of the cross in our life. There are times when it's wonderful, there are times when we have to come on our knees and just repent.

Now I'll just give you one last thing just to finish up, then we'll just have our time of Communion. Every one of us has to deal with self-centredness. I wish I could help you. I'd love you to come up and I'll pray for you, but it's not going to work, because you'll go back, you'll be just as selfish. It's not going to work that way. It's the principle that runs our life,

and it only comes when we come to the cross, so we're going to have Communion in just a moment. Let me give you just a last thing. Most of you would know the Parable of the Talents. Now get this, this is a tremendous insight to the kingdom of God. One of them five, and you notice what he's told; go out and trade. Now notice what he's given - passions, abilities, giftings and God says just go out and make something happen, so God gave him total initiative how to do it. He went and he proffered it, because he wanted to be a blessing to his master. Now notice when he comes back, the master comes back, he said your talents have got this. So in other words he was continually thinking about how he could be productive with what he had.

The one with two did the same thing. Now the one with one, which is the majority of people, did this. He buried the talent, and this is it, listen to this. He buried the talent, because he was looking after himself, and had no heart for the master's interests to go ahead. The master said oh really? Well you're wicked. You have a negative, bad influence. You're very lazy. All you're seeking to do is look out for yourself, and I'll take from you what you had, that opportunity that you had, and it'll be taken from you, given to the one who had five. Now this is a very clear - this is a Parable of the kingdom, that God gives us gifts and talents, He expects us to take lots of initiative, risks and to try things out. But self-centredness will always frustrate us from advancing in the kingdom of heaven, until we actually come to the cross and say God, you gave your life for me. All of my life is in Your hands. I'm trusting You that if I walk with You, and follow Your ways, You in turn will bless every aspect of my life. And even if I don't see it, I still trust You. Amen.

Okay, let's just bring the Communion out now and just set the Communion.

I want us just to open our heart to the Lord. Father, we just thank You. We just take the bread and take the cup right now - thanks very much. Just take the bread, take the cup in your hands. Take the bread and take the cup. Peter said Lord, don't You go to the cross. It's going to mess up all my plans to get ahead. Jesus, don't You go to the cross, it's going to mess up our ministry here and what about all the miracles? Jesus, don't You go to the cross, we've just got a great thing going here. I really don't

want You to go to the cross. I don't want You to mess it up for us. Jesus said get behind Me, He said because I know what My Father's called Me to do. The Bible says for the joy ahead of Him, He endured the cross. Most of us we think of the cross, think of something you've got to give up, but Jesus didn't think that. He thought that the joy ahead, I've got blessing out the other side. I've got resurrection life. I've got to a place where I overcome everything, so when He went to the cross it says for the joy that was ahead of Him.

He was continually thinking of the benefits for you and me, and the kingdom that would come into this world. He was looking at the power of sin and selfishness being broken. He was looking at the Father's will being done. He was looking at people of every generation being saved, and coming into the kingdom of God. He said it's worth it. I know you want me to hang on here and just keep up this nice ministry, but He said actually, I've got a bigger plan. The bigger plan is, I go to the cross and afterwards you guys all do it. Oh Lord, I don't like that plan, we don't want to lose You. Well Peter, that's not how it's going to be, because I'm surrendered to the kingdom of My Father. I've come not to do My own will, but to do the will of My Father, so Peter you're going to have to let this go. You're going to have to deal with this issue in your life.

I wonder what area today that God wants you to deal with in your life, an area where there's self-centredness, selfishness, agendas, where your life's gripped by fears, disappointments, failures, griefs? There's so many things that can hold us back, and so we don't trust God, we try and preserve ourself. But today, as we take the bread and the cup - here, listen to this, listen to this - these are symbols to remind you and me of the extent of God's love and commitment to us. No one you know ever gave their life up for you, but Jesus did. As you take the bread and take the cup, let's remember now that God has demonstrated His love in providing everything we need. The only honourable response I can make is to yield my life to Him today.

God, help me to deal with the principle of self-centredness. Help me Lord to embrace that via the cross, the resurrection power of God will flow in my life. Lord, help me to deal with self-centred agendas, to not hold on to pains and griefs and disappointments and failures and trying to protect

myself, but to Lord bring them all to the cross and walk in the freedom and liberty that comes the other side. Let's just eat and drink together shall we?

Summary Notes:
1. Introduction
Ps.37:4 “Delight yourself in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart”.
Delight = OT6026 = Remain soft, pliable, yielded, easily moved or shaped.
The desires, passions and gifts in our life are connected to God’s purpose for our life.
To discover God’s purpose we need to identify desires/passions.
God guides us by (i) Desires of heart (ii) Wisdom (iii) Revelation – He speaks.
God gives us great freedom to take initiative e.g. Mt. 25:14+ Talents.

2. Kingdom of “Self”
(a) Culture is governed by principle of self interest
Eph.2:2 “…you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that spirit now works in the children of disobedience”.
The world is governed by the principle of self interest - “What’s in this for me?”
Course = NT 165 = Age period of time, or path of successive ages of time.
= value, culture, cares, temptations
This path or way of life is governed and influenced by demonic powers.
Works = NT1754 = to energise, empower something to happen.

(b) This Culture originated in the Garden of Eden
Gen.3:4-6 “You shall be as God…”
The heart and core of Kingdom of Satan is self interest – I will ascend, I will be like God.
The temptation was to abandon trust and alignment with God and to advance own interest.
What’s in this for me? How do I get ahead? It’s all about me and my interest.
Adam and Eve abandoned commitment to the King and His Kingdom for self promotion.

(c) Selfish Ambition activates Demonic Spirits
Jam.3:13-17 “…bitter envy and self seeking = confusion and every evil thing”.
Selfish ambition – getting ahead at the expense of others is destructive.
The fruit of selfish ambition is confusion and demonic activity.
E.g. Mt.16:21-23 “Get behind me Satan”.
Jesus outlined God’s purpose for His life – suffering and death on the Cross and resurrection.
Peter’s response came out of selfish ambition
Jesus identified the energising power behind this thinking as demonic.
Jesus affirmed the need to deal with selfish ambition – using others to advance self.
Jesus revealed the Cross is at the core of His Kingdom – it is a way of life.

(d) Jesus wrestled to Overcome Selfish Ambition
Mt.27:39 “Oh my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me”.
Lk.22:42-44 “He being in agony prayed more earnestly”.
The natural man always resists pain, suffering, sacrifice – Jesus wrestled to gain victory – surrender to the Father’s Will.
His personal desire – avoid the Cross. His life commitment yield to the Father.

3. The Cross is the Door to the Kingdom of God
Heb.2:2 “Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame”.
Jesus focus was on the resurrection life released by surrender to Father on the Cross.
Bible: References to Oak Tree – prophetic picture of the Cross.
Oak = OT424 = strong tree, to be strong.
(i) Place of burying idols – substitutes for God
– Gen.35:4 Jacob buried idols.
(ii) Place of grieving over disappointments and losses
– Gen.35:8 Jacob buried wife.
(iii) Place of burying our defeats, failures, pride
– 1 Chron.10:12 Saul.
(iv) Place of facing and overcoming fears, self preservation
– 1 Sam. 17:19 David slew Goliath.
(v) Place of bringing to death selfish ambition, hidden agendas, bitterness.
- 2 Sam 18:19 Absolum slain in tree.
(vi) Place of decision whose voice you will listen to
– 1 K.13:14 Young prophet – listened to voice of old prophet instead of personal revelation.
(vii) Place of decision to covenant to serve God.
- Josh 24:26.
(viii) Place of calling to fulfil God’s purpose in life.
- Jud.6:11 Gideon – received call to nation.
Each of us must face and deal with the core issue of self centredness.
Recognise and reject the common world view – what’s in this for me?
This mindset uses people and God to advance own interests.

Mt.25:14 – Parable of servants
All servants were given gifts, abilities.
The expectation on all was the same – be productive.

Successful servants
1) Took initiative)
2) Took risks) = commended
3) Had the interest of the master in their heart) increase
One Talent servant
1) Took no initiate/risk
2) Had his own interests in mind
3) Rebuked for being a negative influence and lost opportunities.

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5. Dream Killers - What to do About Them

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Proverbs 29, Verse 18; Where there is no revelation, where there's no prophetic insight or direction, the people perish. Or literally, people miss opportunities that come into their life, because they haven't got prophetic insight, or revelation from God, or a sense of God given purpose and direction. Every person has some kind of thing in their heart. Now you may not know what the dream is God put in your heart. It may be locked up because of various restrictions in your heart, fears, insecurities, doubts, wrong beliefs. All kinds of things can lock up the dreams, but I can tell you now, that God has put something in your heart for you to accomplish that has eternal benefit. It's very clear in Ephesians 2:10. It says we are His workmanship, created in Christ for good works, which God prepared before we were even born to walk in them.

So every person here, God's put something in your heart that you need to accomplish with your life. No one wants to end up their life and we've done nothing with it, or we've filled our life with trivia, so the dream you have or vision is your future. If you have no dream you're drifting like a boat in a storm with no kind of rudder, so all of us need to have a dream, or have some kind of focus and direction and be able to articulate it and be moving our life consciously towards it. Now you can have all kinds of dreams of course, and you can dream of a great cruise on a ship. I dream about that a bit, I like those kinds of things, so dream on a ship. You could have a cruise, or you might be dreaming about a new job and that would be nice, get a promotion and do something better, a bigger wage. You might be dreaming of setting up a business, so everyone's got some kinds of things and if you will keep your dream in focus and work, gradually your dream will come about, because what you hold in your heart, you'll move your life towards.

So there's all kinds of dreams. There's dreams of a new house. Some people dream about a new house, some dream of living in Havelock, all kinds of dreams people have. But most of those dreams are about your personal fulfilment. The world's motivation style is all about personal fulfilment, but we have something greater than that. We're called to the

kingdom of God, and so there are dreams which I would say are in your heart, they're wired into you and they can be great, they can be little, they can be small, they can be insignificant, and many of them are just about your personal fulfilment. They're about well, I enjoy this; I might have a dream of getting a boat and going fishing. I think having a boat and going fishing's a wonderful dream, I think it's an absolutely wonderful dream - but it's mainly about personal fulfilment. God wants to lift everything we do so we have something that's got a bigger bigness about it. See, God doesn't want you to be small. He's a big God with a big kingdom. He doesn't want us small, so therefore God puts into our hearts what I call God given dreams, and God given dreams are not about your personal fulfilment. They're about destiny fulfilment. It's a different thing.

Most of the people I meet primarily are concerned about their personal fulfilment. What they don't understand is when you link with God and begin to discover the dream God has for you, it'll shift you to destiny. Your whole life will be fulfilled in a different way, and the eternal benefits will be immense. So here's the thing - when God gives you a dream, I can tell you two things that'll always be a part of it. Here's one of them. One of them, it'll always be about the kingdom of God, and the calls of Christ being advanced, always. If your dream hasn't got that anywhere in it, well it's primarily your personal fulfilment. That's okay. Good for you, do it - but there's something greater that all of us can live for, and that's the dream that our life could count eternally and significantly, by advancing the cause of Christ in the earth. Now there's multiple ways it can be done; through business, it can be done through the media, it can be done through teaching, it can be done through education, government. There's many ways to advance the cause of Christ, many callings, many different ways, but at the core of it every one of it is this: number one is it's about advancing Christ's kingdom and His cause, and seeing people changed.

The second thing is, it can never be fulfilled without the Lord helping you. Now all the other dreams, many of them you can just do in your own ability if you have enough motivation, drive, a great goal setter. You can learn the techniques of fulfilling it, but the God given dreams cannot be fulfilled without God standing by you and helping you. They'll always have an overflow that advances the kingdom, so when people talk to you

about dreams and visions, just run this thing by them - is it about personal fulfilment, or is it about the kingdom of God and the cause of Christ? If it's about personal fulfilment, the primary one that's going to be fulfilled and honoured and glorified in it is you. If it's a God given vision, the primary one that'll be honoured and glorified will be Christ. That's the difference.

So it helps if we are very clear between what I call dreams and desires, and things which are about personal fulfilment, and dreams and desires which originate in God, and have to do with our eternal destiny, reward in eternity, and making an impact with our life. They are different, and they come in different ways, so what I want to do is - dreams can be lost, so maybe you have a dream, or you don't have a dream. I want to talk over the next couple of weeks about what kills dreams, and there are a number of dream killers. I'm going to pick up one today which over the course of my ministry life I have observed without exception kills dreams, without exception. I can guarantee if God put a dream in your heart, and God's put some great thing in you to accomplish with your life, I guarantee if you miss this one it will cancel you out. It'll actually kill and destroy the dream, so dreams can be lost, dreams can be stolen, dreams can go in all kinds of ways, and we'll share some of those ways.

But dream killers are like a terrorist. You don't see them coming. You don't see them coming. You don't line up and there's the dream killer in front of you. Actually it sneaks up on you, and blows you up, and everyone around you if possible. You have a think about some of the great men in the world, who had great influence, and yet had a moral failure that literally shot down and destroyed their legacy. Think about that. Think about the men in the Bible, great men who had a major character failure, and it destroyed what they could have been and could have done, so the number one dream killer I want to pick up today is an undeveloped character. Most people don't realise that your character is incredibly important. Notice that verse in Ephesians 2:10. We looked at the last part of it, you know, you were His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before, you would walk in them. In other words we're focussed on doing something or fulfilling a purpose in God, but look at the first part. It says you're His workmanship.

In other words God is wanting to build your life. God is wanting to develop you. God needs to build you, so you can be big enough to do the big thing He wants to do.

Here's a thing to understand, is your gift is bigger than your character. Your gift will open doors for you, but only your character will keep you there, and so you can have great giftings and talents - my observation over years is the most talented, gifted people I saw at high school were not the most successful people in life. My observation is over years in the church, and years working with Christians, is the most talented, most gifted people often are not successful, and there has to be a reason for it. We look at talent, we look at gifting, it's impressive. It dazzles. You think wow, we need that person! They've got such a gift on their life - but listen, what is their character? Because only the character can keep the person in the place and produce the fruit God intended, so if we're not committed to develop our character and understand God's process of developing character, no matter what your gift and dream is, at some point you'll derail because your character disqualified you from the dream, the thing you were trying to pursue. Very, very important this kind of thing.

See so your character - here, I'll give you a definition; your character is who you are, when no one but God is looking. See over the years I've found many people try and impress me, try and impress me with their gifts, their ability, they try and do all kinds of things. They try and put on a good show, but what really counts over the long term, is what is this person really like in their inward life? What kind of person is there? What sort of world view do they have? What values do they really have? What kind of attitudes do they have? What sorts of choices do they make when they're under pressure? How do they treat people? That's a big one - how do they treat people? Are people someone that I can use to get where I want to get, or are people someone precious to invest in, because God values them?

So motivation in the world, and particularly with this younger generation, is use everyone and everything to get where you want to get and fulfil yourself. Believe me, that's the path of destruction. The path that God wants us to walk on is quite different to that, and involves the shifting and changing of who we are on the inside. See, the world is concerned with

what you look like - God is concerned with what you are like. World's concerned with image and appearance, so it's all about dressing right, being with the right people, connecting to the right people. I've even seen it in the church. I've seen Pastors - I'd look at it and I'd shake my head, I've seen them deliberately try to get near someone, so they can influence them, someone important, someone anointed, so this thing's everywhere. It's something in the heart of people, but God wants to teach us how to grow, and how to develop - so your character's who you really are, how authentic you are. It's who you are when no one's looking.

So let's have a look then at how God develops your character, and then we'll look at one example and I want to show you, this guy and man, there's this great guy. This really is classic, but most of the time we look at guys in the Bible, we say that couldn't be me - but actually it's there to teach us. So here it is in James, Chapter 1. How does God develop your character? Well actually God provides help, you actually develop your character. God provides you the help, you're the one who develops the character. Here it is, James 1, My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing the testing of your faith produces patience or courageous endurance. But patience, let patience develop in your life or do its complete work - now notice this - so you may be mature and lacking in nothing. In other words what God's saying is that there is a process to get you from where you are to where God wants you to be. Lovely to have the vision and the dream - don't let it go. Develop it, plan it, work towards it, but there is a journey to get from where you are to get to where you want to be.

In that journey, unfortunately there is a thing called trials, pressures, difficulties, set backs, pains, griefs, disappointments. Believe me, if you're alive today, that's part of your life. There wouldn't be anyone in the room hasn't griefs, disappointments, set backs, frustrations, things not happening like you planned, like you wanted, people doing all kinds of weird things, people letting you down, people doing all kinds of crazy stuff. All of us face this. This is life, so if you're going through pressures, trials and difficulties, then welcome to life. Everyone has that life, including Christians. In fact Christians often have some additional

pressures, trials, difficulties and hassles just because they're following Christ. Never wanted it, it just happened, you know? Talk to Paul.

So it tells us here, two things to do in the face of pressures and difficulties. The first one we realise is that pressures, trials and difficulties are used by God to develop courageous endurance inside you, to develop character that can stand and last the distance. That's the point of them. They produce something in your life. Notice it says, notice the trying of faith works. It actually produces something in your life, so the trying of your faith is where you are tested to see the quality of your trust and walk with God. How authentic are you? How deep are you? How committed to God are you? Do you walk out your faith? Is it something you do on Sunday, come and sing a few songs, look nice, feel good, go home? Or is this something that day by day you are walking out, trusting God?

So it tells us in the midst of it, rejoice or count it all joy. I don't know about you, but most people I notice don't count it all joy when they have trouble, not at all. The Bible says to count it all joy. Why is this? Because we have knowledge that God can use it to develop our inner man to get us to where He wants us to be. If you didn't know that, you'd be frustrated, and trying to avoid it all. If you know that, you can rejoice. Here's the second thing. If you don't know what to do when you're under pressure, ask God. He is willing to help you in every situation. He'll give you the wisdom, which means help you discover what to do, how to respond, how to face this thing, and the ability to do it. So God tells us that testings, trials, difficulties, pressures in life are good for us. Tell someone next to you stop complaining, this is good for you. Stop complaining.

Now what happens when difficulties and pressures and trials come, my observation with what most people do, including most Christians is this, is they complain. Complaining is the sign of a loser. You are losing because you can't see what the purpose of the difficulty is, and how it's not meant to destroy you, it's meant to help you grow. When you start complaining, you're dying and perishing and losing. You see, if you complain you're saying this; God, I don't trust you to use this for my good. God, I don't believe you'll help me. I'm just ticked off - that's saying it sort of nicely. I have said it worse than that. So when people face difficulties they do a

number of things. One is they kind of what can I do? Powerless, helpless. Maybe I'll just say a prayer, maybe that'll help. Believe me, it won't, not if you've got that kind of attitude, that passivity. Other people say well it's just I guess I'm reaping what I deserve, what goes round comes round. I must've done something somewhere and I'm getting it back on me. Other people, they kind of get angry and resentful. Anyone got angry and resentful during trials? No, you see there's no one owning up.

No, well I'll own up. I tell you I've got really angry, I've shouted out some bad words at times I tell you. Lyn confined in me she had too. So I know the rest of you do! Don't try and hide it - so all kinds of ways we react with pressure and problems. We can blame people, we can be bitter, we can grow resentful, we can try and promote ourselves, try and use people, try and manipulate people. Or we can actually just grow in character in the trouble. Here's the deal - the choice is yours. I know that there's many people facing and feeling all kinds of pressures. The thing is it doesn't last, but will you last? Will you come out better or bitter? Will you come out like a lemon, twisted up - church, God, people... or will you come out sweet and gracious and better? That's really the question, and you know what? God does not choose that outcome, you do. You do. It's called development of your character.

I think it's great to have wonderful dreams. We need dreams because they're our future, but believe me if you don't develop character you'll never ever fulfil that thing God put in your heart. It just really requires something, so let's have a look at a guy called Joseph. Now here's a dreamer. You'll love this guy, Joseph. You know where we're going and I want to show you a couple of keys in his life and I want to show you what he actually walked through. Now Genesis, Chapter 37. Here's a great man, the example of Joseph and this is how God prepares someone to rule a nation. This is how God prepares a world changer. I hear you know we sing songs of being a world changer, destiny maker, it's lovely stuff, ra-ra-ra ra-ra-ra! But when you leave the church now, will you become a world changer? It starts with your world. See? If you can't change your world, you can't change the world, so it starts with your world. So here it is, here's the young boy.

Now this is the story - Verse 2 - the history of Joseph. Joseph was 17 years old, so he's 17 when he gets the dream. He's a teenager, this is good, good news for teenagers. You can get dreams from God about greatness in life when you're a teenager. He got a great dream from God, so there it was. His father loved him and it says, Verse 4, when the brothers saw that his father loved him more than his brothers, they hated him, so he was the sweet little youngest boy, couldn't do anything wrong, and they couldn't speak peaceably to him. Verse 5, now Joseph had a dream so he told his brothers and they hated him. So it tells he has dreams. It tells us also again, Verse 8, they hated him even more for his dreams and he still dreamed a dream, so Joseph had dreams.

Now they weren't the dream of, I'd like a boat, I'd like to live in a bigger house, not that kind of dream. This is God given dreams about making your life count for something. Now you notice that all he got was some of the sketchy details, he got a picture, an image, some of kind of sketchy detail, that you will be a ruler. So he being very young, a teenager and very immature, announced I have a call of God! I am going to rule over all of you! You will all bow down to me! That's really smart when you're the youngest in the family to say that kind of stuff. So he lacked character, so the vision was God given, the vision was authentic, but what was lacking in him was the character, the bigness to be that kind of man that could fulfil the dream God had. Are you big enough for the dream that God has for you? My observation is a lot of Christians are not big enough. They're small, petty; little things annoy them, irritate them, offences shut them down and they easily shut off. Even the weather can stop them praying.

Destiny makers? I don't think so. It's true. It's true. If you get put off praying simply because it's cold, or because it's winter, and you can't praise God in the winter as well as the summer, you haven't got what it takes to be a world changer. I'm sorry, you haven't. You need to shift and change and not be weather dependent. Come on, we can't be weather dependent and circumstance dependent. It's cold, I don't feel like getting up. Come on now! Okay then, so - oh, you'll all be picking this one up. So he had the dream, and notice he's undeveloped in his character. Now he had to face some things, so I want to show you he faced three lots of problems in three different areas. The first problems he faced were in his

home, being a dreamer. This is great when you have people at home - notice it said they hated him, and couldn't speak peaceably to him. That's not very nice, so if you are a dreamer here's the thing. Here's the thing I've found. People attack someone when they've got a dream, because they haven't got one themselves.

You know this thing called tall poppy? It's about having a dream and being big, and it's about everyone else trying to pull you down, because they haven't got a dream, and they're not big. That's what that's about, so you've got to be able to overcome that kind of deal, and stand up and be tall in the field, and not fill in with the crowd. So notice the first thing that happens is judgement, criticism and hatred by his own brothers. So here's the thing; you have to face this. This is what he faced. This is the preparation God had. The first thing he faced was they judged him, they criticised him, they couldn't speak peacefully to him or about him. In other words everything they spoke was seasoned with a negative attitude. Hello! Negative attitude, speaking critically, judging, ooh oh, it abounds! Losers. People who are envious, people who aren't confident in what God put in their heart - that's what that's about.

But you know if you're a dreamer, and if you've got something great in your heart, you have to be able to handle hatred and criticism. Notice it says they hated him. If I said do you hate your brother, you'd say no, no, I come to church, I'm a Christian, I love my brother. But what do you say behind their back, and what do you speak about them? Speaking about a person and running them down and judging them, criticising them behind their back is hatred. I'm sorry, just because you didn't feel hatred, doesn't mean it wasn't hatred - it definitely wasn't love. So he experienced hatred, and here's the good side of it. Experiencing judgement, criticism, negative reactions from other people to you and your dream is a part of the pain of growing to be big enough, because if you're going to have a big dream, not everyone's going to be happy about you and your big dream. Not everyone's going to be on your side. You'll have a lot of people who will speak against you, and the more successful you are, the more they'll speak against you, so you've got to be able to handle this thing and not get hurt, crumple underneath when someone speaks critically of you.

The next thing they did was they betrayed him. They sold him as a slave into Egypt, sold their own brother. They totally betrayed him. One of the paths on the journey to being a man of God, woman of God, is you'll experience criticism and judgement and hatred and people will betray you, so when you've trusted them, they do the dirty on you - which is okay if they were unsaved, you could handle that. It's just they're a Christian, that's what makes it so hard to handle, but that's part of your growth. That's part of your growth, so God in heaven is watching how do you respond when people treat you that way, what comes into your heart, and what comes out of your mouth. How do you respond? Have you got bigness growing in you, or are you going to stay little? Will all it take is someone's criticism to shut you down? What will it take to stop you from pursuing greatness in your life?

So the next thing that happens is, so firstly he had problems in his home. There's always difficulties and challenges in our home life to fulfilling the dream. That's where the first place you experience the problems, so if you're overwhelmed by the issues in your home life, the relationships in your home life, believe me that's the first place to work on yourself, in order to prepare yourself for big things. Anyone who's had teenagers will know there's difficulties - so the next thing that happens is in Egypt, he got sold to Egypt. Egypt is often a picture of the world, a place without Christ, a place of bondage and slavery, a place where people are driven, a place where people are held, slavery, captivity to all kinds of things and here's the thing that happens there.

The first thing that happens, in Genesis 39, Verse 7, is the master's wife starts eyeing him up, so she starts dressing in scanty clothes, and starts persuading him, saying every day, every day, day after day after day, come on, lie with me, come on, let's have sex. My old man will never know. That's what was happening - every day temptation, so here's what will happen to you too, on the path of your dream. There'll be temptations to take you off course. There's always going to be temptation. There'll be some other woman if you're a man come into your life to take you off course; if you're a woman there'll be some man that you get a crush on or whatever. There'll be always something, somewhere, pushing on you to draw you away - and he had the courage to stand up against it and guess

what happened. Then, when he stood up against it and refused to fall into temptation, next thing is he's accused falsely of attempted rape on this woman. So false accusation, then the master doesn't even give him a hearing, so no one even hears his side, he doesn't get a fair trial, doesn't get any trial. The master just gets angry and throws him in prison, and now his reputation is totally destroyed. That's pretty hard stuff, but this is the preparation ground of kings.

This was how God prepares kings. You may have had not a dramatic thing like that, but sin and temptation is near the door for every one of us, compromise in some little way, give up, pressure financially, all kinds of areas we face pressures and temptations. Many times when you stand up and do what's right, people will falsely accuse you, and treat you unjustly, and you'll find yourself with your reputation being knocked, and you know what happens when that happens to us? You know what's in every one of us? You want to vindicate yourself, stand up and prove I'm right, you're wrong! Character. If you need to vindicate yourself, you're going to be too small, too small for the job God's got for you, and you have to learn how to let God vindicate you, just walk in integrity. Walk in integrity. Keep your mouth shut, stop trying to defend yourself, learn to just stand fast and trust God in the midst of those kinds of challenges. I've had many of them. You know the hardest thing to do is to keep your mouth shut, when everything in you is screaming to try and defend yourself.

Jesus, when they accused Him, said not a word. When you're being falsely accused, when you're being blamed unjustly, most people arise, they're angry, defensive and react and miss the character opportunity. You're too small if your button can be pushed that easily. You're not big enough for what God has yet, so you've got a little longer before you'll get to that dream, and you'll have more of the same until you can kind of get a handle on actually, God is using this to develop me, because He loves me. I need a different perspective on this thing. It's about character, and growing in character, then the next thing that happens to him, the third thing that happens, in prison where he helps some guys out, and you read it there in Genesis, Chapter 40 I think it is, he helps a guy out -

Verse 23 - helps the butler and some other guy out, and they didn't remember him. They forgot him.

Here's another thing that's always a test of your character and that is when people are ungrateful. You help them, you poured yourself, you gave it all this stuff, and then they turn on you and were ungrateful, never said thank you. Ooh, a lot of people can't handle that. A lot of people can't handle someone not thanking them and appreciating them. That's a character one too. If you need people to thank you, you're missing the point. Here's what's going to happen - they won't. Sometimes they will, and that's wonderful when it happens, just don't expect it. Be glad to do it for the Lord, knowing that the Lord rewards everything, because He sees in secret, and He promotes us. See there's a part of life that you've got to learn just to do things, because that's who you are. It's got nothing to do with whether people are grateful, or how people respond, this is the kind of person I am, that's character. I am a generous person, I am a giving person, I am a loving person, I am this kind of person, I'm a strong person. I can stand up in the midst of pressure. This is who you're becoming, this is about your character.

So if God is wanting to prepare a ruler - now get this - the dream that God gave to Joseph was not about him just having some ego trip, just being over his brothers, and they're all bowing down to him - which if you're the youngest and being picked on is a good dream - it's not about that at all. It's actually about the plan that God had to rescue Israel, and make provision for them for 400 years. It was always about God's bigger plan and about salvation and about the cause of Christ being advanced. That's always what these dreams are about. Okay, so how then can you handle it? See, he had a delay. Here's the last one that he went through, is a test of delay, so I'll give them to you again just so you've got them all clear.

Number one is hatred, criticism and judgement, people talking behind your back about you; Number two, being betrayed by people that you trusted; number three, false accusations and injustice, treated unfairly; number four, ingratitude from people you help and number five, delays, when things you expect don't happen, and you've got this unusual delay and you're frustrated. See, now this is God's preparation to make a man

who could change a nation, so even if you're not called to change a nation, we're all called to change something around us, so if we're called to change something around us, God will want you to become big enough to do that. To become big enough to do that, if you can't become big enough, your gift will get you there but you'll fall over, because someone will treat you unjustly, criticise you, won't be thankful to you, betray you, all this kind of stuff and you'll get knocked over and disheartened and discouraged and lose the dream, because you got in too much pain.

Pain is part of life. It's how you handle it, so we choose in the midst of trials and pressures whether we step up, begin to rejoice and praise the Lord and look to Him for wisdom and strength and grow in our character, or whether we find a way out. In the midst of pain we turn to alcohol, turn to fantasies, turn to sexual relationships, turn to all kinds of things to avoid the pain we're walking through. It's your choice, and if you got involved in all those things then go to the freedom thing and the restoration course in the coming months so you can get freed up in your heart to fulfil the dream God gave you. We don't run these courses for nothing. They're run to set you free from the junk that holds you back, and keeps you reacting wrongly in the midst of difficult situations.

Okay, so how did he get out of it? Let me just share with you quickly how he got out of it, and we'll finish up. First of all, number one, what did he do? Here's something just before I do that - here's the interesting thing, if you read the story of Joseph and get this, this is what I love. No matter what scene he was in, he was never a loser, he was always a winner. In his home he was the favourite, he was a blessed one in his home. When he got to Egypt, he starts off as a slave, he ends up he's so popular, God is with him, they can see the hand of God on him, everything he does prospers, the guy gives him charge of everything and totally trusts him, never even holds him accountable, he's got such good character and favour on his life. He's a winner. When he gets his reputation blown and he ends up in prison, guess what happens down there? The same thing happens down there, well blow me down! They see the Lord's with him, he gets favour in the place, and he ends up running the prison. Get this -

wherever Joseph was, he rose up and ran it, and he ran it well, and people could see God's hand on him.

I find it strange when people fail in life, and they think they've got a call to ministry. What's that about? Ministry's got horrendous problems and pressures. No one would take it on unless you were called, and I'll tell you this, if you're not handling what you've got well, you're not ready for your next promotion. It's really that simple, so I don't know what you're facing and what you're handling, what you're walking through right now, but develop an attitude that rejoices and praises God and trust God and hold His word in the midst of it, because this is preparing you for enlargement internally, so you can be large externally. See I've found in church, people want a position. Why would you want a position? Now what's that all about? I don't want a position. It's not about positions. It's actually about having the character in you, and the heart for the work God wants. Positions come and go, they don't mean a thing. They actually are irrelevant. What counts is what you carry in your heart and in your life which is a character issue.

If you've got the right character and got the life of God flowing in you, you'll pop up to the top everywhere you go. That's the story of Joseph. He popped up to the top, didn't matter what happened to him. He's back up the top, he's like a cork - hold him under and [psst!] up he comes again! So what most people do is, they say but that was Joseph, I'm not like Joseph, and you don't understand my troubles. Now listen, that's not true. Joseph is there for our example. Don't think God did all of this to get him there. It was his choices that got him there. His choices got him to where he got. He didn't get to be ruler over Egypt, a mentor and spiritual father to the Pharaoh, and a financial guru that caused a total economic reform. He didn't just arrive there because God did it. What are you thinking! You don't just arrive somewhere because God does stuff. You arrive there because you work with God, developing your character and your capacity to be able to manage your life, and manage your responsibilities.

So what did he do? Here's number one. Number one, he held the word of God, he held the dream, and never quit on the dream. In Psalm 105 it tells us, in Verses 17 to 19, even though they hurt him and afflicted him

and put him in chains in prison, the word of the Lord tried him, which means literally this: he had a conflict between what God said, the dream, and what he was experiencing, the life. In the middle of it, what showed up was this: he praised God, had confidence in God, confessed the word of God, held the dream in the midst of adversity, and in the midst of the prison he held onto to God's promise - you gave me a dream. We know he was in jail at least two years, probably longer, and it wouldn't be a nice prison. He was falsely accused of attempted rape on the wife of the senior military commander. Mate, he would be in the bottom of the prison. That would be a bad place to be, bad treatment, yet he rose up. Why? Because of choices he made in how to handle his pain.

It said they hurt him. In Genesis 49, Verses 22 to 24, it says now Joseph is a fruitful tree planted by a well of water. In other words he's saying Joseph grew, flourished, prospered everywhere he was. How's that? Because he's got a well of water; he's got life from God coming into him, and it says the archers have shot at him. They hated him, and they sorely wounded him. Now that tells us he felt pain. He experienced terrible pain, terrible hurt, terrible grief, terrible anger. He actually suffered deeply - but it says this: his bow remained strong, or in other words his spirit and his heart, that's where your life flows from, remained flowing and alive and right with God. He never let the poison of his circumstance get into him. He kept his character sweet.

See, his strength remained in him because God gave him strength, so what most people do in problems is they groan and complain, ring, talk to this one, that one. What he did was he turned to God, praised and rejoiced, held the promise of God and then held onto God. God, you are my strength. Paul wrote, he said in my first mission, he said everyone left me, but the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me. David, when everything was going against him, everyone's complaining, his leaders want to kill him, he strengthened himself in God. There is a capacity we have, if we will reach into God he'll put strength in your spirit! You can handle whatever comes to you! You are a winner in life, because the spirit of God is in you, but you've got to have a winning attitude, and a winning attitude doesn't complain, doesn't groan. It doesn't mean you don't get hurt. There are times I've been deeply hurt, I've wept and wept

and wanted to be out of what I was in, deeply wounded, deeply, deeply grieved, deeply in pain, sobbed with the pain and stood up and found God and kept going.

See, that's what character is about. That's what God wants to get in you. You've got to choose in the midst of your pain right now, the midst of your struggle, in just whatever it is, whatever life has hurled to you, I can tell you this. You've got the potential to be bigger than it! Whatever's come at you, tell them greater is he that is in you than he that's in that world. I tell you, hold the word of God! Hold it and speak it! No matter what you see down there, see it in the spirit, see and hold your dream, hold what God said over your life. Speak it out over your life until you shape your world by the words God gave you. He held a dream God gave him and never quit, never quit, never quit, never quit! Did he doubt? Of course he doubted. Did he have down days? Of course he had down days. Did he get depressed? Yes. Did he get hurt? Yes. Did he get angry? Yes. Resentful? Yes. Bitter? Yes, all the above. But he held God's word and held onto God, and then this is what else he did - he allowed the Lord to help him resolve the grief and anger and resentment and bitterness. How do we know that? Because when you meet him with his brothers, in Genesis 45, Verses 4 to 8, this is the amazing thing he says, and we'll just finish with this. I could share more but we'll just leave it with this.

He said when he revealed himself to his brothers, he said guys, don't be angry and don't be grieved and don't be upset, and don't fear that I'm going to pay you back. Now what kind of heart and spirit is that? You've been put down for 17 years by your brothers, hated by them, put down every day and then finally betrayed and sold as a slave in Egypt. What kind of grace do you need in your life to treat people who've treated you badly that way? See, this is what makes a king. He's got a big heart. They're not petty, don't hold resentments and bitterness. They let it go real quick. You get hurt? Yeah, of course. Come to God with your hurt and pain, find strength in God, and then resolve it by forgiveness ,and bless those who curse you, and pray for those who despitefully use you. Jesus told us how to do it, it's not hard. It's just you've got to do it, and that's what makes the difference between big people and little people.

It's not your life or your circumstances or how someone treated you, or what's going on. It's how you are responding to what life is dishing up to you. Come on, think about this. So the first thing you notice is his grace towards his brothers. The second thing he said, guys, it wasn't you who sent me here. God sent me here, because he had a destiny of saving the whole of Israel and the family of Israel, so he had a strong grip that all the pain he'd gone through was a preparation for a bigger kingdom purpose of advancing God's purpose and cause and kingdom. How about that? He saw the big picture, not the little one. He said guys, don't blame yourself. Look, God set this whole thing up. He's just allowed all this to happen. He said listen, God has put me here.

Here's the last thing he said. He said God has promoted me. God has promoted me. Now you see you can either let God promote you, or you promote yourself. If you promote yourself, you're full of pride. Pride always promotes yourself. Why? Because it doesn't trust God to do it. I have to promote myself, I have to speak about myself, talk about myself, project myself, make an image, have to do all these things. Why? Because I have no faith that God can get me where He wants to get me. See? He said God promoted me, God got me here. He said what got me to where I am now, you know what he says, I'm ruler next to the pharaoh over this nation, I have influence over the financial destiny of the nation. God's given me wisdom to be able to handle and manage a financial catastrophe. The Bible says money failed, they had a financial collapse in that part of the world, total. And Joseph manoeuvred and found wisdom to find a way through it, and benefited from the financial recession. He ended up with all of the money. Think about it. Where did he get that from? He had to get some wisdom from somewhere. He'd learned to get wisdom from God on how to handle life and the little stuff. He said God has made a spiritual father to the pharaoh. How can a 17 year old boy be a spiritual father to the greatest nation in the earth? Simply he held the dream, he held onto God and he let his character grow through the adversity by forgiving his enemies, blessing them, praying for them, and allowing himself to extend grace when what he could have extended was judgement. You know when he got next to the pharaoh he could have dealt to Potiphar and his wife, he could have dealt to his brothers, he could have punished everyone who'd hurt him on the way, but there

wasn't an ounce of anger and resentment or bitterness in him. He was full of grace, and that's just the kind of man you need to lead a nation, someone with character, someone with no selfish agenda. See, look at America's financial situation. Everyone's got selfish agendas. They can't reach something good for the nation. It needs a great godly man.

So God has a plan for your life. You all know that. Maybe you haven't got it clear what it is, but I can tell you one thing is, whatever you're facing now, is preparing you to be the person to fulfil that. Stop complaining. Stop moaning and groaning, stop looking and allowing negative emotions and heaviness and depression get on. Learn to rise up and rejoice, your life is in God's hands. Hold His word. Hold His promises, hold onto Him and keep your heart sweet, and what you'll find is God will get you where He needs to get you. He can do it. Joseph went from prison the palace in one day. Don't you think God can promote you? Don't you think God can get you there? The problem is are you big enough to be in a palace and no one can choose that but you.

Today I know many here are facing challenges. I don't know how you're handling them. I don't always handle mine too good. Sometimes I shut down in the pain and try and distract myself from the pain, and watch television or something like that, try to cope with the pain. Then eventually I come to my senses, come before God and just pour the heart out and let God give grace to stand up and to move into the next level. You could do that, it's just a choice.

Summary Notes:
1. Introduction
Prov. 29:18 “Where there is no vision the people perish”
Everybody has a dream, vision implanted in them by God – a hope of what can be and do.
Your dream is your future – it is what your life moves toward.
Dream: Cruise, new house, new job – these are about personal fulfilment.
God given dream: This always is about Kingdom of God advancing – people changed.
Dreams can be lost, stolen – without dream (God given revelation) opportunities are wasted.
Dream killers – are like terrorists, guerrillas – stalk you, try to destroy your dream and future.

2. Dream Killer #1 – Undeveloped Character
Eph. 2:10 For you are His workmanship – God is working to develop your character.
Success is not always accomplished by most gifted, most talented.
Your gift is bigger than your character – your gift opens opportunities for you.
Your character is like a rudder on a ship – without character end up on rocks.
Character Who you are when no-one but God is looking.

Your values, your world view, your attitudes, your choices, motivations
World is concerned with image – looking good, positioning self, appearances.
- God is concerned with character – who you are, substance, positioning in heart.
- Bible abounds with gifted people whose character failed – demonstrating consequences.
- Character: Who you really are! How authentic are you?

3. How God Develops Your Character
Jam.1:2-5 "..knowing the trying of your faith works patience…"
God sets up circumstances so we have opportunity to grow in character.
In every trial = NT1383 = to put to the test to examine quality – God provides wisdom.
Every person faces difficulties, pressures, frustrations, challenges, pain in life.
Generally people do not welcome these – they respond poorly.
e.g. passive – fate; must be reaping what deserve; escape – fantasies, drugs, suicide, anger and resentment; blame and bitterness; pride and self promotion.
God wants to teach us patience and maturity through challenges we face.
"Works" = NT2716 = to accomplish, to prepare or equip you.
"Patience" = NT5281 = endurance, courage, character – unmoved from purpose.
Choice: How do you respond to difficulties, pressure, setback,
disappointment, pain?
Rejoice and trust God? Or React?
If you don't know what to do – ask God for wisdom.

4. The Example of Joseph – How God prepared a Ruler
Gen 37:5 "Now Joseph had a dream"
- God put a dream – prophetic dream in Joseph's heart – life purpose
- Joseph was not clear about how dream fulfilled.
- Joseph was only 17 and undeveloped in character and wisdom.
- Joseph's dream was bigger than his character.
Joseph faced several painful situations in which his character was developed.

What Joseph Experienced:

1. At Home
(a) Judgement, criticism and hatred of his own brothers.
- Gen.37:4 They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.
People don't easily recognise hatred – comes as judgement, criticism, 'words'.
- Gen.37:5,8 They hated him more for his dreams and his words.
(b) Betrayed by his brothers – sold as slave to Egypt
- Gen.37:19-20

2. In Egypt
(a) Temptation daily
- Gen.39:7 "…the masters wife cast longing eyes on Joseph and said – lie with me"
During temptation God seems far away and the temptation looks so attractive
Temptation tests your character
(b) False accusation, injustice, imprisonment
- Gen.39:19-20
"..his anger was aroused, then Joseph's master took him and put him in prison."
In the face of false accusation and injustice it is easy to become defensive and angry

3. In Prison
(a) Ingratitude from people Joseph helped
- Gen.40:21-23 “The chief butler did not remember Joseph but forgot him.”
When the people you help are ungrateful it tests your motives and reactions
(b) Delay of release from prison
- Gen.41:1 “Then it came to pass at the end of 2 full years.”
Delay does not mean God has forgotten you
When your dream is delayed it is easy to become impatient and try to “help God out”

Each of these experiences were deeply painful but were opportunities to develop character.

5. How to Develop Character in Adversity
In every situation Joseph was in he grew and prospered and the favour of God.
His home, Egypt, prison – the Lord was with him.
Gen.39:3 “The Lord was with him and made all he did to prosper in his hand”.
Gen.39.23 “The Lord was with him and whatever he did the Lord made it prosper”.
N.B. You must learn how to prosper where you are! Your character is holding you place.
People who fail in life situations often think they are called to ministry!

Keys to growing in Character:
(i) Courage: Joseph held onto the Word of God (the dream)
· Ps 105:17-19
· Hurt = OT6031 = afflict, humiliate, cause great pain and grief, mistreat.
· Word of God tried = OT6884 = to refine gold, test the quality, smelt.
· He faced a conflict between what God had promised and what he was experiencing- He choes to hold and confess God’s Word

(ii) Loyalty: Joseph held onto his Relationship with God
· Gen.49.22-24
· Loyalty in adversity is an evidence of faith
· “Bitterly grieved” = OT4843 = to enrage, make bitter by ill treatment.
· Joseph experienced deep pain, grief, anger, bitterness through his experiences.
· “Archers” = Baal – Lord of Arrows = to chop to pieces, pierce, wound.
· Bow remained strong = OT386 = ever-flowing, steady flow, enduring.
He never lost his inner flow of life with God through his experiences.
· He was strengthened by God – He turned to Him in crisis and pain.

(iii) Purity:Joseph resolved the deep inner pain of his experiences
· Gen.45:4-8 Joseph speaks to his brothers.
· He had experienced deep pain at his brothers hands Gen.42:21
· He had grown in character by resolving the pain of his experiences
· v5 His heart was full of grace – free from anger, resentment and desire for revenge, full of love, compassion for his brothers.
· v5 He acknowledged God used pain to prepare him for rulership
· v7-8 He acknowledged God promoted him to his position of rulership. It was not by his skills or by self promotion
(iv) Serving People: Joseph served diligently and was highly productive
· Gen.39:21-23..and whatever he did The Lord made it prosper
· In every situation, no matter how difficult Joseph prospered in all he did

· He did not serve reluctantly but with passion and diligence
· Serving is a key to greatness in The Kingdom of God Mt.20:25-28
· If you cannot serve where you are and be productive how can God promote you?
Questions:
· What dreams do you have that God has put in your heart?
· What areas of character do you need to grow in to be “big” enough to fulfil this dream?

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6. Dream Thieves - Delays & Disappointments

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Okay, I wonder if you can open your Bible with me in Proverbs, Chapter 13 and Verse 12. We've been looking at a series on Desires, Dreams and Destiny. We're looking at having direction, having a plan, having some kind of focus for our life, and last week I looked at, and just talking about dream thieves, things which steal your dreams, steal your hopes, steal your aspirations, steal away your life. The last one we looked at - that's the very first one in that part of the series - was the whole area of an undeveloped character. When we fail to grow our character, there's no way we'll ever enter into the dreams God has for us. We looked at the issue of dreams, and talked about two different kinds of dreams. We talked about dreams which were what I'd just call personal dreams, dream of having a cruise, having a new house, shifting out to Havelock, shifting to a house by the beach, having a boat or some kind of thing like that, a new job, making money. You can have all kinds of dreams like that. Most of those dreams are concerned with our personal fulfilment, and they require something of us. They don't just come into being.

Then we looked at God given dreams, and the things about a God given dream, there's several characteristics. One is it's always concerned about the kingdom of God advancing, always concerned with the kingdom of God advancing. It's always concerned with people hearing the gospel

and coming to Christ and it always requires God's ability coming into our life to make it come about. Many times in the Bible, God will match up a personal dream with His dream, so they interlock with one another. I'll just give you a couple of examples before I move on, for example Hannah had a desperate passion for a child, yet she was barren. There was a huge delay she experienced, and apparently nothing. In the process of that delay, there came a deep, deep cry, a deep brokenness in her heart, she surrendered her life to the Lord, and God had a need for a prophet in the nation. So her need was for a son, she was being mocked and belittled by the other wife, Elkanah, and continually humiliated because she had no child, she was barren. But God had a need in the nation for a prophet, and so God's need intersected with her need, and she broke through to a place of surrender, and the child that was born to her was surrendered to the Lord. She got a son, God got a prophet, and the nation prospered. That's how God dreams and natural dreams intersect. Think about it.

There's many examples in the Bible - Abraham had a desire for a son. He wanted a son, he wanted an heir, he wanted a legacy. God wanted to raise up a nation of people that would bring forth His son, Jesus Christ and so Abraham went through a long season of delay, and there was a tremendous grief, but then God gave him a promise. In the end God's promise and Abraham's desire linked together. Abraham got the son of promise, and God got a son of promise, a nation through which he would bring His purposes into the earth. You can just go through this many, many different times in the Bible, how a personal dream and God's dream can intersect. So some dreams are just personal, they're just about our being fulfilled, having a nice life, having great experiences, enjoying our life and they're great, they're wonderful. Why not enjoy those things - but there is a higher call. We must live with eternity in mind, so there is a different kind of dream and that always involves God and always involves advancing His kingdom. Where possible our personal dreams should intersect with God's and sometimes He calls us to lay down personal dreams so that we can intersect with His purpose for our life. So that's how these things come together.

Now last week we just saw about dreams, how dreams can actually be lost and stolen. I want to look at two other dream killers today, and just what to do about them. They're very common and so here, we find the first one, I want to look at two dream killers. The first one is delay, and the second one is disappointment. Now notice these are external, but the response we make is internal, and in the end it's not the delay that causes the problem. It's what goes on in us. It's not the disappointment that causes the problem, it's what goes on, and how we process it. So all of us have experienced delays, and all of us have experienced disappointments. It's part of living life. It's what you do with it makes the difference between whether you come into the God given dream or whether you don't.

So let's have a look here at Verse 12 of Proverbs, Chapter 13. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. In other words when you have a dream, an expectation, something you're looking forward to and it's continually delayed, put off, doesn't happen, your heart grows sick. That means to be weak or be in grief. When our heart is in grief it affects all of our life. It affects your motivation. You get a child, and a father promises the child they'll have some time together, or take him to play ball, or go and watch his match, and the father repeatedly just doesn't turn up or doesn't make it, the dream or hope the child has is delayed. Finally in the end, there's a sadness comes into the child's heart. They lose hope it'll ever happen. They accept dad's excuses, but their heart shuts down and dies a little, and a part of their dream about time with their dad, relationship with their dad begins to die. Now this is what happens. Hope deferred makes the heart grow sick.

So whenever we have a dream, and then it's delayed for a whole number of reasons - and I'll look at some of those reasons in a moment - whenever it's delayed, we begin to wonder about what our life could be like. Sometimes in marriage when things don't work out, and the marriage you dreamed of isn't taking place, you wonder what could have been if you'd done something different. That's what people do. When you go down that route you'll end up in deep trouble. You actually have to stay with the dream, and persevere with the dream, so a delay in accomplishing a dream can lead to the heart being full of grief and

disappointment, and then withdrawing and giving up, resigning itself this dream will never take place. This is very, very common, so the heart grows sick. So delay causes people to become discouraged. We start to doubt the dream.

If you've got a God given dream, and God's put something in your heart, and then for some reason it delays; now the Bible's full of dreams being delayed. I wish God wouldn't delay dreams. I don't like dreams being delayed and put off. In fact I get disappointed, I tend to like it to happen now. There's a sort of a saying - there was a song. Remember that song that came out a while ago, I want it all, and I want it now! That's kind of the spirit of the age isn't it really - I want it all, and I want it now! The whole of the marketing culture, it all is wired up to, you want it all, you need it all and you need it now, and we can help you. [Laughter] No deposit! No interest! No repayments for 36 months! Then you'll be paying for the rest of your life. Long after the dream has faded, that object you bought is now marked and old and tatty, and no longer an object of desire. You will be plugging away, paying for that dream that you got impatient about. If you have a think about it, the world is in trouble now because of that very process. God's way is always pay the price up front, and then get the benefits. The world's way is always you can have it now, don't worry, come on, sign up man. Sign up man, it's only $20 a week, it'll be no problem. You can handle that - and so you get sucked in, and before you know it the $20 a week, the $1000 item turned into a $2000 item and you didn't even notice. This is what goes on of course isn't it? We all know that.

So dreams delayed, now here's the thing that when people have their dream delayed, they get discouraged, in other words lose courage to stay the course. Israel, when it got very difficult and very hard, and Numbers 21, Verse 4 it says their heart became discouraged, because they experienced difficulties and delays. What they wanted to get didn't come and when we get discouraged it always comes out your mouth. What's in your heart will come out your mouth, listen to what's coming out of your mouth, and when discouragement is there, you will complain and become quite negative. You'll hear it out of your own voice, so recognise it's just a delay, and I'll talk a little bit about what to do about your delays.

The second one, which is the one that I want to push on, is the one where people get impatient, where they get impatient. Now young people get incredibly impatient. We have a whole generation that is very, very impatient, it just wants it now and the world is wired to give it to you now. You have instant coffee, instant access, instant messaging, and we can't not be without the phone, we can't be without the instant messaging. I've got to talk NOW! I know I'm talking to you, and we had an appointment to talk, but I've also got to talk NOW because someone's putting a demand on me. So there's a whole culture has built in the society we're in now, which wants things now, and becomes impatient if it doesn't get it now, and won't do what needs to be done. Here's a good example in Genesis, Chapter 16. Let's have a look at this example in case you don't think godly men get impatient have a look at this one. Abraham is the father of our faith, so he's a really godly person. He's the father of our faith. If you're a man of faith, he's the great example, the great leader in faith. Now - Verse 1 - Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. Now that was a very sad thing, that he had a promise from God that he would get children. God promised I would have children! But it says he had no children, and that went on for years, went on for year after year after year, and the problem is, when it goes on for years, you're getting older, you start to lose passion and desire and almost you think, well maybe this is never going to happen.

So time went on, and so Sarah came up with an idea. She had a maid called Hagar and she said now the Lord, notice now she is blaming the delay on God, and she said now the Lord has delayed me from having a child, but this doesn't mean to say your promise shouldn't come about. Why don't you have a child by my maid, and he listened to his wife's voice. Now most times it's good to listen to your wife's voice. This was not a good time to be listening to what she had to say. She's proposing that he has sexual relationships with someone else, so they can get the child. Get what the thing is; there's a passionate desire for a dream. It's a God given dream, a God promised dream, but circumstances seem to be working against it, time is running out, and he just got impatient. When you get impatient, you try and make it happen yourself. You kind of think, God needs a help to get this to work. I need to help God out in this

matter, and so what Sarah and Abram did is they helped God out in the matter of getting the extra child.

Of course what happened is, the moment she got pregnant, Hagar began to despise Sarah. There was a conflict came in the home, and now Abram who was having this great idea of having sex with the maid and having another baby, she gets pregnant and gets ready to have the baby, now he's got turmoil in his home. His wife is extremely unhappy. His maid is getting pretty proud, and putting her down with her comments, and so in the end there's such a major conflict - get this - that Sarah drives the maid out, and so later on the Angel Lord appears to Hagar and says - now get this - you are with child, Verse 11, you'll bear a son. You'll call his name Ishmael, because the Lord heard your affliction. He will be - now get this, this is what happens when we help God out. Now remember, every time you turn on the news and you look at the Middle East and you see Arabs fighting, you see people fighting one another, and you see the conflict around Israel, you see all the kinds of stuff that's going on, just remember this. All of that was because one man was impatient - and so he helped God out.

So he said, he shall be a wild man. His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he'll dwell in the midst of his brethren - be a wild man, or like a wild ass. In Pakistan they call it donkey brain, because it just gets such fixed mindsets, and so Abram had this great idea, I'll help God out. I know - well you know, you need to do something to fulfil this dream, and I've got to help God out, and it's not working through my wife. I've got to have another plan, so he abandons Plan A, now he's got Plan B, now he's got a huge mess and he still has to wait. He waited until he was 100 I think, somewhere around about that and she was in her nineties, until all hope of having a child had gone. And then God came through. Isn't that amazing? God came through. He always said He'd come through. He did come through. The problem is, in the time between Him saying it, and Him coming through, we wonder what on earth God is up to, and whether He really knows what He's doing, and we'll help Him out a little.

We come up with all these Ishmaels. I think in business, people come up with lots of Ishmaels. They cost you a lot of money. They're wild, they

cause contention and problems, and people have all kinds of Ishmaels in their life. If you get involved in Christian ministry of various kinds, well then Ishmaels abound. Everyone had this good idea, and over the years I've seen wonderful good ideas. People are going to set up this thing, oh my goodness me, and the mess that these good ideas created, absolutely horrendous.

Anyway, so there's a good idea. So here's another one; 1 Samuel, Chapter 13. Here's another guy - now remember this is Abraham, this is father of faith. Here's another guy, and this guy was a king. Now Abraham created a huge problem. He still had to wait. In the end, God gave him the promise and he grew in his faith and remained steadfast, so steadfast that God could be relied on, that when God said offer your son he didn't flinch, because He said even if I offer Him, God's got to figure out a way to get him back, because God said this is the son through which I'll have a nation. So he had a promise before he had the son, and when he gave up his son, he still had the promise. That's why he was able to go and offer up his son in the way he did. Now have a look at this one here. Here's a guy called Saul. Now Saul is a man who's come to a place of leadership very quickly. He's very tall, he looks good, very attractive, highly gifted man, but he has a word from God, and here it is. We read in 1 Samuel, Chapter 13. It says the Philistines - Verse 5 - gathered to fight against Israel, 30,000 chariots, 6000 horsemen, people like the sand of the seashore came up in a multitude encamped against them. They camped in the place Michmash in the east of Beth Aven. When the men of Israel saw they were in danger, of course they got upset and they hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, holes and pits. Some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, all the people followed him trembling.

And he waited seven days according to the time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come, and the people were scattered from him. So he brought a burnt offering, peace offerings. He said, I'm going to offer them, and as soon as he did it, Samuel came. Saul went out to meet him that he might greet him, and Samuel said what have you done? He said I saw the people scattered, you didn't come in the time appointed, the Philistines gathered against me, so I felt compelled to offer an offering.

Now here it is, test of impatience. Now you notice Saul has been given a word. Here's the word - I want you to wait at this place. I will come, and you will have further direction, and so he waits. Now in the period of waiting seven days which is a perfect number, a complete time of testing, and what happens is this, is multitudes of Philistines came against him, thousands upon thousands, or putting it in modern language, the problems he was facing multiplied. It just became overwhelming, so what he was looking at was multitudes of enemies.

Now the second thing that happened was, the supporters around him were losing heart. They were getting afraid, they were intimidated, they were fearful, and the moment he turned his back, they slipped off out and ran away, so while he's watching, daily the problems are increasing. The second thing is, daily his resources are diminishing, and God hasn't come, in spite of the fact saying wait seven days and I'll come, you notice it wasn't just on the seventh day. It was late in the seventh day that he freaked out, and then he become impatient and thwarted himself. So putting it in a modern context, very simple, problems are increasing. Pressure, could be financial pressure, marriage pressure, family pressure, work pressure - pressure is increasing around your life. Your resources are diminishing. Your ability to deal with it day by day is getting smaller and smaller and smaller, until you wonder it's about to overwhelm you and God - oh, won't answer. You've all been in that place. We've all been there and in that place, what is tested is whether you can handle delays.

Now there is a reason for delays. I'll show you exactly what it is in a moment, and there's a part of God's planning for your character development and your life that always involves an aspect of delay. That's why the spirit of the age, which wants it all now, can never build Godly men. Godly men have to learn how to handle delay. In fact actually even as a simple principle in life, say for example in finances, if you will learn to manage your money carefully now and put off buying until later, if you put off gratification, you will succeed financially. Most people don't succeed because they want it now, they want to feel good now, and so they make actions and decisions that get them into a mess now, so they feel good now. Then tomorrow they feel worse, because the new

problems come up, so in God it's always there's this issue of being patient. Now impatience is the inability to endure steadfast until God's timing. It's the inability to endure steadfastly until God comes through, here's the time.

1 Peter 5, Verse 6, it says humble yourself under the mighty had of God - notice that humble yourself. So this is something you have to do. Humble yourself has to do with trusting God, with doing what God's calling you to do, and then in due time He exalts you. So I've found that in life God can lift you up, God can promote you, but there's always a due time - kairot, an appointed time by God. Now you can't hurry God's appointed time. In the Book of Acts, Jesus spoke expressly, wait until the power of God comes on you. I'm going to give the promise of the Father, you're going to be filled with power of the Holy Ghost. He told that to at least 500 people, but when the day of Pentecost came, there was only 120 there. The 500 had quit on the way. The 10 day delay was all it took to cause the majority, four-fifths of the whole group to disappear, so instead of there being 500 or more, there was only 120 on that upper room on that day. Delay always has a way of pressuring us, so there's a due time. Now you can't hurry God's timing for things. Harvest time will come. If you sow there will be a harvest. You just can't hurry the harvest.

One guy was telling me, he said he started to plant some kind of vegetables in the garden, and he wanted to see how they were getting on, so he kept digging them up to have a look at how they were going and putting them back in the ground. Then he'd go back a few days later, dig them up to see how they were - oh, they're not doing too badly. They were potatoes. He found after a while, when finally the time of harvest came, he found at the end of the harvest came there was almost nothing there to show for all his labour and all his work. When his wife said I can't believe that this didn't work out, what on earth went wrong, he admitted to her he'd dug them up to have a check on them, see how they were doing. She said well you can't dig stuff up. You've got to just sow it, plant it, wait and the due time will come. There is a time of harvest, you can't do that.

I want you read with me in Hebrews 6, so the answer to delays is very simple. It's found in two words, two words that a lot of people struggle

with and the words are faith and patience. Faith and patients. Hebrews, Chapter 6, look at this. It tells us don't be slothful. Rather - here it is, Verse 12 - do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. So it tells us two things. It says don't be sluggish. That word means lazy, inactive. It actually also refers to someone who's a little bit thick, not thinking right. They're a little bit slow on the uptake, so it's saying don't be slow on the uptake. Don't be a slow learner. Don't be a lazy person, but understand this, that it is through faith and patience - through. In other words the vehicle that the promises of God come are faith and patience. The way God's promises come are faith and patience. That's how things get to you - faith and patience. Well we'd like the faith bit, but the patience bit's the hard bit. See faith and patience, see? So patience means a constant steady confident advance. You remain confident, and you continue to do what you need to do. Patience is never passive. Biblical patience isn't well, I'll wait around until something happens. A lot of Christians wait until something happens. This is a problem. We're never to wait until something happens. We must persevere, doing the thing God wants us to do, until something happens.

So it's never, never passive. You notice it says, be an imitator of men of faith, so if you study the lives of men of faith, you'll see something really common in all of them. No matter who they are, they had faith, they trusted God, and their faith in God turned into steadfast doing what God told them to do, and not quitting until the promise came, even if there were delays. You've got your part to play. Think about a pregnancy. Pregnancy, you go through and you've got the idea, got the seeds in there and it's all great and all exciting, great news. Then you wait and nothing seems to happen, looks like nothing's happening whatsoever. Then there comes a period - you just don't sort of get pregnant then have the baby, there's this period where everything begins to change. I watched my daughter. She was so very, very happy during the pregnancy, very, very happy, and she was one who was very conscious of her appearance and whatever. But during the pregnancy she loved the pregnancy, and she was happy. She would watch how big it comes, she'd say oh, now I'm spreading out like this.

Now when God puts something inside you, you have to grow and change and expand to be able to handle what God wants to bring through you. Then when the time comes, then you go through pain and turmoil and distress and you can't wait to get it all over with, then there's the baby and you've forgotten all about stretch and grow. It's now how can I contract and stop this thing and shut right down on the inside again. So that's why - now, so patience is never passive. You don't just wait around for something to happen. All the time a baby's growing, there's a nurture going on. A smart parent will be speaking into the child, making sure they're rested, providing - they actually focus on providing an environment that's really good for the child, so when the child comes out, it comes out with a great start. So it's the same in our lives with the promises of God.

When we have promises of God you've got to stick with it, believing it, holding onto God. In Hebrews 12, Verses 35 to 38 it says, you have need of patience, that after you've done the will of God, then the promises come. I watched Neil with the patience he had when he got cancer, standing on the word of God for week after week after week after week. He didn't just get a miracle like pop, someone prayed and it was all over. He actually held the word of God around his life, and persevered in faith. In that season of persevering in faith there was a delay when God's not showing up, and doesn't seem like you're getting better, you're getting worse - and this is the thing that produces results. We have to hold on to God. It's a challenge to do it. Now there are reasons dreams are delayed. Here's the number one reason; number one reason - it's not the most important one - devils interrupt our dreams. So you find that through the Bible it tells us very clearly, demons try to obstruct things on the way, but you and I have been given authority to deal with it, so demons are not a problem. Tell someone demons are not a problem, demons are not a problem. All you've got to do is rebuke them, they then leave, and away you go, and you carry on your merry way, so demons are not a problem to us.

God's given us stuff. Then there's divine delay, when God has appointed a time, and nothing you do will make it faster. You just have to wait. Now I'll show you what you've got to do when you're waiting, but you have to

wait. You're not going to hurry God up. You can pray all you like, cry all you like, scream all you like, shout all you like, jump up and down, intercede all you like. You can't hurry God up. He just won't be hurried up. He just won't hurry up. I hate that part, but He won't hurry up, and I've had to accept it. HURRY UP! I've waited for seven years trying to get a piece of land in Dannevirke. HURRY UP! You know we had a school, and they told us they had to give up the building the school was in, and hand it over to someone else at the end of the year, and I still had no land. HURRY UP! Can't you see I'm in trouble here! That's kind of the thinking that goes on in our mind, you know? We kind of get a bit distorted, and think God doesn't notice you're in trouble, that God doesn't care about you're in trouble. It seems that way to you, but actually it's not true. It's just an illusion in your mind as you're starting to lose nerve.

So we had delay after delay. I did two years of applications to try and get a piece of land, and every two months it would be delayed by some more bureaucratic red tape; had to get permission from the Hospital Board, had to get permission from the Council, had to go to the Ministry of Works, had to go to the Ministry of Health, had to go to someone to value the land, and then the guy died in the middle of it. It just went on and on and on and on. This went on for over a year, and of course I'd think GOD, HELP! Then the Baptists said, you've got to get out of the building by the end of the year, and time went on, we still got no land, nothing's happened. I've got to get out of the building in January, and we've got to get a school up, and a school in place, and I hadn't even got a piece of land, so by about Maybe HURRY UP! Oh hurry up! Then we had to change the plans, because sometimes you have to change what you've got, to take into account that God is not doing what you want, the way you wanted it.

We had this grand plan for a great big building, but it was not to be. I had to change the plans, and so it got down to about October - HURRY UP! Then I changed. When I changed, I changed in October. In November we got the land. [Laughter] I was sorry it took me seven years to change. It was mostly impatience, and frustration, and feeling a failure, and all the stuff that goes with that. It's a bad track you go down when delay goes, you know that. But you've just got to come to a place where there's

surrender in your life, and you learn how to wait on God, and hold God's promises over your situation. I did everything. I did everything, but I know it was all a trick, and it was all my attempts to make God do it in my timing - and He refused, He said, because I'm interested in making you into a certain kind of person, you've got to hang in there. So it went on and on and on and on. We did five years with one piece of land, went right through to the Privy Council in London and still we got turned down. I mean this is years of battle to get a piece of land, then two years to battle to get another piece of land, and you know what? In November I got the land, at the end of November, 30 November. The 1st of December I had bulldozers on there to get this land underway, and we got a whole team in, we built the whole school in the space of six weeks.

It was a shock to everyone that we could ever get the thing up in such a time. No one believed we could do it, but we did it, and it just was God working through all the people having a heart to work, and to get it done. It was just astonishing how people came together, even people from other churches came and helped us, we got this whole thing. So I'd gone seven years without being able to solve this problem, and in two months God got the whole thing done. I wish I'd known a bit more in those days, I didn't know too much. So divine delay, the purpose of divine delay is to make you a bigger person, so what are you doing when the delay is on, that is crucial?

Here's the last thing is, the reason that dreams are delayed is because you're actually failing to do what you need to do. Now let's face it, dreams don't come about because you dream about them. You've got to do something, and this is about faith always has action. In the kingdom of God no one is passive. In Matthew, Chapter 11, Verse 12, he says the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, violent pressure. There's a certain measure you have to be assertive to bring things from heaven to the earth, so waiting for God doesn't mean you're doing nothing. You have need of faith and patience that after you've done something - you've got to be doing. There has to be a doing, so there are some things we're doing, and notice Joshua's told you've got the Promised Land, wonderful, now go in and fight, and every bit of it by the sword. How about that - and

he said not only that, I'll put some enemies in there, just so you can learn how to war. By the way, I want you to learn how to war.

So God leaves obstacles and difficulties, you and I must arise and begin to do things. So Joshua's told meditate in the promises of God, speak the promises of God, hold the promises of God over your life, and begin to do what God calls you to do, and things will happen. See, the Great Commission is a mandate to change the world. It's still in effect by the way. No matter what the world is looking like, the mandate to change the world is still in effect, but here's the thing. Although God's heart is to change the world, it requires we actively co-operate and participate in it. It'll never happen by itself. It actually requires we get into prayer, and we engage the loss in a meaningful way, building relationship to see them drawn, so what do you do when there's delay? When there's a delay you need to look at, what I need to develop in my character. Do I need to develop faith? Do I need to be holding the word of God, meditating in the word of God, speaking the word of God? What is it I need to be doing? Are there areas in my character I need to grow, or do I just need to hang in there until God does this thing?

See, so no dream comes about without perseverance and without doing something. Here's the last one, I'll just cover it quickly and that is disappointment. Disappointment's a major issue in dreams, and I've struggled with this at times. Disappointment is what you expected doesn't happen, or what you didn't expect does happen, and you end up with a very deep grief and pain in your heart. People can disappoint us, life circumstances can disappoint us. You may for example have a dream about your family, and in that dream about your family - you have dreams. I mean all of us have dreams about our kids. We dream about their first day at school, we dream about them going to high school, we dream about them going out and getting a job, we dream about their careers, we dream about them getting engaged, we dream about them having a wonderful wedding day and family. Even if you don't have a concept of it, you do think about those things. Then what happens when you get a teenager who goes on to drugs and all the dreams you had just seem to die? What happens when you have a teenager and they go off the rails, perhaps they're assaulted or there's sexual assault and now

their life is broken and damaged, and everything you had hoped for them is suddenly stolen away, and your heart is full of grief and disappointment?

What about you have a child that commits suicide, and you can't understand all the dreams you had for that child are all gone? This is the real world we live in. This is the things that happen, and so often dreams meet with real disappointments in life. Marriage can have it's disappointments, can have disappointments in business and finance, and so life faces us with things that we didn't expect. This is part of life. I love it when everything's going well, but my reality is, there are times it goes well, and times of great disappointment, and if we don't deal with disappointment, it will hold us back, and you lose heart for your dreams. What happens is grief will cause you to lose your dream; grief caused by disappointment causes you to lose your dream, and we don't have to hold onto that. Some of you today will have lost dreams because of grief. In the Bible in Genesis 11, Terah lost his son, and he never resolved the grief, so he walked with Abraham until he got to a place that reminded him of the grief of a lost son, and he just wouldn't budge. He just stayed there and never moved on. Many people in life have a dream, and they get a disappointment, and they get stuck and don't move on. They just lose heart and lock down. You don't have to do that. There are other choices. There are many other choices we can make when dreams fail.

In 1 Samuel 30, David had a dream. He had a dream of being a king. He had men who believed in that dream, and one day he was late getting home and when he got home his house was burned down, his wife and children taken, all his finances taken. He'd had a financial and family collapse in just one day, but not only him, all the men he led experienced the same thing, and now they lost hope because of their grief. It says they wept bitterly, then they wanted to stone David. They wanted to attack the one way, the one person who could get them out of the mess. David strengthened himself in God. If you have a dream - he knew that God had spoken to him, and he would be the king. He held the dream in the face of the deepest setback you could possibly face; you've lost everything that was precious to you, and in the face of that he held the dream. It says he strengthened himself in God. What do you do to deal

with disappointments? They do come to all of us. What do you do with it? If you don't do something about it your vision will go, your dream will go.

In Luke 24 the disciples on the road to Emmaus were full of disappointment and grief. Their dream had gone and notice this - they left the very place Jesus told them to stay and wait for empowerment. In other words, they totally let go of their vision and dream, and as they walked to Emmaus they saw Jesus. They didn't even recognise him. See, grief and disappointment will blind you to what God is doing, you can't see it. You actually are just - all you want to do is go back where you feel comfortable, what's familiar again. I feel God speaking to many people about that right now. Going back to what's familiar, what's comfortable, what's secure is not the answer. You have to deal with the issue, and so Jesus helped them deal with the issue. This is what He did. He talked to them and drew out their feelings, the pain and disappointment and disheartenment. He drew out their dreams and what they were, and then He adjusted the dreams, and adjusted their thinking, and put fresh hope back in them again.

So if we're faced with a situation where there is disappointment, at the end of the day, the first thing you've got to do is just acknowledge how deep the disappointment is. I've found because I'm a quite motivated person, that often when disappointments come I don't acknowledge them as I ought to, or as quickly as I ought to, and they just sit in my heart. Then I feel the loss of energy, and eventually I come and push into God, then it starts to come out in a deep grief, and you actually have to let grief go. There's a process to release grief. To think Christians don't have grief is foolish. We have it, and to pretend it's not there, to try and tough it out, that's not God's answer. God's answer is to take the griefs and sorrows of our heart, acknowledge them, feel them and just let them go, then look at the believing, what thinking is in behind it? Sometimes we need to make some changes, so the remedy then, if there are disappointments, number one is resolution of the pain, and number two is refocusing your life again. So when Jesus faced the disciples with their disappointments, this is what He did. He helped them express it and resolve it, then put fresh vision in them, and they went back with a new life, a new hope again. You could do that. I know you could do that.

Sometimes you have to adjust personally. It's not going to be like before, and that can be a grief. Sometimes you have hopes and dreams, and then it seems it changes, not the way you thought it would work out. You have to be willing to let go, and let God change you on the inside, as you deal with the grief. Sometimes you've got to change your plan. Sometimes you have to change your expectations.

There may be people here today, I can feel in the spirit now, and there's been delay and you've got discouraged or there's been disappointment and you've become disheartened. God wants to help you today. He will help you. You've just got to acknowledge it. Just acknowledge what's happened. If the problem is delay, go and meditate in the word of God, get your hope back and faith back in God, God is faithful. So begin to meditate in the promises of God, speak the promises of God, and do what you need to do to get where you need to go. If there's disappointment, take the time to get alone with God and acknowledge the pain, acknowledge the grief, and then adjust your life again around this change.

Why don't we just close our eyes right now. Holy Spirit, come. Holy Spirit, come. Spirit of God, fall upon the church. Just while our eyes are closed and heads are bowed, if you're here today and don't know Jesus Christ, this is a great day to receive Him, to receive Him as a friend, to receive Him as a Saviour, allow His spirit to come into your life and heart. Jesus loves you, and died on the cross for you, so you could actually enter into a life walking with God, free from sin, free from pressure of demonic curses, able to walk into the destiny God has for you - but it does require decision to respond. If that's you today, and you want to come to Christ, give your life to Christ, please just raise your hand wherever you are. I'd love to lead you in a prayer to receive Jesus. Anyone here today? I wonder just while I was talking, I felt the spirit of God start to come on the issue of discouragement and disappointment, and if that's you today, rather than just do nothing, it's not really about us praying for you. It's actually more about you make a decision to acknowledge actually there's been delays, and I've become discouraged. I need to acknowledge it, and come back and represent myself to the Lord again, come back into a place of faith, patience, enduring and walking out the dream.

If it's a disappointment I need to come and acknowledge that I'm in pain, make a decision to open the pain to the Lord, allow Him to heal me, allow Him to adjust me and to grow me and re-set my focus again. If that's you today, why don't you just come out of your seat and just come, I'm not going to pray for you, just come and lift your hands before the Lord, say God, I'm hearing you speak to me today. I'm just coming forward to worship you and acknowledge you are speaking into my heart. Just come out of your seat, just make your way to the front, just stand, hands lifted up. I'm not going to pray with you or alongside you, just going to pray a general prayer over everyone here - but coming up is like a faith action, saying I know God's talking to me today. I've got such deep disappointment, I need God to touch me in the area of disappointment, disappointment in marriage, disappointment in children, disappointment with family, disappointment in finance, disappointment in business, disappointment in ministry of some kind. It doesn't really matter what it is, just coming up is an act of acknowledge that God, You are speaking to me and I will respond.

See, faith always has got actions. If you believe, you'll do. If you're doing, I know you believe. Just come, just come today, just come and just lift our hands to the Lord, just lift our hands to Him right now. Whatever that disappointment is, whatever that set back, whatever that delay, God is here. He loves you. He saw it coming, and He can help you. When the disciples were disappointed, Jesus talked to them. Why are you so sad? What's going on in your life? He got them to just share with Him, and I guess they wept as they talked about broken dreams, hopes, aspirations and Jesus listened and walked with them. Then He spoke into their hearts, and those men rose up and literally ran back into the assignment God had for them, and on that day of Pentecost they were there. They were there. They were restored, the dream was back again. This time, every one of them laid their lives down for the sake of that dream. That's right, God is here today. Are there any others with broken dreams, disappointments? Just lift your hands to the Lord right now.

Father in heaven, You love us, You believe in us. You have thoughts towards us. You know plans that You have for us to do us good, not evil. Give us a future and a hope, but right now we acknowledge before You,

that through the delay of those dreams the heart has been affected, hope has been lost. Through difficulties and disappointments grief and sorrow has weakened our resolve, so Father we ask comfort our heart, restore our hope, restore our dream, adjust our lives so we're aligned with what You have for us. Lord, come and touch us.

We feel Your presence here. Father, I just pray Your spirit to move and comfort people, strengthen people, strengthen in our heart to resolve and we will never give up, but we will hold the word of God, the promises of God over marriage, over family, over children, over loved ones, believing to see them saved, restored, built, established, over finance and business, over areas of responsibility, over lost loved ones. Father, today we thank you for grace in our lives, to resolve disappointment and grief, to stand up again and run again with the message of the gospel, to run again with the dream. Yes Lord, Halleluiah! We love You Lord.

Some of you standing here today, got very deep grief, find a deep pain in your heart, please feel free to stay on, just worship the Lord. You may want to just process it at home, just go and take some time alone with God, some worship music, remember what it is that you expected, what disappointed you, and just grieve before the Lord, let the tears flow out from your heart to the one who'll comfort you, strengthen you and listen for His voice to speak fresh direction, fresh hope into your life. Father, we thank You for this body of people. Father, I pray increase enlargement, I pray a river of the spirit of God to bring healing to our community, lives to Jesus Christ and Lord, we give you all the honour and all the glory. Amen. Amen.

Summary Notes:

1. Introduction

Your dream is your future – it is what your life moves towards.
Personal Dreams: Cruise, new home, new job – these are about personal fulfilment.
God given Dream: This always about Kingdom of God advancing – destiny fulfilment.
Dreams can be lost, stolen and opportunities lost – life drifts.

2. Dream Killer #2 Delays

Delay = What you expected does not happen when you expect.
Prov.13:12 - Hope deferred makes the heart sick – but when desire comes it is tree of life.
When time passes and dream does not eventuate – feel life is ‘on hold’, ‘just a dreamer’.
May begin to think about life could have had if hadn’t listened to God – discouraged.
“Sick” = OT2470 = weak, grieved, in pain.

Delay can cause people to become:
(a) discouraged – lose the courage to stay the course (Num. 21:4).
(b) Impatient – irritated by delay, restless, resistant to delay.
e.g. Gen.16:1-12 “You shall call his name Ishmael … He shall be a wild man”
- Abraham became impatient – listened to poor counsel – produced Ishmael.
- His impatience hurt his marriage and produced two nations at war.
e.g. 1 Sam.13:5-8 “Then he waited 7 days according to the time set by Samuel but Samuel did not come”
- Saul became impatient, under pressure of conflict, people leaving and God delaying.
- His impatience cost him his leadership. Vs14.

Impatience = the inability to wait until God says we are ready.
1 Pet.5:6 “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.”
· Due Time = NT2540 = Kauros = a set time, a time that God has appointed.
God has exactly the right timing for doors to open, promotion to come.

Keys: Faith and Patience
Heb.6:12 “Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises”.
· “Through” = NT1223 = Dia = whatever follows this is the method through which the promises of God come.
· Patience = NT3115 = constant steady confident endurance.
= ability to remain confident in Christ and continue on course.
· E.g. Pregnancy – period of change, preparation then pressure/pain to birth. We need time to change, grow, develop readiness, stretch.
· Patience = Not passive, waiting for something to happen.
e.g. Mt.1:12 The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence.
= persevering in believing, changing, doing what is necessary.
e.g. Heb.12:35-38 You have need of patience that after you have done the will of God you may receive promises.
· Exhortation in Heb. 6:12
(a) Don’t be slothful = sluggish, lazy, dull, illegitimate.
(b) Be follower = mimic or imitate men of faith.

· Why Dreams Delay:
(i) Demonic Resistance – easily overcome.
(ii) Divine Delay – must co-operate with process of change.
(iii) Failure to take action – must co-operate in fulfilment of dreams.
· There is no God given dream fulfilled without our participation.
· N.B. Doing nothing guarantees delay.
- Josh.1:3 – Joshua required to physically enter and possess the land.
- Mt.28:19-20 – Great Commission requires our participation.
· Don’t delay the dream by refusing to do your part. (Heb.2:1-3)

3. Dream Killer #3 Disappointment
· Disappointment What we expected does not happen.
Unpleasant or painful things happened that didn’t expect.
· People hold dream in heart for marriage, children, finances, career. When the unexpected happens can have painful setback, trauma e.g. child – drugs, accident, suicide.
What happens is inconsistent with dream – experience grief.
· E.g. Gen.11:27-32 - Terah never resolved disappointment and grief – settled down and did not pursue dream or vision.

· E.g. 1Sam.30:4-6 - David and followers experienced immense disappointment and grief.
Impact on David's men was to lose dream and vision.
E.g. Luke 24 - Disciples on road to Emmaus – full of disappointment and grief.
· When experience grief/disappointment it is easy to entertain doubts.
(a) about God (b) about self (c) about dream

· Remedy: Resolution and Refocusing

· Heb.11:23-25 - God is faithful who promised.
(a) Acknowledge grief, disappointment – express openly to God.
Take time to resolve this grief.
· Lk.24 Jesus drew out the disciples to express their grief and lost hopes.
(b) Refocus on the faithfulness of God.
- Take time to meditate and remember the dream v32.
- Choose to rejoice in the Lord 1Pet.4:12-13
- Adjust personally
- Adjust your plan
- Adjust your expectations.

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7. The Holy Spirit & the Will of God (7 of 7)

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Why don't we just turn in Ephesians, Chapter 5. I'm full of the Holy Ghost today, absolutely, up praying, getting full of the Holy Ghost. It's good to be full of the Holy Ghost, otherwise you're full of something else usually, you know, depression and heaviness and fears and anxieties and worries. God wants us to be full of the Holy Ghost! Full of the Holy Ghost! I hope before you go out today you get filled up. You'll open your life and get filled up, and we've been doing a series on desire and destiny, but there's one more thing I had just burning in my heart that I just wanted to share, and I want to talk about the Holy Ghost and the will of God, because all of us want to know well, what is God's plan for my life? So we're going to go searching all our desires and whatever, and we want to find out what God's plan is.

Of course you'll notice if you read the Bible you can't get answers for everything you want. It's just like there's some things He didn't talk about, so kind of left there, so we need to get some help on that. We're made for God's pleasure, and God has wired certain things into our heart, so one way of finding God's purpose for your life is to connect with the desires of your heart. Now one of the things we have to realise though is we live in a culture which is very, very self-centred. Had you noticed? It's [laughs] and it's fuelled by instant everything, so I want it all and I want it now! This is not a good culture, a good environment, to be a godly person, because God doesn't give it all, and He doesn't give it now. He gives it all, but not now, and that's the dilemma, because in the world you want it all up front, so there's a challenge that the generation arising has, that in the west it's all a very 'me' centred culture, that community and responsibility - community is broken down, and actually the prevailing culture is, what about me? It's all about me - what do I get? What do I want? How can I get ahead?

So even in the universities the flow of education is towards what's in this for me, what do I want? How can I get ahead? Then that overflows to well, how can you help me get ahead? I will have connection with you while you help me get ahead, and after that then, if you don't help me get any further ahead, goodbye. This actually totally violates kingdom culture, so there's a spirit operating in the world today, that affects us without even thinking, that it's all about me, and my fulfilment, and my desires, my destiny, but actually it's not about that at all. The Bible says we're made for His pleasure, and so just following your desires isn't enough. It's a great way to identify things that God's put in you, but left to that alone, you'll be caught in the spirit of the world and the spirit of the age, just do what you want to do, and you'll find yourself very, very far from what God has planned for you, which is much better.

I won't go into all these. The Bible talks very clearly in the last days, in 2 Timothy 3, it says challenging or difficult times will be in the earth, and one of the reasons is because people love themselves. They're wrapped up in themselves. It said that they're truce breakers, or in other words, they don't enter into committed relationships easily. They're ungrateful and unthankful, and have got issues with their parents. Sound familiar?

It's very true. We're having a breakdown in culture which is very well described in the Bible. It says, God calls those days perilous days, and so when people are wrapped up in a culture or in a mentality that it's about me and my fulfilment, then what happens is, we miss the best part of God's work, which is always concerned with something bigger than just ourselves.

So the Bible says many things. In there it says that, there be lovers of pleasure, in other words hedonistic, or just seeking to get something that makes me feel good, so if I can get what I want, and my desire, I'll feel good. Get the idea? I'm getting on to where I'm going shortly. Now I just was thinking about this the other day, and the Lord just began to drop into my heart the names of a whole number of people in the Bible who had desires, and their desire totally blew it in their life. Let me just give you a few, I'm not going to look them all up, but I'll give you a few of them. Eve had a desire. She desired the fruit on the tree. Oh boy, that's good, that'll get me ahead. Yeah, right! See, it violated what God had for her, and in doing so, that desire to get ahead, that desire to fulfil herself, that desire to make her way in life without reference to God, actually is the core of the human problem. That's what led to the problems we have in society. Now you start to follow it through. What about the problems in the Middle East right now? Where did they all come from? Well they came from one man, who had a desire to have a son. He thought it would be a good idea with have sex with his wife's maid. So he desired her, and he desired a son. Now get this; God had promised a son, so he can kind of frame it up, well God's got a plan for me and it's not working out here. I'll try this. Of course now we have all this conflict - wild man.

What about Israel? Israel desired a king like everyone else, so what did they get? The ended up with Saul, they got the king they desired, and had years of sorrow and conflict and pain and problems in their nation - but they desired, that's what they wanted. They desired that. It's just, their desire wasn't so bad to have a king, but it's just outside the order what God had planned. They settled for less than what God planned, because they followed their own thinking, and their own desire. Here's another one; Isaiah desired the priesthood. He thought man, I'm a king but boy, to be a priest, that'd be fantastic, great offer of sacrifice - so he desired to

be a priest. What happened to him, he ended up his life in leprosy, in defeat, trying to - he desired something that was not what God intended for him.

Now we can go through, there's heaps of them there. What about Josiah? Josiah wanted to go down and get involved in a fight. Josiah's a good man, he brought revival into the nation, had victory after victory, but he wanted to get involved in the fight, and the king said it's not your fight, stay out of it. But he desired to go to the battle. He went. You know what happened to him? He had a premature death, because of his desire. He just missed what God was saying to him, because his desire just was not tempered by finding what God wanted. I'll give you another one there; what about Jehoshaphat? Jehoshaphat desired to strengthen his relationship with King Ahab, and King Ahab wanted to go down the battle, talked him into going to battle, then they got a prophet, and the prophet said no, no, there's going to be a big defeat if you go there. But did he go? Yeah, he went anyway. So even though he'd had prophetic word, even though there was indications from God this wasn't the right thing, because of his desire for this relationship, and this affinity between the two nations, he went to the battle. He nearly lost his life.

These are written in the Bible. There's heaps of them. They just go on and on. What about Ghazi? Well, he desired that his ministry be rewarded. He thought well, I'm serving Alias, I should get something out of this you know, there should be something in this for me. So when the Syrian got healed, he thought man, I should get a bit of dough out of this, so he followed him after and said listen, we need a bit of money for our ministry, how about you give us some? He got some money, but then he got leprosy as well. His desire brought leprosy and shame, not only on him, on his whole family. Isn't that interesting?

In Mark 1 it tells us the desire - the disciples were in a midst of a revival Jesus was having. You know what they wanted? They wanted Jesus to come back out and do the same stuff He did yesterday. He said no, actually we've got a bigger plan, and it involves the rest of the nation. We're not going to stay where you want me to stay. What about Peter? Peter desired that the ministry influence he had would expand, and extend right through the nation, so when Jesus started to talk about a

cross, he said forget crosses, crosses aren't in the deal. Man, we're just pumping. We haven't got room for crosses in our ministry direction. We're so set on success, we can't see where crosses fit in anywhere. Jesus said, get behind me, and rebuked him as having a demonic source operating, through his desire to look after himself. This is what goes on, so there's so many of them.

What about David? David had a desire to build a house for God. God said plainly no. What about the desire; was it a good desire? It was a good desire. Was it a godly desire? Oh, it was a godly desire. He wanted to build a great house for God to dwell in. God said no, you can't. Someone else is set to do it - it's not going to be you. He accepted that, and he co-operated with God's plan, harnessed his desire, and provided all the resources. So your desires sometimes can actually be out of sorts with what God wants. How about this one with Paul? Now this is a good one. Paul wanted to go on a mission journey, to a place he'd been commanded to go and preach the gospel. He wanted to go, he'd been commissioned and sent out, and he tried to get to the place, and the Holy Ghost forbade him to go there. Now what do you make of that? It was a great desire, great dream, great vision, but it's just not in what God had. God had a bigger plan, so all of these things are written in the Bible, so that we can understand just because we desire something, doesn't mean to say that that's in the plan of God for our life. You have to temper it with something else, and it's the something else we want to find out about. Amen, okay.

You notice even Jesus, in Mark, Chapter 14, notice His great prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Father, all things are possible to You. In other words, oh God, You're a great God. You can make anything happen. He said, take this cup of suffering from Me. What I really want is, not to go through with the cross. Then He adds in, but if it be Your will, not My will, but Your will be done. We're here because He did that. What was His desire? His desire was to not have to go to the cross, naturally no one would want to do that, but through prayer and surrender, He found and obtained the will and mind of God, and actually then had a much greater impact. Now these are the kinds of things you need to see. We live in a culture where people do what they feel, do what they want,

come into church, and then want to use God to fulfil their own desires and whatever. Now you've got to match this with finding what God - God is still God, and so we've got to match this one up.

Okay then, so let's have a look in Ephesians 5, and we'll get started, Verse 15. See then, that you walk wisely or carefully, not like a fool. He's talking to Christians - but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. In other words he's saying, this is about how you run your life, and he's saying what I want you to do, is to run your life wisely, not like a foolish person, and that means you need to understand the importance of time and using your time, investing it in the right things. Now notice what he says; therefore because of that don't be unwise, but understand what the will of God is. To be unwise is to be without a mind, to be ignorant, to not have any idea whatsoever what the will of God is, and he's saying don't be unwise, but I want you to understand or have insight to what God's will is for you. So very clearly he's saying, don't be a dummy! Christians, don't be a dummy and walk foolishly! Man, you've got one life, don't blow it with foolish decisions that take you off course. Rather, you need to know what the will of God is.

Now that's a dilemma; what is the will of God? How many people have wondered that? God, what is Your will? Oh God, what is Your will? There's so many decisions we face - God, what do you want? You don't know what He wants, because somehow it's very quiet, and Paul in Colossians 1:19 says he was praying that we'd be filled with knowledge of the will of God, so clearly it's God's plan you know his will, and two, that you actually be filled with understanding, and have a sense of knowing what to do at any point in time. Yet, that's not what most of us experience, so I want you follow - so how can I find the will of God? Well I know you'll give me the common ones, you'll give me the common ones - will you read the word of God? Now this is true. The word of God is the manual, so there are many decisions in life related to all affairs of life, which if you'd read the word of God, there are very clear directions how to succeed and to prosper, so it gives input on money, on marriage, on family, relationships, body life, the gifts of the spirit, the purposes of God - it gives this whole wealth in the Bible.

So the first thing is, we need to be students of the word of God, to discover what God has to say about a whole range of things in our life, so when a problem comes up, you know exactly what the word of God says. We need to study the word of God. I notice lots of people don't have a Bible, don't seem to read a Bible. Let me ask you this; how are you going with the will of God? How are you doing? If you're not sure how to read a Bible or find out what's in a Bible, why don't you come and ask and say hey listen, we'd like some help, I don't even know how to start. That'd be an honest place - I realise I need, but I read it and I don't get anything out of it, I don't even know how to start. We can help you with that, real easily. Okay, so that's that.

Now the other thing too would be - and the Bible's very clear on it - is to get the counsel of wise people. Now many people get the counsel of the wrong people, so if you're going to get counsel of anyone, you want to get counsel of someone who has succeeded in life in that area. That would be a fairly wise person I'm sure, and get counsel of someone who's also got spiritual insight, otherwise you'll gain a wisdom that's of the world, and it'll fill your life with strife. But that would be two things, and the Bible says a fool follows his own way, and everything that's in his own heart, but it says a wise person will draw on the counsel of those who have success in their lives, so we need to learn to do that.

Now those are the most obvious ones. What I want to do is, I want to focus on this area of what the Holy Ghost does to help us, because here's the wonderful thing is, God gave you the Holy Ghost to talk to you! When Jesus left He said, I've got a promise for you. It's a promise of being filled with the Holy Ghost - and I want to show you how you can draw on Him. I'm going to show you two or three things, very simple, just a matter of whether we do them or not. So here's the first thing. Now there's a lot of areas in life where you don't know what to do, because there's no verse in the Bible tells you where to live, what job to take on, whether to do this, whether to do that, what person to marry. There's a whole realm of life where there is absolutely no direction in the Bible whatsoever, and so in that area, in that arena which we face all the time, we operate on two principles. One is the principle of wisdom, godly wisdom, gained by spending time in the word of God, and not doing

stupid things, or if you do, then learning from them. The other one is revelation; in other words the Holy Ghost speaking directly to us, and showing us what to do. Now we need both. If you only just rely on one, you'll end up there's a lot of things God's not talking about, and you'll be making up things in your head you think He's saying, so we need the balance of wisdom.

There's a lot of things God won't tell you, because He expects you to do it. He won't tell you what to put on your shopping list. He doesn't tell you, because it's your job to figure out the shopping list, but He can tell you if you forgot something. I remember on my first missions trip I got down about as far Chesterhope Bridge, and the Holy Ghost just shouted into my ear - you forgot your passports and tickets! Aaagh! I'm looking at the time thinking oh my God, I'm not going to catch the plane. I rebuke this thing in Jesus' name - look, I just spoke and commanded the plane to be grounded until I could get my tickets. My first missions trip, first time anyone paid for me to go anywhere, and I was dependent on that plane to catch the connecting - it was a connecting flight to catch the main one overseas. I did not want to have my first day turn up late, so I flew back home as fast as I could, and then drove to the airport. Yes, I drove to the airport and blow me down, when I got to the airport, the plane had been grounded. It had been grounded. It was grounded a full half an hour, and I was able to get on my flight, but you know it was the Holy Ghost told me.

I don't think He tells you everything, but He does tell you things at times that you need to know, so we need to figure out how to hear that. Now notice what it says in - I want to keep reading on. Notice he says, be not unwise, and understand what the will of God is, and don't be drunk on wine which is foolishness, but be filled with the Holy Ghost. Now you notice it's talking about not drinking wine. Now we could go into all kinds of stuff on that, but here's the thing. Being filled with the Holy Ghost is deeply connected with knowing the will of God, and he jots in there this thing about not being drunk with wine. Now here's the deal about it. What he's saying is, don't come under any other influence that would cloud your thinking, your mind and ability to make decisions, whether it's drink, drugs or any other kind of thing; don't let your mind senses be dulled. But

rather be yielded to the Holy Spirit. It's a different spirit. It'll quicken your mind, He'll give you ideas, quicken you with energy in life. Yield to the Holy Ghost.

Now people get all hung up, and they forget the big thing there is, get filled with the Holy Ghost, so everyone gets worried about wine? Well if you want to drink, the Bible says those who are dying, and those who are in trouble, drink wine, because they need it to feel better. That's what it is, to feel better - I'll be sociable, so I won't go into a big thing about wine. The Bible just says don't be drunk, but it does say get drunk on the Holy Ghost, and I'm more interested not whether you're drinking wine, but whether you get drunk on the Holy Ghost, and when's the last time you got drunk on the Holy Ghost? Filled with the Holy Ghost - ooh, Holy Ghost, wow, MORE! Because that's connected with knowing the will of God, be filled with the Holy Ghost! Many Christians don't get filled with the Holy Ghost, and if they do, they don't stay that way, but you see the Holy Ghost helps us with the will of God, and I'll show you just some simple things you can do, because God has put within you a power, the ability to consistently day by day, actually be filled up with the Holy Ghost, and have the life of God flowing in you.

It's real simple, and discover on the way what God wants to do. Let's have a look, Philippians 2, Verse 13. Look what it says here. Now it says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling - notice this - for it is God who works in you, both to will, and to do, for or of His good pleasure. Notice it says to will, that's the word desire, so God even helps you get the right desires. It means to desire, to will or to determine, so it says God wants to help you with your desires, and to help you with your doing. God is at work in you, both to will and to do of the things that please Him, so here's the thing; we're not on our own. The Holy Ghost has been given to us, to help us with our desires, so our desires align with heaven's desires, and also to help us and empower us. Notice that word, God is at work - that word work is the Greek word energetic, or energayo, from which we get energetic, like the Energiser battery. God is energising you. God is empowering you. Now let me ask you this; where's He empowering you? At an altar call? No, no, no. God is at work in you, so you have to activate the movement of God within you. If you don't

activate the movement of the spirit within you, then there's a problem, because that's why the Holy Spirit's given for you to work with Him. So it says, He's at work in you, both to will, and to do, and the word do there is the same word, energetic, so God is energetic, helping you get your desires right, and then so you can be energetic with the things of God, the same word. God is at work, and you get working, and the thing that is the key is the desire, so the Holy Spirit is going to help you with both your desires, so you'll end up discovering what God wants, and end up doing it. There is a power at work within you.

Ephesians 3:20 says, now the might power of the Holy Ghost inside you, but people don't experience that. They just have [in monotone] I got the Holy Ghost when I believed. [Laughter] Then I got baptised in the Holy Ghost. Life has been difficult since then. [Laughter] Where's being drunk in the spirit! Where's being so full of the Holy Ghost, that you are full of life and bubble and zim and zeal, and it starts to flow out of your personality? They say boy, you been on the drink already? I remember when God first spoke to me about alcohol, and man I used to drink a fair bit, then and God just spoke to me, tip the whole lot out. Then I said well God, if I'm going to go to parties I don't want to be a wowser. [Laughter] You're all drinking, you know? Sort of that sort of look, you know? I said God, every time I'd get invited to a party and the invitations dropped off after people found I didn't drink, but I still went to some anyway - but every time I'd go to a party, I'd say now God, I want to be filled with the Holy Ghost! I want to go there full of the Holy Ghost, so I'm more alive than anyone there, and I'm laughing and having more fun than anyone, and I come home and I have no headache. I wake up and worship God tomorrow, and it'll be great! God would fill me up, I'd get there and I'd find I'd laugh and have fun and be joking. People say what are you drinking? I say well here it is. You know, they can't tell what I'm drinking at all - drinking the Holy Ghost!

That's why Jesus gave you the Holy Ghost. He said don't even think of trying to change the world without the Holy Ghost. Don't even think about it. He said DON'T THINK ABOUT IT! Just stop until you get filled with the Holy Ghost, so they prayed, they sought, they got filled with the Holy Ghost. I don't know, we've been talking the Holy Ghost out of the church

ever since. That's the problem. We need the Holy Spirit. You need the Holy Spirit in your life. You need Him in your business. One of the great keys - you talk to Steve, you'll find he has the Holy Ghost in his life, operating in his business. There's a lot of others like that too.

Romans 8:26, now the Spirit helps us with our infirmities. He helps us with our infirmities. Why? Because we don't know what to pray. I don't know what to pray, what will I pray? I need to pray, I don't know what the will of God is, what to pray, you know? So people get stuck in that kind of rut, so we don't know how to pray, what to pray, or how to pray as we ought, but the Holy Ghost helps us. So notice, helps us with our infirmities. That word means we're a bit without strength. It means we have a struggle, a lacking, we don't quite have the ability to do this, but the Holy Ghost helps. Now the word help there, is a word meaning to take hold together with someone else, so you pull together in the same direction. Now you notice that someone has to be pulling first, before the Holy Ghost comes and helps. So for most Christians, because they don't know how to pull in the spirit, then they don't have the Holy Ghost working with them. That's His role is to work with you, not for you. For you means it's someone else doing it for you, you don't do anything. I just come up, lay hands on me and just get blessed. Great. But you know when you go away, you've still got to get up tomorrow, now what will you do that will inspire the Holy Ghost to arise within you, and begin to take hold with you, and begin to start to bring something into the earth? That's the deal and it's part of our responsibility is to do that.

So the Holy Ghost will help us. So God gave you the Holy Ghost. He's going to help you to get filled with the spirit, so notice here it says don't be drunk with wine - Ephesians 5 - don't be drunk, don't be - that word is metho-o.Don't be a metho. Don't be a metho. It's quite good not to be a metho. Don't be under the influence of anything that gets around your mind, your senses and dulls you down, so you don't know what you're supposed to be doing, how to fulfil the will of God, but rather get full of the Holy Ghost, speaking to yourselves. Now that's an interesting thing. It connects the will of God to being full of the Holy Ghost, to speaking to yourself, and speaking certain things.

Speaking to yourself, so - and we're going to show you exactly where this comes in - speaking to yourself. Now when a person prays in tongues they speak to God, but they also speak into themselves, speaking to yourself. Paul - I'll show you in a scripture in a moment how Paul taught himself, and he taught himself by the gift of praying in tongues, filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking to yourselves, psalms and hymns and spirit, spirit songs. What is a spirit song? Glad you asked, we'll go into 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14. Spirit songs, now it's talking about the gift of tongues. Now notice they spoke in tongues, as the Holy Ghost infused into them the language to speak forth, so when you got filled with the spirit, you were baptised in the Holy Ghost, you got a gift given to you. Now that gift is a powerful gift. It's one of the most neglected gifts in the church is this gift of speaking in tongues. Paul said, I speak in tongues more than everyone, and he also said I get more revelation that everyone as well. There's a connection between revelation, insight to the word of God, and speaking in the spirit, speaking in tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Verse 14, if I pray in an unknown tongue my spirit is praying, so your spirit, you can energise, activate your spirit consciously every time you pray in tongues, your spirit is praying, the Holy Spirit, who knows the mind of God ,starts to infuse language into your spirit, in harmony with the will of God, and you're now praying the perfect will of God as you speak in tongues. Most of us say well, I don't understand it, don't know really what it's about, so we don't really value what it does, but your spirit is praying. So he says, I'll sing with the spirit, sing with understanding, otherwise you're blessed with the spirit held another person who don't know what you're saying, say Amen at your giving of thanks. Notice we're blessing, we're praying, we're giving thanks, because you give thanks well when you do it with tongues. So he said in Verse 18, I speak in tongues more than you all, yet in the church, I'd rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also. Why does he say also? Who else is he teaching?

See, one of the things the Holy Spirit's given to you for is to teach you, is to teach you the things of God, to teach you the mind and heart of God - so we don't know how to find that mind and heart of God, so begin to speak in tongues. You say well, I don't know what I'm saying, my mind

isn't connected to it. No, but when you speak in tongues, you are now directly opening the communication with God. Now the Holy Spirit is directly imparting to your spirit, you have an open communication line with God in your spirit. You try praying in tongues for a few minutes, and then suddenly stop, just go psst, stop! Holy Ghost will keep going. You find your mind filling with the language, it just overflows. It's a flow from within that fills your mind, so when you start praying in tongues, you start to open up your spirit, the part of you that's connected to God, and as you begin to flow in tongues, the spirit of God begins to energise your spirit, begins to impart words and language for you to speak. So what words and language are we speaking? Well one thing we know, we're blessing God, thanking God, we're praising God. We know we're doing all those things, but if you look in Verse 2, it says he that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not unto man but unto God - and listen to this - how be it in the spirit he speaks mysteries. Well there you go.

When you're speaking in tongues, you're speaking mysteries. Most people look at that, and they'll say it's a mystery to me, what does all that mean? How could that work out for any good? That's a mystery. It's all a mystery. I don't know why I have to do it, so you've got to look at other parts of the Bible. In other parts of the Bible, every time the word mystery is mentioned, with all exception but one, where its mentioned first in the mystery of ungodliness, it's talking about things of the spiritual realm, the eternal realm, so each time it speaks of mysteries, it's speaking of God's design, for His kingdom to advance in you, and through you. So the mysteries you are declaring as you speak in tongues, are actually a download of what God, by His spirit, has purposed for you, in you, and through you. You say, why do I have to do it in tongues? Simply this; because your head would get in the way of the will of God, and you'd argue with Him [Laughter], because you'd have your own mind. You'd be praying something like this; Oh God, change that wife of mine! I want you to turn her into a loving person who doesn't control me [Laughter] and the Holy Ghost, as you pray in tongues, if we could interpret it, would be saying something like this; Father, help me to change my heart attitude, so I can be more loving and sensitive and kind to my wife, and not be so passive, but be more responsible. If you heard that, you'd argue and shout it down straight away [Laughter] so God puts it in another

language, so you can't understand, and it's called the mystery of God. Not bad aye?

See, that's how it works. So when you're praying in tongues mysteries, you're praying directly the things God intends for your life, to work in you and through you and accomplish through you, so when you're speaking in tongues, you're not only energising your life, and opening up a direct communication with God, you begin to start the flow of the spirit in a way that enables you then, you're in the same communication flow, that you hear from God. You've got to learn to practice it. The more you pray in tongues, the easier it is to feel the flow of the spirit, and then you start to hear the voice of the spirit, the impressions of the spirit - not if you just pray a little bit once. But what if you were to make it your lifestyle, that every day you'd be praying in - [Prays in tongues] You don't have to pray that loud, but let me shout out loud. I pray quietly under my tongues [Prays quietly in tongues] Now the trouble is, when you go around doing this [Prays quietly in tongues] people hear you talking, they think you're crazy, so I've found it easier to sing in tongues, because when you sing in tongues, people don't know what you're singing, but they just know you're singing, and they say oh, that's nice, a happy person. But otherwise they go [tounges] like Ian does - [Prays in tongues] - oh! What's that? What's going on there? But you can pray in tongues all the time. You can pray every day. Here's the deal - you can call forth the will of God as much, or as little, as you like. You can grow yourself in your spirit as much or as little as you like. You choose how much you build your life with God! You choose how much you yield to the Holy Spirit, or put it another way, if you go to a party, you can choose how many drinks you have. Have one - oh, that was nice. Like chocolate, you can have one. I can't eat one piece of chocolate, I just know now I have to have the whole flipping cake. [Laughter] I don't know where it went, it just vanished just like that - empty wrapper. If you look under my desk you'll find empty wrappers of chocolate. It's not healthy, but it's good.

I don't know how I get to eat a whole cake. I just start, and just can't stop. It's partly because you get a taste for it. I tell you something, when you get praying in Holy Ghost, ooh you get a taste for it! You get a taste for the feel of His life pumping in you, of the clearness in your head, of the

life of God flowing. You may go out and have a few issues, come back a bit beaten up, but get praying in the Holy Ghost. Remember, the moment you decide you'll pray, He takes hold with you! You get full as you'd like, full of the Holy Ghost, full of the spirit of God, see, speaking to yourself. That's not just talking to yourself, that's actually speaking in tongues the mysteries of God, speaking and building your spirit man. I tell you, we need a church that every person's full of the Holy Ghost. You pray in tongues. I look in the meetings sometimes, I see some people standing there, and they're like this - oh my! You're at a party, and you're not drinking, that's so sad. You know, to be a wowser at a party's a terrible thing really, just sitting there looking serious, while everyone else is drinking. It's not very good really is it aye? Everyone notices it too. Have you noticed? They all notice you. What's up with you? Ooh - let me drink! Drink! Come to a meeting, drink! Get up in the morning, drink! Start the flow of the spirit of God, get that anointing flowing inside you. That's who it is - it is a person and that person flows through you, your life gets energised.

You start to build this into your life, day by day build it, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes then through the day. [Prays in tongues] Praying in tongues. You know what will happen? You'll start to come alive on the inside, then you'll start to hear things from God. You'll start to know things. You say how do you know that? I don't know how I know, I just - I don't know, I just know. I don't know how I know. That's what Steve does in his business. How did he know what house to build? How did he know they were going to give him the contract? Because he saw in the spirit. How do you see in the spirit? Well I guess he prays in tongues a fair bit, that be right Steve? Pray in tongues, pray in the spirit every day? See what happens is, the benefit is, you start to get into a flow of revelation, and things that God has purpose for your life, so you may have lots of desires, but one desire to cultivate is the desire to pray strongly in the spirit, to let the life of God begin to flow through you! Why? Because what will happen is, your head will clear, your spirit will become strong, and gradually you'll begin to form in your spirit the things that God is wanting to birth.

Gradually they'll start to form in your spirit until they give birth, until finally there comes a point where these things start to happen. There's other factors in that of course, but at least do the ground work, because God gave you the Holy Ghost. He said don't try and live the Christian life without the power of the Holy Ghost. You say well, I'm not so good at praying in tongues. Why don't you give yourself to it? If God gave you the gift, why don't you just give yourself to it? Well I'm a quiet person. No, no, no, no, that's a mistake. That's quite an untruth. You're not a quiet person, you're a wild radical person. I've seen you at parties, I've seen you at the dances, seen people up here last night ... you know? They get into it, we sing a song, you know, Y-M-C-A [Laughter] we're doing all this stuff there, but on Sunday why? Why God, you know? Come on, get the whole song, get the whole song! [Applause] Really get into the whole song, and start pumping you know? Got to really start pumping in the Holy Ghost, get fired up in the spirit!

For some people there's just a demonic block, a demonic thing, and you're yielding to the demon, rather than yielding to the Holy Ghost. Man, we need to have a whole lot of Christians that are pumped up and going. I saw it last night, I was at the party. I saw what some of you were like. I watched you on the stage last night dressed up, what you were like, and then I watch you this morning [Laughter] How can wearing a few clothes make you suddenly become free? What on earth did it shift in you? Why don't you just shift that every day? Just shift that every day? Just shift that - that's what the Holy Ghost came to do, so you could [Prays in tongues] Halleluiah! We need to pray in the Holy Ghost, start presenting your body to the Lord. You know, that's the whole thing. Start, present your body to the Lord. When we're up there and we're dancing - I saw people up there doing the hokey tokey last night. [Laughter] I watched. It's like these quiet church people, like a group of mad hooligans [Laughter] just grabbed hands, and they ran at Lyn! More hokey tokey tokey! I thought this is brilliant - now why can't you do that in church? [Laughter]

See, it's actually just, you just made a decision to let go of inhibitions, and to express fun, because we're made for that, but that's what the Holy Ghost has given, not to make us more religious, not to make us ooh,

deeply spiritual... No, no, no! Get you full of life so you're uninhibited, and don't need a drink or a party. You can actually be happy, and people say why are you happy? What's going on? Have you been drinking or something? Yeah. What kind? That's right, that's right - I've got the Holy Ghost, got the Holy Ghost! God gave me the Holy Ghost! I'm full of the Holy Ghost, oh oh! I'm feeling the spirit of God right now. Come on over here quick and let's just - quick, someone to catch them, they'll fall over for sure - I'm so full of the Holy Ghost! [Laughter] Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait [Laughter]

Lift your hands up, just lift both hands up there like you have a good drink - are you ready? Drunk in the Holy Ghost! Fill him Lord! Ready? Power of the Holy Ghost! Just come around - Holy Ghost, drunk, drunk, drunk, drunk, drunk, full of laughter, Holy Ghost, quick! Quick, quick, quick, quick, quick. Are you ready? Come on, touch her, quick! She's going to stagger full of - she's a drunk woman, drunk in the Holy Ghost, filled with the Holy Spirit, whoa! Full of the Holy Ghost. See, we need a lot more of that don't we Jill? Come on Jill, come on out here, quick, have a good drink. Why don't you reach up - now listen, someone get behind her quick, begin to pray in tongues. Pray in tongues. [Prays in tongues] Holy Ghost - see, she's already getting full of the Holy Ghost. See, the Holy Ghost is here. The Holy Ghost is here, so you've got to stir up the gift inside you.

Summary Notes:

1. Introduction

We are made for God's pleasure – not all about me, my personal fulfilment.
Great trend in the West towards self idolatry – all about me and what I want.
Fuelled by demand for everything now – instant coffee, communication, answers.
Without cause to live for the Next Generation: How can I get ahead? Loyal only to self.
Bring that mentality into the church: What can I get? How can you get me ahead?
· Paul wrote 2 Tim.3:1 Perilous times = 5467 = Hard to deal with, difficult, dangerous.
2 Tim.3:1-7 Lovers of pleasure – form of godliness.

2. Following Desires can head to Failure

e.g. People in the Bible who followed desire of heart and ended with disaster:

Gen. 3:6 – Eve
Gen. 16 – Abraham and Hagar
1 Sam.12:13 – Israel and Saul
2 Chron.26:16 – Uzziah and priesthood
2 Chron.35:22 – Josiah and battle

1 K.22:32 – Jehosophat and battle
2. K 5:20 – Gehazi and money
Mk.1:35 – Disciples and revival
Mt.16:22 – Peter and Jesus purpose
2 Sam.7:4 – David and House of God

- All had desires, good ideas that they pursued – in conflict with the will of God.
- Did not recognise the will of God – clouded by personal desires for fulfilment.

e.g. Jesus

Mk.14:32 "Father all things are possible with you – take away this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will…" (desire, determine, be inclined towards)

3. God Wants You to know His Will
· Eph.5:15-18 "Be not unwise but understand what the Will of the Lord is…"
· Unwise = NT878 = to be mindless, ignorant, acting recklessly.
· Understand = NT4920 = to comprehend, have insight into, come into ones mind.
· How can I find the Will of God? (Col.1:9 "…filled with the knowledge of His Will")
(i) Word of God … principles and instructions.
(ii) Counsel of experienced godly men (Prov.12:15 .. hearken to counsel is wise)
· Many areas need to make decisions – no reference to it in the Bible. E.g. Where to work? Where to live? Who to marry?

4. God Helps us to know His Will

a) Phil.2:13 "It is God that works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure"
· Will = 2309= to desire, to will, to purpose, to determine.
· Works =NT1754= energeo = to be active, effective, put forth supernatural ability.
· Do =NT1754= energeo = to do, be active.
· God is at work within you – He has put something in you to help.
· There is a power that works within us (Eph.3:20) to help us.
b) Rom.8:26 "The Spirit helps us with our infirmities for we don't know what to pray.
· The work of the Holy Spirit is to help us.
· Help =4878= to take hold together with, to help in obtaining, participate with.
· Infirmities =NT769= weakness, to have not enough strength.
· Groaning =4726= to sigh = deep expressions of Holy Spirit with us interceding.
e.g. Jesus: Mk.7:34 Looking up to heaven He sighed – man healed.
Mk.3:12 Sighed deeply in His Spirit – left Pharisees.

5. The Work of the Holy Spirit and the Will of God

a) Eph.5:17-20 "Be not drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit."
· Context = knowing the Will of God
· Drunk = NT3182= Meth uskoo = intoxicate, under the influence of alcohol.
= subject senses and mind and emotions to influence of alcohol.
= deaden and dulls pain, deadens senses to cope with life.
· Filled with the Holy Spirit = come under the influence of the Spirit and Word of God.
= subject senses and mind and emotions to another influence.

= Present your body, life, soul, to Holy Spirit and to the Word of God.
· Speaking to yourselves = overflow of the Holy Spirit operating.
· Note: Spiritual songs, thanksgiving – as much as you like.

b) 1 Cor.14:14-19
· Speaking in tongues = spirit is praying, Holy Spirit is imparting to spirit.
· You speak – Holy Spirit takes hold with you and imparts to your spirit.
· You open the part of your spirit where God connects/communicates.
· E.g. pray in tongues – stop – words keep flowing into your mind.
· Revelation of God's will comes the same way.
· Vs.2 Speak mysteries =mystery= hidden purpose and plans of God to advance His Kingdom in and through you.
· As you speak in tongues you speak forth the purpose of God. You strengthen and energise your spirit.
· Listen with spiritual ears to the overflow – words/pictures.
· Rom.12:1-2 presenting body and soul to the Lord – yielding to the Holy Spirit so you can hear instruction from the Spirit of God = surrender to Him.
· In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus yielded to the will of God then prayed to bring forth that will.
· 1 Cor.2:12 we have received the spirit of God that we might know.

Action:
· Commit to Praying in Tongues daily, strongly to develop spiritually.

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