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Hands and Hearts

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, January 24, 7:00 AM in HHR #5

(breakfast provided)

Tuesday, January 24, 7:00 PM in Office #225

(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

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non-denominational**

Mortals make elaborate plans, but God has the last word. Humans are satisfied with whatever looks good; God probes for what is good. (Proverbs 16:1-2)

What are your plans for 2017? What places do you plan on visiting? Who will you relate with? What abilities are in your hand? What are the dreams in your heart? What does your list of goals and ambitions state? God has a plan for you! His plan includes today and tomorrow. His plans supersede self-determined goals of women and men. Does your life equation include God?

We humans keep brainstorming options and plans, but God's purpose prevails. (Proverbs 19:21)

Many times, it's God that places a sense of dream in your heart. A desire for a future brighter than today. A future closer toward what you'd like the sunset to look like at the end of the day.

At times God pulls back the curtain of life to make us aware of His will for our life. For some, the curtain is withdrawn during prayer, others while reading Scripture; still others, in general conversation. You might have a regular conversation with someone and "wham" there it is, the dream just popped out. You sense a weight on your words that come from more than you. And, still, others don't recognize the light before them.

*Two Principles About Your Hands and Heart

1. What's in your hand is for present use. What's in your heart is for future use.

Your abilities, job, family, and opportunities are in your hand. In your heart are your dreams, plans, and desires. Your hand is engaged in the now; while your heart envisions the future. Many times, there is a gap between the time when the dream God places in your heart and when that dream is realized.

The Apostle Paul had a dramatic conversation to Christ on his way to Damascus, the capitol city of Syria. In the book of Acts, chapter nine and verse fifteen, God pulls back life's curtain to give Paul a glimpse into God's plan. **Is it possible some don't recognize the dream placed in their heart by God because they work hard to deny or discount eternity?** That's what Paul did until he encountered Jesus in a personal manner.

But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings [Political/Government Leaders] and the children of Israel.

Twenty-Five years later Paul's dream became a reality. Throughout the Roman-Greco world Paul's ministry was predominately conducted in capitol cities; specifically, sixteen of the nineteen cities of his ministry focused on political leaders and people in influential positions.

In 1991, my wife, Christine, and I, started our first church in New York. During those days of young ministry, God placed a dream into my heart. He pulled back the curtain of life revealing to me that in the future I would serve in ministry among political leaders. At that point, I had no idea what that meant. I knew enough to know, if it was a dream placed by God, I wouldn't have to push doors open for it to happen. My field level experience has taught me to place my dreams into God's hands and to use my hand to be productive with what's before me. For twenty-five years, I've pastored local churches, worked in the business market and the non-profit sector. I faithfully employed the gifts, knowledge, and will to serve with what was in my hand. I didn't always get it right, nor do I now, but I do use what's in my hand to serve.



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2. Faithfully doing the work that is in your hand will set up what's in your heart for the future.

One of my favorite sayings is: “bloom where you are planted”. When we view our present work as a stepping stone, or over-focus on “what’s next?”, we minimize, possible miss, some of the greatest lessons to learn. Lessons like:

- Skills to develop
- Depth to understand God’s leading one’s life
- Character development
- Perseverance through hardships
- Managing human conflicts in a redemptive manner

Make the most of your today. Maximize your gifts, opportunities, and job. Develop your skills, deepen your character, grow in wisdom and in stature. Learn to trust God in the gap time between when the dream is placed in your heart and when the dream is realized.

Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men. (Proverbs 22:29)

Work like nobody is watching. Practice your work, again and again. Sharpen your saw. Learn as much as you can from those with more experience. Learn from others failures.

Then, you shall stand before “kings” with your gifts. God will open doors for His purposes in His time.

It is more difficult to be faithful to what’s in your hand than to have faith for the future dream. The future is always easier than present.

The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand. (Psalms 37:23-24)

A Few Thoughts on Dreams

1. Receive the dream but leave the details to the Lord.

Believe it, but give yourself fully to the present. Focus on what’s before you.

2. Receive the dream and patiently wait for God’s grace and providential work to bring about the dream.

When we force the dream into the present often we hurt people in the process. We miss the amazing journey of faith that God offers people.

- God gave Abraham a dream that he would be the “father of many nations”. Abraham and Sarah became impatient with God’s timing leading to an unplanned family forced into the wilderness broken and pained. Yet, God remained faithful, twenty-five years after the promised dream his wife Sarah gave birth to Isaac, his son.
- The spiritual line of blessing was destined for Jacob, however, his cheating Esau out of his birth right fractured his family. Jacob was forced to flee his home. It wasn’t until many years later before Jacobs family was restored and God’s dream was realized.

3. Careful who you share your dreams with.

In the book of Genesis, chapter thirty-seven, God gave Joseph a dream about his family bowing down to him. Not everyone celebrated the dream. By end of chapter thirty-seven, Joseph was forced into slavery. Twenty-two years later Joseph’s dream became a reality. His selfish ambition drove him to share his dream prematurely.

4. Recognize the dream is not automatically easy.

When King David of Israel was a boy, God used the Prophet Samuel to reveal to David that he would be the next King of Israel. It was twenty years later, and a life on the run before God’s plan for David was fulfilled.

*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. (Psalm 62:5) *I have adapted and re-written this message from my study and personal experience. Original inspiration was derived from my Pastor in my home church.*



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January 24, 2017

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