

Samuel Rodriguez: Follow your God-Given Dreams This Christmas

Read Time: 3 Minutes 21 Seconds

The secret to keeping your eyes on the prize is looking ahead and not behind.

Once you have embraced your calling as a Christ follower, you must remain faithful to the course God has revealed to you. God will fulfill his promises as you bring your divinely inspired dreams to life.

While his journey to becoming the father of a nation was never easy, Jacob experienced the life-transforming power of God through an extraordinary dream. After cheating his twin brother Esau out of his birthright, Jacob tricked their father Isaac into blessing him with what was not Jacob's to receive (see Gen. 27). Furious over the deception, Esau vowed to kill his brother, which prompted their mother, Rebekah, to send Jacob on the road to stay with her brother, Laban, in Haran until Esau cooled down (see Gen. 27:42–43).

So there was Jacob, escaping from the wrath of his family when God shared a dream of his divine destiny. While sleeping, Jacob dreamed of stairs reaching from earth to heaven, with angels going up and down its steps. At the top stood God, who told Jacob that he would become the father of a nation with countless descendants (see Gen. 28:13–14). Then the Lord blessed him: "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you," (Gen. 28:15).

No matter how badly Jacob had blown it back home or how he

would blow it again, he had a God-given dream to realize. Jacob knew he could let go of his past because God had revealed his future. Climbing the ladder to his dreams would make stretching for each rung worth it.

When you lived in your past without Christ, you didn't have a dream—only an illusion. Running in place, stuck on a treadmill of your own making, you didn't plow with perseverance but dug a rut that grew deeper the more you relied on your power instead of God's. But in Christ, your nightmare is replaced with God's dream for your life.

Once the heavenly ladder of your dreams appears before you, it changes your life. Because you're no longer where you used to be—you are on your way up! You and your family can now glimpse heaven coming down. When God gives you His dream for your life, nothing can stop you from ascending toward higher places. Your climb will not be easy, but it will lead to things you have never seen or even imagined.

Others may treat you differently because dreamers are dangerous. Jacob discovered this as he dealt with his brother, his uncle, his wives and his children. Joseph, Jacob's youngest and favorite son, learned the hard way that your dreams can make others jealous.

But when you faithfully steward all God gives you, your dreams can also save you. Joseph was summoned from prison, where he landed after being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. Because of Joseph's gifts as a dreamer, he not only explained what Pharaoh's dreams meant, but he became second-in-command of all of Egypt.

Another Joseph was also a dreamer, a carpenter from Nazareth engaged to a young virgin named Mary. When God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, Joseph planned to do the honorable thing and discreetly call off their engagement. But he received a message from God in a dream instructing him to honor his

pledge to Mary and to proceed with their marriage. Later, after Mary had given birth to Christ in a stable in Bethlehem, Joseph was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt to escape danger from King Herod.

God has always used dreams and dreamers to accomplish His purposes—and He still does! His Word tells us, “‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams,’” (Acts 2:17). This promise reminds us that we dream not only for ourselves but also for our children, community and nation.

This Christmas, follow the example of Joseph on that first Christmas and all the brave people of God who came before him. Courageously follow the dreams God has placed in your heart. As God fulfills your dreams, you will discover new ones carrying you into His glorious future! {eo}

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