

This Is What Happens When a City Obeys Psalm 33:12

If you listen to my podcast or follow Bethel Church you probably know that lately God has been speaking to me about Redding, the city I call home. I have a fire burning in my heart to see my city become a noble city, and I believe that this is something God wants to do on the whole earth! In Jeremiah 29:7 it says, "Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace."

If we want to prosper, we must pray that our cities prosper too. Whether you realize it or not, you are shaping your city, and your city is shaping you. So then, how do you want to shape your city? What words will you speak over your hometown? As you know, words create worlds. It's time we begin to take ownership, have a voice, and therefore a vision for our cities. Let's dream God-sized dreams for our land, serve wholeheartedly, and put action to our love for the places we call home.

Here are 10 signs of a noble city. Meditate on them, hold them in your heart and dream about what this could look like in your city:

1. The city is safe. You are not worried about your children being harmed or your home being broken into. When someone does commit a crime, they are brought to justice swiftly.
2. The city is prosperous. Industry is thriving, and there are plenty of well-paying jobs for everyone who wants to work. Therefore, unemployment is low and there is enough tax money to pay for all the necessary services.
3. The educational institutions are excellent. They are training and equipping students in both life skills and

occupational opportunities.

4. There is a positive spiritual climate in the community led by many healthy churches.
5. The morale of the city is high. People have a positive outlook on life and they are generally happy.
6. The medical community is well-equipped and staffed to help bring physical wholeness to people.
7. There is healthy recreation and entertainment in the community.
8. The government of the city is honest, forward thinking, and wise.
9. The city has a noble identity and purpose.
10. The poor and homeless are well taken care of.

A Great City Serves All of Its Citizens Well

I want to camp out on a point here that I think is so important, both in Redding and many other cities I have traveled to. Loving the poor, the broken, the helpless and the homeless is not only our responsibility, it's our privilege! Those that "have" may not want the "have nots" around, (and sometimes for really good reasons), but great cities are judged not by the lack of needy people in their community, but by their capacity and compassion to care for them. A great community adopts their less fortunate, takes ownership of all its citizens, and embraces them as valuable human beings. In fact, the greatest measure of a community is in how they treat powerless people who have no recourse. Remember, that all of us who live long enough will most likely rely on others to help us in our later years. We do not have the right or the responsibility to hide our broken and poor people away from society so that the middle class and the wealthy are not inconvenienced by their mere presence. People who find themselves in this condition are not the responsibility of a few city council members, nor are they the responsibility of a couple of specialized ministries. They are in fact, the responsibility of all the citizens of our community! The truth

is (like it or not), we are our brother's keeper. As citizens who want their city to be noble, we must do our best to meet the real root needs of these hurting people in a way that gives them a hand up, not just a hand out, understanding that some people simply don't have the capacity to help themselves.

Whether it's caring for the poor and needy, or starting a business or something else completely, I want to encourage you today to write down one dream in your heart for the city you live in (which, by the way, I'd love to hear in the comments). And if you don't yet have a dream for what could happen in your city, ask God for one. I know He will speak to you about the plans, hope and future He has for the land you call home.

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