

God Time Day 1: Don't Follow Your Dreams, Follow God



This "Fake News" series is about things we are told, and often believe, that are not true. We began last week by looking at the lie, "I am a good person." This week, we look at yet another lie.

We have all heard some saying related to this, "Follow your dreams." You may have been told, "You can be anything you want if you just work hard and pursue your dreams." It sounds nice when you're a child. Who hasn't dreamed about being a famous singer or sports star, only to discover that a lack of singing ability or physical talent is a rather large obstacle to overcome? (Ever watched American Idol auditions?)

But, while OUR dreams can be flawed, mistaken, or wrong, following GOD'S dreams for our lives is always a good idea.

Take the nation of Israel for example. The Hebrew people lived in Egypt for 400 years, the last 100 years as slaves. The people cried out to God for deliverance, and God answered. He unleashed plagues on Egypt, and the Hebrew people were set free. God blessed the people with miraculous assistance along their journey, and after a few months, they arrived at the land God promised to them.



But the land was occupied by giants.

Read Numbers 14:2-4.



² All the Israelites complained about Moses and Aaron, and the whole community told them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to die by the sword? Our wives and children will become plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴ So they said to one another, "Let's appoint a leader and go back to Egypt."



Here is the true news: Following God's will does not mean there will be no obstacles (giants) along the way. Write down two big obstacles you have encountered in your life.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

God Time Day 2: Giants and Growing Faith

Reread Numbers 14:2-4 from yesterday.



So, the Hebrew people are led out of slavery in Egypt, struggle through the desert, see miracles of all types along the way, and when they arrive at the Promised Land, they give up. Sounds silly, but the truth is that many of us do this all the time. We face trials of all kinds, but the moment we encounter an obstacle that seems too big to overcome, we want to escape back to our former life. After all, it may not be good or healthy, but at least it is familiar.



Read James 1:2-4.

² Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

Underline the word "trials."

Circle the word "joy."



According to verse 3, what does "the testing of your faith" produce?

Too often, people ask the question, "Why does God let bad things happen to me?" Unfortunately, the question is flawed. There are times when things we experience in life may be painful, uncomfortable, and possibly require a great deal of effort to go through, but that doesn't mean that the experience is "bad."

As we go through life, we are going to experience trials and hardships of all kinds. If we spend our time and energy hiding away from or avoiding these experiences, then whenever we encounter an obstacle that cannot be avoided, our faith will be too weak to carry us through.



Share with someone about a struggle you've experienced that ended up deepening your faith and trust in God.

WEEK 2: FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS TO HAPPINESS

God Time Day 3: Faith Leads to the Promised Land



After that first incident at the Promised Land (reread Numbers 14:2-4 from Day 1 as a reminder of the first attempt to enter the land), the Hebrew people wandered in the desert for 40 years. An entire generation has died off, and with Joshua in charge, God is now leading the people back into the Promised Land a second time. He gives the people these instructions.



Read Joshua 1:6-7.

⁶ *“Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their ancestors to give them as an inheritance. ⁷ Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go.*

Underline both times it says to be *“strong and courageous.”*



Share with someone today about a time when you trusted God and experienced a blessing for it.

God Time Day 4: Pursue God to His Promised Land



There are people who will tell you that if you are faithful to God, He will bless you with whatever you want. Fake News or truth?



Read Matthew 6:33-34.

³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. ³⁴ Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Underline what we are supposed to seek in verse 33.

Seeking first God’s kingdom and righteousness means that our desires and dreams will be for God’s will to come true in our life.



The truth is, if you are faithful to God, He will bless you with whatever you want, because what you want is what He wants: more of His kingdom and righteousness.

God Time Day 5: Four Practical Ways to Follow God



God calls us into a relationship with Him. That relationship is intended for God to be our Lord and for us to follow Him. Therefore, troubles come when we pursue our dreams and then expect God to follow our lead by flexing His divine muscles to give us what we want.

Here are four practical steps you can take to help you follow God’s will and pursue His desires:

1) **Look to God First:** Reread Matthew 6:33 from Day 4.

Begin by asking God to reveal His will to you and trust that He will answer. While you wait, give Him your best and trust that He will use your efforts for His purposes.

2) **Trust In This Moment:** Reread Matthew 6:34 from Day 4.

We are going to experience ups and downs in life. Too often we make plans for some distant, imagined future only to be filled with anxiety when life does not go according to our plan. Even if you don’t know how, simply trust and know that God is in control and will guide you as you need.

3) **Know Who You Are:**

Psalm 139:14. *I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well.*

God has given you gifts, talents, abilities, and experiences. Trust God use them for His kingdom. Take the Spiritual Gifts Survey!



and

4) **Go When He Says Go** (or Stop When He Says Stop):

Listen intently to God’s voice and be prepared to respond and adjust when you hear it.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*