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**BRIAN HOUSTON**

# THERE IS MORE

**WHEN THE WORLD  
SAYS YOU CAN'T,  
GOD SAYS YOU CAN**

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“If you’ve ever felt that you’ve been created for something greater, pastor Brian Houston’s new book, *There Is More*, is exactly what you need. Packed with spiritual truth, deep insights, and practical wisdom, this book reveals how your future can hold more than you ever thought possible. Read *There Is More* and prepare for God to build your faith, stretch your mind, and enlarge your perspective of what He wants to do through you.”

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“There couldn’t be a more timely or needed book. In these confusing days, we need to be stretched where our thinking is limited, expanded where our dreams are small, and reminded that our God is not a God of

confusion. In Brian Houston's *There Is More*, we are encouraged to hold tight to that truth, believing that His peace, power, and light abound in even the darkest of times and that through us He can and will do immeasurably more than we can ever imagine."

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of LightWorkers Media

"Brian Houston is an exceptional leader—God loving, Jesus focused, Holy Spirit anointed, authentic, credible, and pioneering. *There Is More* is a treasure trove of inspiring visionary teaching and leadership insights, combined with fascinating anecdotes and his own powerful testimony. I hope you will enjoy this book as much as I did."

—NICKY GUMBEL, vicar of HTB Church, London

"Brian's approach in explaining how to seek God, walk by faith, dream big, and trust Him completely is very effective. I believe many will experience more of God's destiny in their lives through the inspiration he shares."

—JOYCE MEYER, Bible teacher and best-selling author

"I respect and admire Pastor Brian so much that when my own dad and pastor was valiantly fighting cancer, it felt only natural to me that Pastor Brian was the kind of father, husband, and pastor I could look to for leadership in these next seasons of my life. I literally began to call him "my pastor," and the rest, as they say, is history. When I read *There Is More*, I noticed that the character of God has spurred Pastor Brian on to desire more of Him, to learn more about Him, to follow His hand with great faith, and to live with an expectation of His goodness in all circumstances. This hunger for more is sincere and deep and very real; not for things but

for a vibrant relationship with his God. Not because he is a pastor, or a husband, or a father, but because he is first a follower of Jesus. It's clear from these pages that Pastor Brian actively cultivates this beautiful appetite for more of God. And now he whets all of our appetites as well."

—JUDAH SMITH, lead pastor of Churchome.org and best-selling author of *Jesus Is* \_\_\_\_\_.

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## THERE IS MORE

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To the wonderful people who have loved me through the highs and lows of my best and worst seasons, none more so than Bobbie and our beautiful extended family, thank you for doing the journey.

To the long-serving board and elders of Hillsong Church, you have led the way and faithfully stood alongside us, always seeking the will of God. I am eternally grateful to each and every one of you.

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## Introduction

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# Exceeding, Abundant, and Above

Please, sir, I want some more.”\* These famous words of a starving Oliver Twist have undoubtedly echoed in the hearts and minds of millions of people who also long to have just a little bit more. Perhaps you long for more time, more resources, more space. Maybe you simply need to find a bit more energy and motivation to continue along the path you currently find yourself on, or maybe you have a dream in your heart that continues to evade you. Maybe you’re walking in your calling but still find yourself asking, *What is this all about? Should I be doing more with my life?*

The narrative of this book is not about selfishness and greed. It’s not about acquiring more, about avarice and indulgence. It’s not even an essay on satisfaction and self-fulfillment. It’s about calling—God’s amazing plans for your life and the sufficiency of His grace in superseding your wildest dreams, all for a purpose bigger than you are.

Have you ever stopped to wonder what God’s response would be to

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\* Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, in *Works of Charles Dickens, Household Edition* (New York: Sheldon, 1864), 34.

your heart's cry for more? It is my firm belief that, unlike Mr. Bumble (the tyrannical caretaker of the orphanage in Charles Dickens's classic novel), the Savior of the universe would bend down and in the most caring of manners say, "More what? And how much more? My supply is unending. My mercy is limitless. My grace is more than you need."

You see, the more that God wants for your life is beyond comprehension. It's not limited to space and time, not able to be measured with earthly devices or human minds. Ephesians 3:20–21 tells us plainly, "God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us" (MSG). Other translations put it this way: He can "do above and beyond" (HCSB) or "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Have you ever stopped to think about that? God can do *anything*. And not just a little bit more than you have already asked for or dreamed of. *Far* more.

What are your wildest dreams? Your craziest ideas, deepest longings, and grandest plans—the things you've not dared tell anyone and barely allowed your soul to imagine? Because it is exactly that dream, that vision, those grand plans of yours that I'm telling you aren't enough. What a small thinker you are! All of heaven is looking down upon you, shaking their heads, and saying, "Is that *all*?! Is that all he wants? Is that all she can dream of?"

Allow me to stretch your thinking here, dear reader, because we serve the ultimate Big Thinker. No plans of yours even *compare* to His. Your heart's cry for more has been answered with a chuckle and a grin from a Father's heart that takes what you see and expands it into something you can't see.

God can take every limitation that has been put on your life—by yourself or by others—and expand your heart and purpose in a way that is *way* bigger, *way* higher, *way* more effective than anything you could imagine.

I’ve seen it in my own life. I can testify to His faithfulness when it comes to more—more than I wanted, more than I dreamed, more than I ever thought I would need. I’m not speaking of simple material matters, of monetary things or things that can be counted or valued by earthly standards. I’ve watched as God has exceeded the dreams in my heart, the visions I’ve had for my own life and the lives of my family and those closest to me. I’ve experienced the “much more” favor of God when it comes to my marriage, leadership, children, and friendships.

For many years, while standing in one of our Hillsong Church auditoriums or by the side of the stage at one of our annual conferences, people have asked me, “Could you see all this when you started?” You know, I have always been a determined visionary, but in my wildest dreams I could not have imagined all God has done and is doing. I couldn’t have planned it, executed it, or dreamed of the days we are living in now. And I’ve stopped trying to. You can never out-dream God.

I’ve learned to trust God with the secret desires of my heart—the things I don’t know that I need and the things I thought I didn’t need. Many a time, I’ve discovered there is more to the valleys I walked through than simply the pain I experienced. There is more to learn in storms than what my eyes were fixed on in the natural. There is more purpose to my provision than simply my own fulfillment and enjoyment—so much more.

In fact, in the sentences preceding the glorious verse I already quoted (Ephesians 3:20–21), we are given a glimpse into the reason for our more:

I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (verses 14–21)

Filled with all the fullness of God. Glory to all generations.

This book is about exactly that: the character and nature of the God we serve and His desire to see each and every one of us experience that Ephesians 3 life—His desire to see us filled to overflowing with every good, wonderful, and perfect gift from Him, purposed to build the church, expand the kingdom, and echo His name throughout the generations. The following chapters unfold the purpose of our more, the source of our more, and the understanding that more is less about us, more about others, and all about Him. But first you need to understand that our heavenly Father sees more in you than you could ever see in yourself.

My prayer is that you will turn each of these pages and discover something new within the ancient text scattered throughout. I hope that regardless of the prayers you have prayed, the triumphs you've celebrated, the failures you've lived or perceived, you will come to understand that

there is more grace, goodness, mercy, kindness, love, forgiveness, and favor waiting in your future. God's will for your life—heaven's perfect purpose—is indeed beyond your wildest dreams. And if you have ever asked for more and, like *Oliver Twist*, been met by angry words or an indifferent spirit, or if you've ever had your motives questioned or been unjustly assailed, I pray that through my personal experiences and revelation, you will find healing as you discover a little bit more about the true character of our giving God and His desires for your life.

There is always more to uncover—more to discover about who He is and who He says you are. There is more ahead of you than you've allowed yourself to dream or allowed yourself to believe. There is more room in your life for the things of God and the people of God than you even thought possible—more space to be made for God to make His presence known in and through you. And if for some reason you've stopped dreaming big things for your life, stopped imagining that your life is a story to tell or a legacy to be remembered, then this book is a good place to start again.

# Dreams and Destiny

Seventeen. What did you dream about when you were seventeen? Did you dare to dream? Were you allowed to dream? Were you laughed at for your dreams? Perhaps family or peers were threatened by your dreams. Or are you the product of an environment where you were encouraged to think big and dream impossible dreams? And if you are not yet seventeen or are well beyond seventeen, what grand things do you dream about now?

I was a dreamer. You see, I came from a land that was then said to have three million people and seventy million sheep. That's great if your life's grand ambition is making woolen jumpers or Roquefort cheese, but it's not necessarily a launching pad for dreaming of building anything with worldwide influence and impact. Interestingly, this small land in the Southern Ocean has produced (among many other fine endeavors) the first man to climb Mount Everest and the first man to split the atom. It is home to the famous landscape displayed in the splendor of the Lord of the Rings movies, as well as many world-renowned entertainers, actors, athletes, and businesspeople. Plus of course it boasts the world's most successful and famed rugby team, the New Zealand All Blacks. So

maybe, just maybe, humble beginnings are the perfect soil for a blossoming and fruitful life.

In the 1960s, my family lived in a state house, which was a government-owned, timber-lined dwelling that stood like a sullen soldier among all the other similar houses in Taita, Lower Hutt, New Zealand. It was a working-class suburb, with all the associated social problems, just outside Wellington.

Nothing in particular stood out about me as a child or teenager. I found it impossible to concentrate in school, and my long legs were more of a hindrance than a help when it came to the sporting field.

I have vivid memories of my journey home from Hutt Valley High School. I began my daily walk from the train station onto High Street before turning left past the Tocker Street Dairy, our local convenience store, where, if I had any change, I would stop to buy hokey-pokey ice cream (vanilla ice cream with small bits of honeycomb toffee throughout). Then I would veer right onto Reynolds Street, past Pearce Crescent, Molesworth Street, and Compton Crescent, before finally turning into Nash Street, and I would walk past three houses before arriving home at the corner of Nash Street and Taita Drive. And day after day, on that repetitious walk home, my young, shy, but adventurous mind used to dream and dream and dream. It was a dream that always seemed to follow a similar narrative.

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to someday serve Jesus and preach the gospel. In fact, I cannot remember a time when that wasn't what I dreamed of doing. I dreamed in the school classroom, I dreamed on that journey home, and I dreamed while sitting in church twice on a Sunday, every Sunday throughout my childhood.

It was then that I imagined speaking to big crowds or traveling the

world, leading thousands of people to Jesus Christ and maybe one day building a great church. I would also wonder who my wife would be, what she would look like, where she was, and what she was doing at that very moment. And I dreamed that maybe I would meet her—that one person who would want to pursue this dream with me.

Fast-forward forty-plus years, and I have found myself on a much longer journey than that childhood walk home from the train station. It's been this ongoing adventure called life, in which this small-town day-dreamer has found himself living in the realization of those dreams and in the wonder of even bigger ones.

## Dare to Dream

As I mentioned, concentration was never my strong point. I distinctly remember that the comments of my schoolteachers followed a theme: “Brian doesn’t listen”; “Brian could do so much better if he didn’t day-dream”; “Brian procrastinates.”

In the 1960s, our church congregation was about five hundred to six hundred people. At the time, it was possibly the largest church in the country, but it was still not an especially large group. Looking back now, I realize that if I had shared my wide-eyed, wonderful, and global dreams out loud, many would have politely laughed or perhaps shared a patronizing smile with other adults nearby. For a young pastor’s son from a low-income neighborhood in an astoundingly beautiful land of millions of sheep, what outrageous dreams they were! Although I never got the feeling that anyone had high expectations about my future, I just kept on dreaming anyway.

When I was seventeen years old, I held eleven different jobs to raise



enough money to go to Bible college. That's too many jobs to name, but not one of them was my passion. Yet I worked hard because I was preparing and planning for the things I was passionate about. So, despite the odds against me and the jobs I didn't want, I never lost sight of the dreams in my heart.

I believe that the ability to dream is one of God's greatest gifts. So let me ask you again, what do you dream about? Do you dream of things far bigger than you are? I believe it was those wild dreams of mine as a boy that led me to Bible college and set me on the path I find myself on today.

## The Bigger the Better

Have you ever heard the saying "If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time"? Well, in the same way, if you aim at a target, you might not hit the bull's-eye, but at least you'll get as close as you can. Even if your dreams become only 80 percent real, it's still better than nothing at all!

The truth is, you *should* shoot for the moon. God gave you the ability to dream, to create, and to imagine endless possibilities. In many ways, dreaming is just like faith, and the size of your dream can be in direct correlation to your belief in what God can achieve. In my opinion, if you're dreaming about something you can do on your own, you're dreaming too small! God-sized dreams are dreams that can be done only when you put your faith in the Creator, the One who knows the beginning from the end and who desires your future to be filled with hope and abundance. So much potential perishes because of the lack of an audacious dream.

So, what did your life look like when you were seventeen? What was it that made you drift off from the present and dream about the future?

Are you still dreaming now? Perhaps you didn't dream of anything outrageous or were never prone to believe for something outside your current reality, but I believe that everyone should have a dream—a dream bigger than he is and one that is impossible to fulfill in an individual's own strength. Dreams come in varied forms. You can consciously dream by having aspirations for your future, and you can physically dream through visions in your sleep. I believe that God can work through and speak to us in both ways. Dreaming is important, as your dreams can become your destiny. So if you don't have a dream, you are limiting your destiny.

I dare you to dream big, scary, and outrageous dreams—the kind that would make other people laugh if only they knew. The Bible tells us about a seventeen-year-old dreamer exactly like that. This young man dreamed an outrageous dream, and for him, that dream was only the beginning.

## The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars

The young dreamer I'm talking about is, of course, Joseph. Here is the story of his dream:

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.” (Genesis 37:1–11, ESV)

Sheaves of grain bowing down to him, and even the sun, the moon, and the stars! From where Joseph sat, tending sheep in the land of Canaan, his dreams looked absurd. Talk about shooting for the moon—he imagined that even the moon would be within his grasp!

When I dreamed as a child about traveling to places I had learned about in school, there was nothing in the natural that made these dreams look possible. I would take a pen and doodle on the back of my school-books pictures of such places as Paris, with its outdoor cafés, poodles, and endless baguettes. I dreamed about London, with its unique black cabs, double-decker buses, and destinations I knew from our family Mo-

nopoly board, such as Fleet Street, Coventry Street, Park Lane, and Mayfair. And I was always fascinated by bigger places, such as Australia or other countries that then seemed so far away. The United States of America and everything it offered seemed like another world back then. Today those dreams have become so much a part of my life that I hardly think about the fact that they were once a dream.

How often do you believe for the impossible?

About twenty years ago, I spent an afternoon in my office with a blank piece of paper in front of me and wrote down the words “The Church That I See.” Quite miraculously, the amazing thing is that thirty years on, in many ways, those words I wrote down are reflective of the church we now lead. But it wasn’t always that way.

In 1983, Hillsong Church was a gathering of less than one hundred people in a tiny school hall. It was a passionate, vibrant, young community of believers, along with a few almost believers and even nonbelievers, putting out chairs, sweeping the floor, and praying in a broom closet before and after services each Sunday. The “stage” was a road case, and the quality of the band was modest at best. Hillsong Church looks very different now, but many of the values that we built on are the same today.

Hillsong has always been a worshipping church. Before there was Hillsong UNITED, before there was Hillsong Young & Free, before there was “Shout to the Lord,” “Mighty to Save,” or “Oceans,” there was worship. Passionate worship. It wasn’t always polished, there weren’t always lights, and in those early years, there wasn’t even a stage, but we worshipped. We sang and we began to take baby steps in writing songs that resounded in the hearts of the people in our community. Sure, the piano had one or two notes that didn’t work and was out of tune, and the drummer didn’t keep a steady beat. Jack, our smiling senior accordion

player and his wife, Elaine, not only were a part of the band but also looked after the tiny group of kids in our children's ministry, including our own four-year-old and eighteen-month-old sons. Those were rough, raw, pioneering days, but the fruit of the labor of many faithful people early on began to give way to opportunities beyond our wildest dreams.

It was on that piece of paper, more than two decades ago, that I wrote these words: "I see a church whose heartfelt praise and worship touches heaven and changes earth—worship that influences the praises of people throughout the earth, exalting Christ with powerful songs of faith and hope."

Only one year before I wrote that, in 1992, the very first live Hillsong album was released: *The Power of Your Love*. But even before that, we recorded our first musical effort, *Spirit and Truth*, in a tiny home studio. I was so proud of that little collection of original songs that, when I had the chance as a pastor to speak at a citywide gathering of hundreds of ministers (almost all older, wiser, and more seasoned than I was), I made them first listen to some of the songs. I can still see the blank stares sending a clear message that no one in the room was anywhere near as excited about this as I was. But the idea of recording an album simply came from our passion to worship God in our local church, along with the belief that our local church was called to resource other local churches with words and music that would glorify our worthy God. At the time, we never could have imagined that our albums would be sung throughout the earth, but we had a belief that God had called us to do something with what was in our hands and that, as we were faithful, He would also be faithful.

Now, more than ninety albums later, God is growing and stretching and changing the story of Hillsong Worship. But it was long before those

first albums that the songs of God and the sound of our house were established as a priority, an arrowhead, and a cornerstone of who we are—all because of a God-breathed dream.

The Bible tells us in Zechariah 4:10, “Do not despise these small beginnings” (NLT). Whatever it is God has entrusted into your hand—your family, your career, your ministry, or whatever—don’t count it as insignificant. Whatever dreams are in your heart and still seem like a world away, don’t be discouraged! I believe that in the eyes of God and with His leading, wisdom, favor, and provision, if you hold fast to that dream He has placed in your heart, you, like Joseph, will see it come to pass.

## Dream Killers

Among the youngest of the sons in his family, Joseph probably took his fair share of mocking and rough-ups from his older brothers. Yet when Joseph dreamed of his mother, father, and brothers bowing down to him, he didn’t hesitate to share with them the God-sized dream. It had the predictable effect: it enraged his family.

Joseph’s brothers waited for their chance to get back at him. When they were out with the flocks one time and Joseph came to them, they knew their chance had come. “They saw him in the distance, and before he had reached them, they plotted to kill him. They said to one another, ‘Here comes that dreamer! Come on, let’s kill him and throw him into one of the pits. We can say that a vicious animal ate him. Then we’ll see what becomes of his dreams!’” (Genesis 37:18–20, HCSB).

Because of Joseph’s dream, his brothers tried to kill him. He was captured, thrown in a pit, and sold into slavery. Talk about dream killers!

But Joseph didn’t stop dreaming.

Have you ever had a dream die? Have you ever shared your dream with anyone? Perhaps you have and you've been mocked for it. Maybe when you finally opened your mouth to share about the impossible longings in your heart, you were met with laughter or cynicism or hurt by the words spoken to you by the people you love.

Dreaming can be a lonely place. If you're going to dream things that will set you apart, sometimes the people who are closest to you and know you best will be the very ones who are threatened by the trajectory of your life and will oppose you, try to squash your dreams, and bring you down to size. So, if you are going to be a dreamer, understand that it can be a lonely road. You are going to need to hold fast to your convictions and hold firm to the Word of God and the desires of your heart, despite the criticism or accolades you receive along the way.

What it comes down to is that you have an enemy who would love to kill your dream with all sorts of "realities," such as opposition or lack of resources. Often the negative voices of other people, or even the wrong ambition in your own heart, can suffocate your dreams. Sometimes along the path toward your dreams, you have to make choices and sacrifices that feel like backward movement instead of forward motion.

When I married Bobbie, I told her, "Sweetheart, we might never own our own home or have a new car or a lot of money, but we will serve Jesus together." For the first year of our marriage, to be volunteer youth pastors in a small suburban church in South Auckland (near where Bobbie grew up), we both worked multiple jobs. Bobbie was a secretary in a pharmaceutical company, and I was in sales. I had after-hours jobs cleaning the bathrooms in an automobile factory and stocking shelves in a supermarket—all because we were passionate to serve God. And we de-

sired to, when the time was right, build a local church that was enjoyable and warm and filled with people who were influential in their own spheres. In many ways it wasn't easy as we gave our all in the local church, but it was the very sacrifices that we made then that enabled us to keep dreaming now, confident in a God who always provides. We could have let the setbacks take us off course, but we held fast to the vision we had for our lives.

I don't know about you, but I don't want to just live on a dream I had way back in the past. I want to keep dreaming new dreams. Being a dreamer isn't past tense; it is an ongoing part of life! Just like Joseph of old, dreamers never stop dreaming. Despite the obstacles put in front of them, the limitations imposed on them, or the dream killers that get in the way, dreamers just keep on dreaming!

## Surrounded by Dreamers

In order to keep dreaming, you need to surround yourself with other dreamers. Find people who will walk alongside you and remind you of your dream when setbacks make you want to forget. Keep company with people who inspire you to dream and breathe encouragement into your vision—people who will keep you on course.

Winston Churchill, the Nobel Prize-winning, twice-elected wartime prime minister of the United Kingdom, wasn't always as well regarded as he is today. In fact, he struggled in school and failed the sixth grade. Later, he faced many years of political failures until he finally became the prime minister at the ripe old age of sixty-five. Churchill was a dreamer—he dreamed of making a difference in his nation. And when he finally got



elected to office, he credited his wife of almost thirty-two years for continuously dreaming along with him and believing in him, despite his failures and the financial hardship and public ridicule they endured. Clementine Churchill is not often spoken of, but history may never have recorded her husband's achievements without her support of his dreams.

Who is cheering you on? Who is offering you consolation in the form of encouragement while your dreams are yet to be realized?

Being around other dreamers is a catalyst for dreaming bigger. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (KJV) or "cast off restraint" (NIVII). The New Living Translation says they "run wild." The Message translates it like this:

If people can't see what God is doing,  
they stumble all over themselves;  
But when they attend to what he reveals,  
they are most blessed.

A dream will indeed cause you to sacrifice and make the hard choices, but perhaps more importantly, it will also cause you to choose your friends wisely. Who are you dreaming alongside?

## Determined to Succeed

Nobody begins to pursue a dream believing that it will fail. Sounds simple, right? But a lot of people don't necessarily dream to succeed; they dream to function and survive but don't dream of success, perhaps because it feels too indulgent.

Let me assure you there is nothing wrong with success. The God

who wants to give you abundantly above all you could ask or think is the same God who wants to see you succeed!

Joseph's dream was a dream of success, and it came to pass. Years after Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt, this happened:

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "... You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:39–43)

God isn't going to give you a dream of mediocrity. Believe it or not, *success* is a biblical word! See what the Lord said to Joshua when he took charge of the nation of Israel:

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:7–8)

*Good success.*

Define success however you like, but the way God defines it is different than the way the world does. It's not about acquisition or self-indulgence. Success in the kingdom of God is so often about service.

## Good Success Versus Bad Success

Most people have the will to *live*; fewer people have the will to *succeed*, because of the personal cost involved; still fewer people have the will to *serve*. The point of serving God is that we live to succeed and we succeed to serve.

When you live with a dream in your heart and with humility to serve, you *really* live. When your dreams and your success are centered on serving the cause of Christ and those around you, you become part of the 1 percent. Who is the 1 percent? The group of once-in-a-generation type of leaders who cause others to sit up and take notice. The people who, regardless of their inhibitions and limitations, are determined to live out their dreams and fulfill their destinies. People who believe deep down that they are called to do something important with their lives.

Have you ever been camping? In an arid and sunburned country like Australia, sleeping under the stars means getting well acquainted with the dust of the ground. Life can be like that. Looking up at the sky, we can dream great things. It's like setting out on a camping trip, imagining the beautiful starry nights, sleeping by a campfire, roasting marshmallows, and grilling your freshly caught fish. But the realities of living out that experience also mean we must find the tent, pack the car, drive to the destination, pitch the tent, sweep out the dirt, swat the flies, spray the

bug repellent, and manage without the conveniences of home—all so we position ourselves to experience that dream. Then when the dream becomes real and we are enjoying the magnificent starry night, it seems all the sweeter because the value of our sacrifice and diligence is now in perspective. “Oh, this was *so* worth it!”

So what happens when ordinary people begin to serve—to live their lives with a purpose in mind and focus on making it happen? The dust of the ground is the domain of servants, while the stars of the sky are the realms of kings. When we have servant hearts, it makes us perfect fits for greatness and impossibilities realized, for blessings promised and for the Word of God to work in our lives.

Jesus said, “Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28).

We should never underestimate what God can do with the dreams in our hearts and the dust of the ground. I don’t know what we’d do with a rib—maybe cook it up or give it to the dog—but God took a rib and made something of exquisite beauty: woman (see Genesis 2:22). He began with the dust, but He didn’t leave things there. We serve an amazing God!

If you have a dream in your heart, then you need to be a sower. A sower works the ground, and the process of sowing and reaping is a principle of the ground. Reaping what you sow is not just an Old Testament idea or a New Testament idea; it’s an eternal principle, a biblical promise. If you sow in good ground, you will reap a harvest. In other words, what will get you to your dream—what you sow—is what will keep your

dream thriving. Essentially, servants live for something far greater than themselves. Servants understand the value of their contribution in building something great.

Many years ago, when my television ministry was a very simple setup in a makeshift studio out behind one of our office buildings, a young boy used to volunteer each week to make coffee, run errands, and serve the producer and small crew of people who made it happen. When he was just fourteen years of age, his mum would drop him off each week, and with a pure heart and a spirit to learn, he simply hung around the studios taking in the wonder of film and television and doing whatever was needed, no matter how big or small.

Ten years into the future, and the dream in this boy's heart began to take shape as his talents made a way for him onto the set, and eventually he became the director of one of Australia's longest-running and most-watched television series. It was on the set of this show that he met his wife, one of the lead actresses in the program and also a believer in Christ. However, it was never his aspiration to climb the ladder of corporate success in Hollywood. He always kept a secret longing in his heart to attach his obvious talents to the kingdom of God, and wherever possible he continued to serve the vision of Hillsong through consultation and volunteering.

Today Ben Field is the head of our entire Hillsong film and television department and the creative genius behind all the content on Hillsong Channel. Week in and week out, he manages a growing staff of producers, directors, production teams, writers, and editors who are creating cutting-edge media for our church and global audiences. His passion for the church, willingness to serve, and expertise in his field have set him up

to be a great blessing to Bobbie and me and to take us forward in the world of television and other media in a way we never imagined.

Impossibilities are made possible through our daily choices.

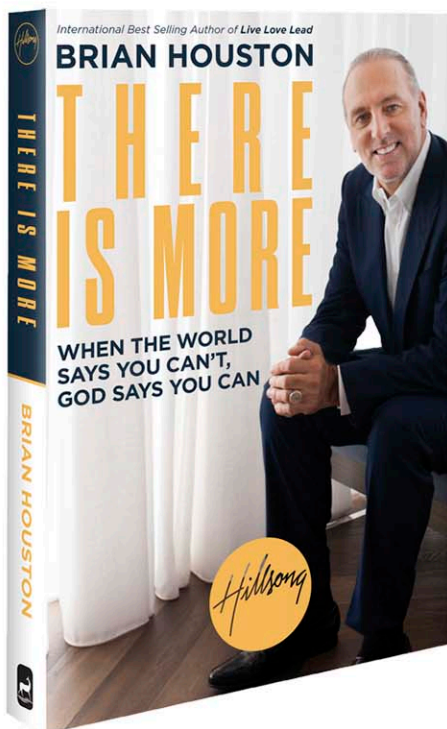
The Word of God says it plainly: if you want to be great, serve. It's how Jesus ministered on earth, with service being the quality that set Him apart from all others. Never underestimate the power of servant leadership. Remember, in the kingdom of God, the way up is down. The road to reaching the lofty heights of our dreams and visions for the future begins on the dusty ground of servanthood. And the act of becoming a servant will move you from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

Your dreams are nothing compared to God's dreams for you. There is more to your life than what you can even imagine, so why not dare to dream big?

The Bible goes on to tell us that not only did Joseph's dreams come to fruition, but his unexpected position and power in Egypt brought safety and care to his family and the nation. Your destiny is abundantly above all you could ask or imagine; your success, much like Joseph's, was planned and dreamed for even before the foundations of the earth. Just as Joseph's destiny ultimately took him to a place of great influence and authority, so too can your future bring blessing into your life and positively affect the lives of those around you. For us as believers, our success is never just for ourselves, and so often it simply starts with a dream.

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