DREAM BIG

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SUMMER STUDY GUIDE

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Welcome!

**YOU’RE HERE BECAUSE YOU’VE GOT A LOT OF DREAMS IN YOU.** Maybe they haven’t taken any shape yet; they’re just a big blob of ideas. Maybe you haven’t discovered them yet. That’s okay! The beginning of them are inside you. You’re busting with possibilities, gifts, and abilities that only you – the once-ever-in history you – can offer. Jesus invited you on this adventure called your life, and He did it so you could be fully alive and fully His.

You’re here because you want to become awake to yourself and your God-given purposes. You want to release amazing things into the world and are willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen. I’m really excited you’re going to figure out what’s next for you.

As you begin, remember: you are loved and accepted. One hundred percent. No qualifications. No prerequisites. You can’t be good enough, smart enough, or nice enough to be loved by God. He decided He would love you before you decided you were interested in loving Him back. You are some of His most creative work ever.

This study guide focuses on some fantastic passages in the Gospel of Matthew for reflection and guidance as we dream big together.

So grab your favorite pen and get ready to write. This is the good and hard work of understanding who you are and how God made you so you can unearth the ambitions that may have been sitting dormant in your heart. We’re going to move them from staying inside of you to impacting the world around you.

Let’s get started!

Blessings,

Valena Hoy
WEEK ONE – UNDERNEATH IT ALL

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 1:1-17

REFLECT
Who are the women in Jesus’ genealogy?

Why are they important? What stands out about them?

Who is important in your genealogy? Why?

Read Dream Big – Chapters 1-3

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

Picture some of the moments in your life when you’ve felt absolutely loved and accepted. Write or draw about them in detail here.
You’re probably doing a couple of things really well right now and are a hot mess in other areas of your life. Accept it. But don’t resign yourself to perpetually screwing up. You are in as much need of tremendous love and grace and kindness from God as we all are.

No matter what you do, God is love, and He loves and accepts you completely. So, embrace His unreasonable amount of grace and acceptance. And then get ready to throw all you’ve got into your ambitions. Acknowledge the reality. Personalize it. Repeat it. Respond to it and say how it impacts you.

If God answered every one of your prayers, would it change anybody’s life except your own? What do you pray for? How will you shape your prayers in the future?

Name a time that you failed miserably. What did you learn from it?

Who do you admire? What kinds of questions do you have for them?

Can you agree not to do what merely occupies, entertains and numbs you as you go through this study? Name two things that you will stop doing that merely occupy, entertain or numb you.

1.

2.
WEEK TWO – WHO ARE YOU?

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 3:13-17

REFLECT
Why did Jesus get baptized?

What happened after His baptism?

What did the voice of heaven say?

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

There is massive power in self-awareness.

If we can learn what the core motivations behind our actions are, we can figure out where they came from and take the action necessary to make progress forward.

Are there some recurring themes in your behavior and choices? For instance, do you tend to act out of fear or a sense there will never be enough?
Do you have a tendency to think you will never be enough?

Do you live life out of a fake bravado or think you have to always please others?

Take some time to explore why you do what you do. It’s okay if this takes more than a few minutes, especially if you’re asking yourself these questions for the first time. Take as much time as you need to express what is real, honest, and true about you. Record your observations below.

Imagine God saying this about you “This is my beloved child, whom I love; with him/her I am well pleased.” What feelings or ideas does these bring to the surface for you?

If someone asked, “who are you?” what would you say?
WEEK THREE – WHERE ARE YOU?

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 7:13-14

REFLECT
What is the wide gate? Who or what does it let in?

Where does the wide gate lead in your life?

What is the narrow gate? Who or what does it let in or keep out?

Where does the narrow gate lead in your life?

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

Figuring out WHERE you really are is a big part of discovering WHO you really are right now.

Be wise enough to stay optimistic while you’re getting clear on where you are in your life. Meanwhile, become more situationally aware of what’s going on within and around you. In other words, figure out where you are.
Remember, shame has one goal and one goal alone: to keep you cemented in a dark part while it hides a beautiful future from you.

We can’t get on the path toward our ambitions without figuring out where we are. Where you are today is simply the harbor from which your ship is about to sail. Cut loose the lines. The horizon is where you’re heading because it’s where your ambitions reside.

Remember, think biography, not geography. Are you confused about which major to choose? Do you feel stuck in your career choice but don’t know how to change it? Are you up to your eyeballs in debt? Are you happy in your marriage or other important relationships? Take some time to describe exactly where you are right now.

Think of a close friend who you can get honest with, then complete this statement: “I’m meeting __________________________ at Starbucks to tell them exactly where I am right now.” Then send the text or make the call to set it up.

DATE:___________________________________   TIME: ______________________
WEEK FOUR – WHAT DO YOU WANT?

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 8:5-13

REFLECT
What is happening in this story?

Why is the centurion an example of faith?

What are you learning about Jesus?

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

Your ambitions are worth all the attention you’re willing to give them.

The best engine to drive our ambitions is a strong sense of purpose. We need to replace what we’ve settled for with what we’ve been longing for. We need to find ambitions worthy of our time and the effort it will take to pursue them.

If you’re in it for the long haul and want to live a life steeped in purpose, a better long-term approach is to figure out who you want to be and let that inform what you do. Don’t settle for what you’re simply able to do; figure out what you were made to do, then do lots of that.

Take a look at what Jesus had on His list of ambitions and lift a few onto yours. His list wasn’t very long, but it changed the world forever. He was a master at choosing ambitions that were worth it.
Get this: Jesus’ ambition was you. It was everyone else He created too. He made us with eternity in mind, sure, but also for tomorrow and the next day and the next, filled with touching lives with incredible intentionality.

Identify what has captured your attention and what has distracted you. Fill your days with dozens of small, intentional acts of love. Take note of those ambitions you already have that Jesus also demonstrated and move them higher on your list.

Jesus wants you to gain more clarity on your faith, relationship, and what He uniquely made for you. He wants you to really see. Quit merely asking for think-er classes when Jesus has invited us to climb up on His shoulders for a better view.

**WHAT DO YOU WANT?**

So much of this book is about finding the right answers to this very question. We’re going to make a first attempt at creating a list of what you want.

- Do you want a bigger house?
- Do you want to make working the soup line a Christmas tradition?
- Do you want to hike the Pacific Crest Trail or finally get to Paris?
- Do you want to lose weight or reconcile with your dad?
- Do you want to get closer to Jesus or teach a Sunday School class?

It can be all this and more.

Your list will be totally unique to you, and it will probably get you pretty excited. That’s the point. Don’t worry about “editing” the list to make it look more noble or holy. Just be honest. Think about every single thing you’re dreaming about right now and get it on a list. Flip to the next page for space to get started. Make sure to capture everything.

Later on, we’ll work toward curating the list and arranging your dreams so they make a constellation of possibilities you can actually work toward. For now, just write it all down.

Have fun!
A LIST OF WHAT YOU WANT...

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WRITE A LETTER...

Now that you’ve started your list think about this: what if “future you” could write a letter to “current you” about all you’ve accomplished and experienced on this journey? What would that future you say to help and encourage the current you?

Take fifteen to twenty minutes to write that letter on the next page. Stuff it in an envelope, address it to yourself, and put a date on it that’s a few months into the future. Six months is a pretty good stretch. That’s the day you’re going to open and read the letter.
DEAR ME:
WEEK FIVE – WHAT DO YOU WANT?

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 9:9-13

REFLECT
What happens in this story?

Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?

What does this say about Jesus?

Read Dream Big – Chapters 7-8

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

When Jesus invited you on this adventure called your life, He did it so you could fulfill the ambitions He has for you – to be fully alive and fully His. He wants you to stare down your fears knowing He’s got your back and can handle anything that comes your way. It’s not as simple as this though. Often-times we compartmentalize our faith – it’s what we do in church or during a daily devotion we feel guilty for skipping.

On this path to discovering and living our most beautiful, lasting ambitions, you’re going to have to activate your faith in order to drive your life. You’re going to have to give it all to Him. Jesus is knocking on the door of your life because He wants the whole room, not to just have you take a safe look at Him through a peephole or the crack between the door and the crack you’re in.
God endowed each of us with something unique. The trick is to figure out what you think it is and how you’re going to get it in play.

Remember, we can’t be the new version of us if we’re stuck being an old version, and we’re going to need to change some things that have worked in our past in order to make way for our future. Cut those past capabilities and ambitions loose or put them in service to the new ambitions you’re chasing.

Because we’re meant to change, don’t resist it when a little change comes your way. Embrace it. Celebrate it. Keep up with it. Stop freaking out about it. This is your chance to show the world you really believe in what you’re doing.

Have you given Jesus the whole room or are you trying to cram Him in a corner? What do you need to get rid of in your life to make space for Jesus? How would your faith transform if you gave Him the space He wants to be the center of your life?

Imagine taking everything you pursue – good grades, a better job, a house in a different neighborhood, a boyfriend, whatever – and laying them out on the table. How are these things flowing into your life of faith? Now imagine taking those things one by one and deciding whether you should add them back to your faith and your life. Should you move something from the table to the garbage bin? What would you add back?

Use the table on the next page to map out your answers.
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One of the hardest things to believe about God is that He loves you completely and unconditionally. Do you have trouble with this? Is there anything lurking in your heart that says you have to change, do better, or do something better to earn God’s love? How would a complete and enduring belief in God’s love change your life and fuel your dreams?

What we do with our days will eventually become how we’re known and remembered. If you looked at everything on an average Tuesday, what would it say about your faith?

Fear is a part of all our lives. Even the most fearless among us have to stare it down and decide to act anyway. On a scale of one to ten — with one being “very little” and ten being “all the time” — how much does fear have a hold of your life?
Knowing your talents is a great starting point for thinking about your dream. Maybe you’re naturally friendly or optimistic. Maybe you are great at geometry or have a heart for homeless people. Things like this may not seem like “talents” as our culture defines them. They’re so innate to who you are that they just feel like second nature. But they are your talents.

Write down ten things about yourself that feel like your innate talents.

If you’re having trouble coming up with ten things, just ask a few people in your life what they think your talents are to give you some hints. My bet is that you’ll have a list a lot longer than 10 things.

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10.
WEEK SIX – REST AND BE AVAILABLE

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 12:1-14

REFLECT
What conflict arises in this story?

Read 1 Samuel 21:1-9. Why does David take the bread?

Why did Jesus take the bread?

Why did Jesus heal the man with the shriveled hand?

Who gets angry in these stories? Why?

Read Dream Big - Chapters 9-10

QUESTIONS & IDEAS
What would our lives look like if we were fully awake to them?
Take the next step. Don’t just look awake; come alive to who God has made you to be. Practice walking around fully awake to yourself. Take notes, sing songs, laugh a lot, smell the flowers, roll on the grass, write the letter, take the class, make the call. You’re not doing this just for fun; it’s one of your first steps as you wake up to some of your slumbering ambitions.

If you’re going to live fully awake and full of anticipation, you need to spot those areas in your current life where you’ve slipped into numbing routines that are putting you to sleep.

Remember to rest. Rest is wise. The path to your ambitions is not one long race; it’s a series of wind sprints that eventually covers the distance of a marathon. There’s a reason sprinters don’t break world records in five-thousand-meter-races. They stay focused and run their short race then rest before their next one.

Part of the process of realizing your ambitions is recognizing when you need a break. If a break is what you need, take one. It’s not just okay; it’s smart. Get as much rest as you need. You’ll know when it’s time to be fully awake and get back to work.

Do you live life half awake? Maybe you like routine so much that somewhere along the way you forgot the power of shaking things up a bit. Do you need to become more fully alive?

What stands out to you when you think about the miracles in the Bible? What if you believed that God had a miracle waiting for you, too? What would life look like if we peered around every corner, dug in every couch cushion, and looked under the bed to see how God has already been doing miracles for us? Write down a few things that have happened in your life that feel like God’s miracles for you.

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Anyone can fall into the trap of thinking that work equals progress. In some sense, I guess that’s true if you’re doing the right things. Maybe you’re so laser-focused on what you want to accomplish that you’re grinding yourself into a fine powder with all your hustle. Do you have rhythms in your life that allow you to get adequate rest? Do you sleep enough? Do you work compulsively and realize too late that you’re burned out? How can you pursue rest today and this week? How can you build rest into the rhythms of your life?

Jesus didn’t hide from people. The people you spend time with will play the largest part in the ambitions you achieve, not the minutes you saved each day by avoiding them. Be available. Talk to everyone. Become their student, not their teacher. Love’s goal isn’t ever efficiency; it’s presence.

The trick for leading a noteworthy life is having noteworthy conversations and writing down what you learn. Do lots of that and opportunities will find you.

People are essential on the journey to our ambitions. Without others to help, encourage, and support you, it’ll be difficult (and probably impossible) to achieve your dream. This can be hard for some people to accept. Are you the kind of person who thinks they need to go it alone? Does help from someone else feel uncomfortable to accept? If so, why?

List three people in your life to whom you could become more available. What will you do today and this week to make yourself more available in their lives?

1.

2.

3.

A lot of people are constantly looking at others silently asking the question: What can this person do for me? It happens in business all the time, and I guess that’s okay in some respects. But what about you and your daily life? Are you scanning the room to size up what you can get from the people around you? How would your life change if you flipped the script and instead asked, “What can I give to everyone here?”
WEEK SEVEN – A HAND UP

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 14:22-36

REFLECT
Why were the disciples out on the sea without Jesus? What was Jesus doing?

Why were the disciples terrified?

Why did Peter sink?

What happened to the wind when they got back in the boat? What did the disciples say about Jesus?

QUESTIONS & IDEAS
Take a moment and list five people in your life who are your friends. Now, as you look at each name, can you remember the last time you asked them a probing question that got past the surface? Now, think about yourself with each of these people. Can you remember the last time you shared something that felt vulnerable and real? In general, would you say you’re a person who is willing to go deep with others?

Read Dream Big - Chapters 11-13
Does it seem strange or possibly even counterproductive to your dream to think how you can find opportunities for others? Are you afraid that if you give too much there won’t be anything left over for yourself?

Have you ever been in a position to open a path of possibility for someone else? How did it feel to play the role of giver instead of receiver?

In chapter 13, we read about the sinister power of comparison. What role does it play in your life? Are you the kind of person who thinks everyone else has it better than you or has it more together than you? List some ways that you struggle to “keep your eyes on your own paper” in your own life.
WEEK EIGHT – GREAT EXPECTATIONS

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 16:13-20

REFLECT
What is revealed in this conversation between Jesus and His disciples?

Who revealed to Peter that Jesus is the Messiah?

Peter symbolically represents the church. What does Jesus say about the church? FUN FACT Jesus calls Peter two names in the passage: Simon (which means “he has heard” son of Jonah (his father’s name), and Peter (which means “rock”).

What does it mean for the church to have the keys to the kingdom?

Read Dream Big – Chapters 14-16

QUESTIONS & IDEAS
Look back to the list of ambitions you started during week three. Does your list feel like you or are there some impostors hanging out in there? Before you move forward, make sure your list is honest and genuine. Your list should feel like an autobiography of who you are and what you really want.
Revisit your list and revise as needed. Is there anything you need to add or take off? Remember, there are not right or wrong moves here. The only thing that matters is that your list is honest and truly reflects you.

Are there some items on your list that are too vague? If they’re not specific enough, you’ll never know if you actually achieved them. Go through your list and drill down to get really concrete and specific about your ambitions.

I’m the kind of guy who has an idea every five seconds. My trouble is not having dreams, but having too many. You might be the same or you might be the exact opposite. It’s all good. If you’re going to get some movement on your dreams, you’ll have to create some priorities. You can’t chase them all at the same time, nor should you.

Take the list you have and create three different categories: small, medium and large or, if you like coffee, go with tall, grande and venti. Place everything on your list in one of these categories. The exercise is more about clarifying what you can pursue quickly or what might take some time.

**For each of your large dreams, answer these three questions:**

- Is it meaningful? (Does this dream reflect my most beautiful values and hopes?)
- Will this dream stand the test of time? Will it last my lifetime or beyond?
- Will it help others? (Is this dream just another feather in my cap or will it impact the people around me?)
Look at the “small” dreams, draw a line if one of those dreams seems connected or could lead to a “medium” or “large” dream.

This is a hard question, but I have to ask: Are you looking to get a pat on your back for some items on your list? Do you want your teacher or pastor to see it so you can feel affirmed? Do you want your spouse or best friend to think you’ve made the right choices?

Be honest.

If something on your list feels like someone else’s fulfilled expectations of you – but not necessarily a genuine dream of your own – take some time to think about why you added it, then consider if you should take it off your list. The last thing we want is you chasing a dream you think you’re supposed to have but don’t actually have.
WEEK NINE– KEEP MOVING TOWARD LOVE

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 18:15-20

REFLECT
According to this passage, what is the process for dealing with sin in the church?

What are the similarities between this passage and last week’s passage from Matthew 16:13-20?

What do you think Matthew 18:19-20 means in the context of scripture?

What are you learning about Jesus’ church?

Read Dream Big – Chapters 17-18

QUESTIONS & IDEAS
The dreams you wrote down and vetted in the last chapter made it on your list because you haven’t accomplished them yet. Why? Are you the kind of person who needs a fully reliable master plan before you take the first step?
Are you stopped before you begin because of fear or what others might think? Maybe you have a family or a full-time job and can’t carve out the time to make some moves toward your dreams. Take a moment and ask yourself, “What’s kept me from pursuing my dreams?” We’re not creating solutions for these obstacles just yet. Identifying them, though, is an important step. (We’ll get to the solution part later.)

Think about the body of knowledge you might need to accomplish your dream. Chances are you don’t know all that stuff yet. What steps can you take to start learning what you’ll need to know when your dream is fully realized?

Name three people you know right now who could help you make some progress on your dream. Are you willing to approach them and ask for help? If so, how and when will you do that? How far are you willing to go to get an audience with someone who could be key for you to accomplish your dream

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When you look at your list of dreams, take the ones that light you up the most and write down the next action you need to take to get some forward movement. Write only one! It’s tempting to write down a sequence of events like lining up dominoes. But I find that it’s really empowering to have one thing that you can do to move your dream forward. (Of course, once that’s done you can write down the next thing. Eventually you’ll have a daisy chain of completed steps!)

Working toward your dreams comes with some opportunity costs. Choosing one dream to chase means you might have to wait on another. So remember to be incredibly picky about how you spend your time, energy and resources. When you look at your list, is anything sticking out that may not be worth it? Are there one or two large dreams that lead the pack and get you most excited? That’s a good sign. Follow the breadcrumb trails to the one or two dreams that get you most excited.
WEEK TEN – WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK?

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 20:1-16

REJECT
What happens in this parable?

Why do you think the first ones hired were surprised with their wage? What was the grumbling all about?

What is this parable telling us about the Kingdom of Heaven?

Reflect on this verse: “The last will be first, and the first will be last.” What do you learn about Jesus here?

QUESTIONS & IDEAS
This section started with a story about a bank robbery that led to something we now call Stockholm Syndrome. Why do you think we cling to our captors, the things holding us hostage in our lives?

As you scan the current dynamics in your life—both internal and external—do you have anything you would say is holding you hostage? If so, how strong is its hold in your life? Take a few minutes to write down some thoughts if you feel you need to name your captors and call them out for the role they play in keeping you hostage.

Read Dream Big - Chapters 19-21
Now, having identified any limiting beliefs, how might they be standing in the way of some audacious dreams you have or want to have but are too hesitant to chase?

Have you ever heard the phrase “do it scared”? I heard once that courage isn’t the absence of fear but the willingness to act in the face of fear. When you think about the role of fear in your life, what are you willing to do to overcome this emotion when it comes to your big dreams?

Are there any launching beliefs (the opposite of limiting beliefs) that you can be grateful for and focus on as you make moves toward your dreams? Think of three positive things people have consistently said about you during your life. Maybe you’re a natural optimist or selfless or a hard worker. Maybe you have some natural skills and abilities that have consistently caught other people’s attention. Create some reminders on sticky notes (or your phone lock screen or written on your bathroom mirror, or wherever you look often) to help you remember what is inherently good and true about you.

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When I’ve spoken to people about their dreams, one of the most common reasons people tell me their dreams can’t happen is all the commitments they currently have and can’t let go of. I get it. I’ve made commitments that seemed good at the time but ended up shackling me to a particular spot. What commitments have you made that take up time, space and energy on a daily or weekly basis? What would happen if you picked one thing—really, just one—and decided to stop doing it? Maybe it’s something as big as a letter of resignation or something as simple as paying for school lunch one day a week instead of packing it. My hunch is you can let go of more than you believe you can. Pick one thing and just see what happens.

What is your one thing?
Imagine how much extra time, space and energy you would have for your dreams if you decided you were in charge of your commitments. I’m not suggesting you ditch everyone and become unreliable. It’s important to keep your word. But you also have permission to change and shift, to adapt and be nimble. Describe below a day in the near future when you’ve dropped some of the burdens you’re currently carrying and replaced them with activities that move you closer to a fulfilled dream.

Thursday is coming. It happens every week, so you know you can rely on it. Name one thing you’re going to quit this Thursday. It could be a chore or a job or a daily routine. It could be a volunteer position or a habit or negative attitude. It could be anything, really, just something you decide isn’t helping you anymore. Go ahead—write down your own thing, then mark your calendar for this Thursday. It’s quitting time! What stops Thursday?

Saying no is not a pleasant experience for most people. But it’s a critical skill if you’re going to save space for your dreams. Often, we just need a little practice saying no. Go practice saying no one hundred times in the bathroom mirror. Get a few close friends together and have a “no” party where you practice with each other. Step out on your front porch and yell it at the top of your lungs. Think of a few common occurrences in your life where you just can’t seem to say no. Now, make a plan to decline the next time. The truth is, people respect it when you tell them no in the right way, like we discussed in the chapter. It really is a liberating and powerful tool on your journey toward your dream.
WEEK ELEVEN – TAKE ACTION

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 22:1-14

REFLECT
What happens in this parable?

Who is invited to the banquet and who actually comes?

What is this parable telling us about the Kingdom of Heaven?

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

It’s natural to seek comfort and familiarity in life. A life filled with uncertainty can feel too chaotic and stressful. Just the right amount of stress, however, can awaken our senses and bring out some of our best traits. This tension is almost always part of chasing a dream.

How about you? Are you afraid of living on the edge of yikes? Does it get you completely amped and ready to take on the world? How would you describe your default reaction as you start to take some steps toward your dreams?
You might be able to divide the world between people who procrastinate and those who don’t. It’s the late-night crammers before the big test versus the people who studied for weeks. Be honest with yourself—are you a procrastinator? Do you think of a dozen reasons why not to get started? Decide now how you’re going to respond as you take your first steps toward a dream.

Sometimes the resistance we feel toward action comes from inside us. Other times it comes from the people around us. Can you name one or two people who you think will try to tramp down your dream? How will you respond when they start to douse your attempts?

In Chapter 24 I shared a few ideas to help you get some concrete plans to move toward your dream: make a date with yourself, make one phone call a day, set incremental milestones, and so on. Go back through the list an focus on a few that resonate with you. (Or, if you have a few tricks and tactics you already use, think about those.) Make a list of some things you want to do and decide in advance when and how you’re going to do them. Put them on your calendar. Have a friend call you to check that you actually did it. Whatever it takes, decide now that you’re going to act. When is your first date with yourself?

Pencil in your date below.

_____ /_____ /_____  

Perfectionism can be a major roadblock to our dreams. We think, “if I can’t do it exactly how I want, I won’t do it at all.” Don’t fall prey to this. Are you a perfectionist who does less because it won’t be exactly right the first time? Explain.
Fear of failure is another big reason I hear from people struggling to realize their dreams. What if you failed on purpose just to get it out of your system? The truth is, failure is a reality for all of us. You might as well join the club and realize that not every attempt toward your dream will be successful.

The real challenge is this: how will you respond to failure?

Take a few minutes and write a paragraph or sketch ideas for how you’ll respond when things don’t go as planned.
WEEK TWELVE – PUSH THROUGH SET BACKS

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 26:36-46

REFLECT
What is Jesus doing?

What are his disciples doing?

What does Jesus ask for? And how does he submit to the Father?

What is about to happen to Jesus?

Questions & Ideas
The place where faith and failure meet can be tricky. You’ve probably heard people say “God opened the door” or “God closed the door.” Maybe you’re one of them. It’s tempting to interpret our setbacks as heavenly signals we’re headed in the wrong direction.

Read Dream Big - Chapters 25-26
I don’t think this is true, because the dreams we have, I believe, are God-given gifts. How about you? Do you tend to think any blip along the way is God speaking to you in code? If so, why?

In Chapter 26, I told a story about Sweet Maria after our lodge burned down. I learned something powerful and precious about her in the wake of that loss. It made the catastrophe worth every single beam and piece of timber. Have you experienced some setbacks and simply tried to power through or get past the pain as quickly as possible? Take a moment and sit in the heap. What can you learn about yourself that only setbacks can help reveal?

Sometimes our setbacks make us more qualified, not less. Think about your life and some attempts that didn’t go as planned. Maybe you face planted or lost some money or hurt someone you cared about. But with a little distance from the setback, you also gained some authority to help others avoid the same. Can you recall a time in your life when a difficult experience equipped you to help someone else avoid the same mistake? Can you recall a time when a past setback helped you avoid the same mistake?

How would you describe your relationship with failure? Do you avoid it at all costs? If so, why? What do you fear about failing?

Faith and friendship are essential tools to keep us motivated when we face a major setback toward our dreams. Have an emergency kit of these ready when it happens to you. Do you have some favorite Bible verses God has used in your life to keep your head up? Is there a close friend or two who has a knack for encouraging you when times get tough? Put those verses and those names in a special place. When you’ve hit a roadblock on your Dream Big journey, get those out. Read. Make the call. Don’t be afraid to reach for some encouragement and truth exactly when you need it.
WEEK 13 – SUSTAIN BELIEF & LAND THE PLANE

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 28:16-20

REFLECT
Who is with Jesus on the mountain? Do they all believe?

What does Jesus commission His disciples to do?

What does Jesus say at the very end of the commission?

Jesus also commissions us, His Church! How will you sustain your belief in Him and live out this commission?

Read Dream Big - Chapters 27-30

QUESTIONS & IDEAS

Are you securely tied into your faith and relationships? Think hard about this. Can you really rely on them when you’re dangling from a cliff face? If you need to tighten some knots or click into some carabiners in your relationship with God, do it. If you need to reconnect more firmly with the people you depend on most, don’t wait another second. List three ways you can get more secure and do these things.

1. 

2. 

3. 
When you face a setback, it’s normal and natural to get into a funk. The problem comes when we stay there too long. What’s your tendency? Are you able to acknowledge a difficult spot you’re in and find a way forward? Or does it become your new return address? One of my favorite ways to overcome a setback is to preplan what I’ll do when it happens. Do the same. Think of three things you’ll do when you face a setback.

1. 

2. 

3. 

I’m an impatient guy. All my friends and family know this. As I’ve chased some of my dreams, though, I’ve experienced how patience is a powerful tool for the journey. What about you? Do you know your sweet spot between abdication and expectant waiting? Sometimes it’s hard to recognize, but think about it.

WHAT DOES PURPOSEFUL WAITING LOOK LIKE IN YOUR OWN LIFE?

If you’ve been fully engaged in this process of discovery and self-reflection, my hunch is that you’ve covered quite a bit of distance so far. Take a moment to reflect on where you started and where you are now. Do you have more clarity? More energy? I know it’s hard work sometimes, which is why you should stop right now and congratulate yourself for everything you’ve poured into this. Remember, you’re worth it. Take five minutes and write down what you’re proud of in this process.
One of the head-fakes we get as we pursue our most beautiful ambitions is thinking we have to go from step one to step twenty-three in one major leap. Don’t fall for it. Revisit your lists from earlier in the book—your list of dreams and the opportunities you’re going to explore—and star the ones that feel like small things that can lead to big things.

As you’ve gone through this book and the prompts in this section, maybe you’ve tried a few new things along the way. How has it gone? Have you gotten a bit of lift-off, or are you still on the cusp of making some moves? This is a critical moment. Go back and reread the “Pitch, pick, and point” section of chapter 28. How can you do the same in your journey?

Something is better than nothing, right? I think this is almost always true. When it comes to your dreams, I know it’s always true. As you move toward your dream, remember to celebrate even the small wins and half-steps forward. What are some midway points you can celebrate? Go buy yourself a few medals or write yourself some notes of congratulations to open when you’ve made some progress.

Remember learning that thing in school where an object in motion tends to stay in motion and an object at rest tends to stay at rest? Much of the Dream Big framework is to help you move from rest to motion. As you land the plane on this process, don’t overlook the feeling of excitement and momentum you get from making some moves forward. As you end this book and look out on the life in front of you, stop and take a deep breath. Tell yourself:

“I AM GOING TO DO THIS.”

Hopefully you’ve identified a few dreams you’re going to take some action on. Write down this phrase for each one of them:

I WILL ________________________________.

I WILL ________________________________.

I WILL ________________________________.

I WILL ________________________________.
SOMETHING HAPPENS WHEN WE MESS UP. WE GET TO START FRESH.

- BOB GOFF
DREAM BIG