

WHAT IS YOUR DREAM? WHAT IS JESUS' DREAM?

Everyone has dreams. From when we were children, we had dreams of what we'd like to be or what we'd like to do sometime in the future. We all want to live a life that matters. We all want to have a meaningful purpose for our lives.

- What are some dreams you had when you were young?

All through my school years I dreamt of being a teacher. Unfortunately I had to give up on that dream when I got sick and wasn't able to continue my studies.

As we mature our dreams might change. We might acquire other dreams, depending on the gifts we discover in ourselves and depending on our life experiences. I, for example, became a good photographer and dreamt of becoming famous and making money at it. But I soon found out I wasn't really interested in being famous after all. And, though I did make some money at it, that in itself did not satisfy me. I no longer found those kinds of things fulfilling.

- How have you fared with your dreams? Have you been able to realize the dreams you had when you were young?
- Are you still hanging onto those dreams?
- How have your dreams changed? How have you changed?
- Do you have dreams today?
- Do you know what God's will for your life is? What is *His* dream for you?

Determining God's will for our life is something many of us struggle with. It can be hard to know what our purpose in life is – to know what God intends for us to do.

In his book *One. Life*, Scot McKnight wrote the following:

“At the core of every dream you have,
Behind every dream you have,
Ahead of every dream others have,
And in the center of every good dream every human has...
We will find the kingdom dream of Jesus.
We are designed to give our One.Life to that dream.”

Scot McKnight refers to Jesus' dream as the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven) – that "Kingdom" we hear so much about in the New Testament. It means a place and time where God reigns. In the Lord's prayer Jesus prayed "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10) Jesus' dream is that God's kingdom be established on earth, not tomorrow, but today – bit by bit.

Jesus said, "*the kingdom of God is near.*" (Luke 21:31). Dr. Ralph F. Wilson explains this as meaning, "The Kingdom is now, in the presence of the King in our lives through his Spirit." It's in the love, peace, joy, justice, beauty – all that good stuff that the Lord wants for us to have.

What does God want us to do? What is His will for our lives? His will is for us to join Him in working towards building this Kingdom here on earth. Using whatever gifts and talents and skills we have; we can help work towards this "Kingdom dream of Jesus."

What kind of work could that mean for us as individuals?

A favourite quote of mine, one I have at the bottom of all my emails, is by Frederick Buechner: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." We can use our talents and gifts – those things that give us the most joy – to make the world a better place. Of course, there is a lot of hunger and need in the world. We would burn out trying serve *all* those needs. No way should we even try to do that.

But each of us has a unique set of skills and interests that makes us able to serve a unique need. What we need to do is to find out where we could use those skills and interests to do the most good. Everyone has them. Everyone is unique in some way. All of us have abilities that we can use to work for God. We can all help make the world a better place.

DETERMINING GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE:

There is an exercise you can do to help you sort out what kind of work God might intend for you to do:

Make a list of at least ten - but more if you want - things you love to do or things that you're better at than the average person. Take your time doing this, including your skills, talents and personal qualities and gifts (like high energy, patience, listening skills, compassion). Ask a close friend to make a list of the gifts he or she thinks you have. Compare the two lists.

Then see if some of those things will tie together to create work that would contribute to God's dream of His Kingdom.

For example: If you love to do photography and you love music, you might like to set some of your pictures to music, making a slide show. You could use this ability to create shows that you could show at care homes.

If you love to read and have patience and good listening skills, you might be able to use these gifts to spend time with house-bound seniors. You could read to them and talk with them. Or you might want to do children's ministry at your church.

If you like to share your faith and have the gift of compassionate listening, you might be the right person to start a Living Room group of your own ☺