



Dare to Dream!

by Mark Brunner

Shoulders To The Wheel! (Nehemiah 3:5)

The goal was now in sight! What I had worked so hard for, was suddenly staring me in the face and it was so great to finally achieve what I'd worked so hard for. I had been trying for weeks to get a feature printed in a local newspaper; one that highlighted the work that I was doing with a local non-profit program. Having carefully written the story and making sure that the proper photos were provided for, the wait was on. Would the local newspaper print the story? Would they even print it with the photo? When I opened the weekly paper the following Wednesday and found the story and the picture on page two, I was, needless to say, delighted. You might even say I felt a little puffed, as a feeling of self-satisfaction quickly coursed through me. The work had paid off. There was the story, every word I had written, and the picture looked great. I went to the office that day feeling pretty good about the whole thing. The hard work and perseverance had paid off. My confidence had been stroked and it felt pretty good. Unlocking the door and turning on the lights, I walked over to my little office and put the paper down on my desk right next to a sticky note that read, "Don't forget! Pick up stamps today. Office toilet needs to be cleaned." My soaring spirit landed with a thud.

Sometimes, when our pride is flying a little higher than it should, a little dose of reality may bring us crashing down.

Here's a thought from golf immortal Arnold Palmer as he recalls a lesson about overconfidence: "It was the final hole of the 1961 Masters tournament, and I had a one-stroke lead and had just hit a very satisfying tee shot. I felt I was in pretty good shape. As I approached my ball, I saw an old friend standing at the edge of the gallery. He motioned me over, stuck out his hand and said, 'Congratulations.' I took his hand and shook it, but as soon as I did, I knew I had lost my focus. On my next two shots, I hit the ball into a sand trap, then put it over the edge of the green. I missed a putt and lost the Masters. You don't forget a mistake like that; you just learn from it and become determined that you will never do that again. I had been overconfident when I shook that hand. Haven't done that in the 30 years since." (The 19th Hole, Longmeadow.)

The Bible tells us that pride may feel good for the moment, but it is never an alternative to stepping aside when common sense and the good of others is involved. Pride often results in overconfidence. In the end we may end up looking foolish, even hurt. Pride is a collision course. Flying high may feel good; but overconfidence often leads to a rough landing. Feeling a little overconfident today? Reality may be waiting just around the corner and thuds can really hurt.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt 6:34)

What If! (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

Several years ago my wife purchased sixteen Hasta plants from a distant producer that had the misfortune to ship over the July 4th holiday. Because of the holiday and the additional warehouse time the plants would be subjected to, it took several extra days to ship them during a very warm period of weather. When they arrived the sets had begun to wither. They even had begun to take on an ugly odor. I urged her to send them back to the company but she insisted on cleaning each individual set, washing them gently and then putting them into the carefully prepared ground. She had a vision for each set that at first I could not see. But, she was firm, compelled to see beyond the withered, discolored roots. Where Holly saw green leaves, I could only see rotted roots.

In that sense, Holly was able to say “What if?” And, her “what if?” became so compelling that I even volunteered to dig the holes.

As Christians, God has given us the ability to see what sometimes others are not able to see. He has given each of us a vision, a dream for what could be if only we took the time to stop, remember the role God wants us to fill as a believer, and think it through.

Here’s author Bob Logan’s definition of vision: “It’s the capacity to create a compelling picture of the desired state of affairs that inspires people to respond; that which is desirable, which could be, should be; that which is attainable. A godly vision is right for the times, right for the church, and right for the people. A godly vision promotes faith rather than fear. A godly vision motivates people to action. A godly vision requires risk-taking. A godly vision glorifies God, not people. (Bob Logan.)

Holly believed in the Hasta sets that she had spent a good deal of time shopping for. An idea of greenness had taken over her mind and she would not be deterred. As Christians God wants us to be able to see the possibilities even when we are confronted with impossibilities. In a sense it’s like Noah and the ark, and Abraham and the promise of a son in his old age. Without vision, each man could not have faced the impossible and continued to believe until that time when God fulfilled what had been only a dream. May it be with our dreams; that we might see the green leaves when others see only rotted roots—that because of our ability to dream, others may be motivated and inspired to say with us, “What if?” Perhaps I might even like to share in that dream after all,

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Walk On The Moon! (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

When is the last time that you shared your dreams with someone? If you’re like most people, it is often difficult to talk about dreams. I’m not talking about a crazy nightmare or, perhaps, that pleasant dream you had the other night. No,

it's the day dreams that all of us have. The times when we quit our busy pace for a moment and just dream a little bit about life and the "could-be's" and "what-if's." It's rare that most of us share those dreams. In a way we're often embarrassed by them. We grow up hearing that we should "stop our daydreaming, and get down to work." It's no wonder that few of us stop long enough to really enjoy a daydream.

Perhaps the real reason we're so hesitant to share our daydreams is that we're often afraid that someone might not share our vision; or, perhaps, they might even laugh at us.

Here's a story. It started like so many evenings; Mom and Dad at home and Jimmy playing after dinner. Mom and Dad were absorbed with jobs and did not notice the time. It was a full moon and some of the light seeped through the windows. Then Mom glanced at the clock. "Jimmy, it's time to go to bed. Go up now and I'll come and settle you later." Unlike usual, Jimmy went straight upstairs to his room. An hour or so later his mother came up to check if all was well, and to her astonishment found that her son was staring quietly out of his window at the moonlit scenery. "What are you doing, Jimmy?" "I'm looking at the moon, Mommy." "Well, it's time to go to bed now." As one reluctant boy settled down, he said, "Mommy, you know one day I'm going to walk on the moon." Who could have known that the boy in whom the dream was planted that night would survive a near fatal motorbike crash which broke almost every bone in his body, and would bring to fruition this dream 32 years later when James Irwin stepped on the moon's surface, just one of the 12 representatives of the human race to have done so? (Bill Hybels, *Who You Are When No One's Looking*, IVP, 1987, p. 35.)

There are many things about our God that we don't understand. One of them is His ability to make the impossible possible. What you and I might think is too big for us to do, is nothing for God to do. Our daydreams to him are opportunities to do something in us for others. Dare to share your dreams today with someone you love. Who knows, perhaps someday you may surprise them and everyone else as to the unlimited ability of God to make your dreams a reality. Dare to walk on the moon with your dreams. For God, nothing is impossible.

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Lost In Possibilities! (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

My paternal grandmother was what you might call a very practical person. Having raised her family of eight during the Great Depression, I guess I could hardly blame her for her rationing, practical ways. She had a way of looking at things point blank, injecting her personal brand of practical seasoning, and coming up with short-term, but pragmatic solutions to things. My grandfather, however, was a dreamer. He dreamed of inventing, building, and journeying to far places. Even though he never owned a patent, built anything bigger than a rickety pier around his little boat landing or journeyed farther than Washington state to visit relatives, I know he accomplished all he dreamed of doing within the confines of his imagination. Where Grandma was guided by what she knew, Grandpa always seemed guided by what he wanted to find out. In that sense, Grandma was guided by what she could sense, and Grandpa by what he could feel.

God gives us dreams and aspirations for a reason; when we dream we begin a process the He uses to accomplish His will not only for us, but perhaps for others as well.

Here’s a story. Photographer Freeman Patterson remarks: “On those frosty mornings when I grab my camera and tripod, and head out into the meadow behind the house, I quickly forget about me. I stop thinking about what I’ll do with the photographs, or about self-fulfillment, and lose myself in the sheer magic of rainbows in the grass. Letting go of self is an essential precondition to real seeing. When you let go of yourself, you abandon any preoccupations about the subject matter which might cramp you into photographing in a certain predetermined way . . . When you let go, new conceptions arise from your direct experience of the subject matter, new ideas and feelings will guide you as you make pictures.” (Source Unknown.)

Even though my grandpa never realized his dreams, because others knew him and came to understand what motivated his dreams, his dreams lived on in the

lives of his children and their children. I believe that today you might call me a dreamer too, because much of my Grandfather lives on in me because of his dreams. It is a mistake to think that our new ideas are purely ours. They belong to those with whom we share as well. Don't ever regard God as working only within the realm of you. God make take your dream, start it with you and finish it with someone else. When we allow ourselves to get lost in the possibilities of life, we can count on a God who has the roadmap to make those dreams come true.

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Dreaming Standing Up! (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

There's an old adage that says, “Those who dream by day are aware of many things that those who dream only by night could never imagine.” Somehow we've come to associate dreams, the process of slipping away from ourselves for a time, with sleep alone. What ever happened to the day dreamers, those who could stop what they were doing for the moment, and just dream? The fact is, if we reserve dreams only for the pillow, what marvelous and magical realities, known only to those who dare to dream awake and standing up, we would have missed.

Here's a story. Most people who knew Gutzon Borglum thought that he was eccentric. He was a sculpturer, but not of the ordinary kind. He didn't dream of creating a piece of artwork to be displayed in a museum or some mansion. He had a dream of creating the world's largest sculpture, one that couldn't be contained except by the earth and sky itself; and in 1924 he announced that the substance for that sculpture would be not a large block of marble but an entire mountain. “American history shall march along that skyline,” announced Borglum in 1924, gazing at the Black Hills of South Dakota. In 1927 Borglum began sculpting the images of four presidents on the granite face of 6,000-foot Mount Rushmore. Most of the sculpting was done by experienced miners under Borglum's direction. Working with jackhammers and dynamite, they removed some 400,000 tons of outer rock, cutting within three inches of the final

surface. When Borglum died in March 1941, his dream of the world's biggest sculpture was near completion. His son Lincoln finished the work that October, some 14 years after it was begun. (Today in the Word, January 2, 1993.)

Borglum had a great dream, a dream he dare to dream standing up! Sure, there's always the danger that you might stare through someone, or that you could lose touch with "reality" for a moment or two. But remember, God has used dreamers like Joseph, Nehemiah and others to fulfill His plans. If they had not had the vision to see beyond what most people were willing to believe, the course of history itself would have been changed. When you dare to dream standing up, there's always the chance that God might use your impossible dream to inspire others to do the impossible. Borglum's dream drove the jackhammers of scores of men who may not have seen the finished project as he did, but they were willing to put their faith in a dream that wasn't even theirs' to start. When we dare to dream standing up and awake, the odds are others will find that dream catching.

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