

# DREAM BIG

Know What You Want, Why You Want It,  
and What You're Going to Do About It

STUDY GUIDE | FIVE SESSIONS

BOB GOFF



NELSON  
BOOKS

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*Dream Big Study Guide*  
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# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	v
How to Use This Guide .....	vii
Session 1 <b>Get Ready to Dream Big</b> .....	1
Session 2 <b>Set Absurd Expectations</b> .....	21
Session 3 <b>Clear the Path</b> .....	41
Session 4 <b>Push Through Setbacks</b> .....	61
Session 5 <b>Land the Plane</b> .....	77
Leader's Guide .....	95



# INTRODUCTION

You become fully awake to your biggest and most worthwhile ambitions by becoming fully awake to yourself and your God-given purpose.

**BOB GOFF**

## **WELCOME TO *DREAM BIG!***

All of us have ambitions and long to do more in this life. But we also have all kinds of distractions, misunderstandings, and assumptions blurring what we need to do to bring our dreams to life. In order to tap into our deepest passions and unleash the purpose God has for us, we must assess our understanding of who we are and how God sees us. We must sort through the messages we have been given and find our truest ambitions. This includes looking at disappointing areas of our lives as well as those we perceive as failures.

This process won't be easy. But the good news is that you won't do it alone. This group is the ideal place to dig deeper and uncover the big dreams inside you—the ones you dared



to pursue before others told you it was impossible or irrational to chase them. God has a wild and exciting dream for your life, and it is time to take the necessary steps to see it clearly and make it reality. Not only will you confront your deepest desires with clarity, but you will also identify the obstacles holding you back so you can come up with a plan to overcome them. You can reconnect with your passions and be the big dreamer God made you to be.

Here is how it works. *Dream Big* is a five-session study in exploring your hopes, dreams, ambitions, and the real purpose God has implanted within you. Each session will explore a different aspect of what it means to dream big through the teachings Bob Goff. There will be an opening question, a brief Bible reading, and then you will watch Bob on the video.

The good stuff, however, comes after the video, when you dig deeper into each topic in a guided small-group time. This makes space to process the message and get practical about what it means in your life. You will discuss your responses, ask questions, and hear more about the dreams that God is revealing in the lives of others.

So, are you ready? Then it's time to rediscover how to *dream big*.



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

As you will discover throughout this study, dreaming big is practical. It requires you to take chances and do things. Dreams require reflection but also risk-taking. This study is designed to give you opportunities for both.

Each session begins with an icebreaker type question followed by a reflection from the Bible. Then you will watch Bob's teaching on the video before diving into some directed discussion with your group. Even though there are many questions provided to facilitate your group discussion, don't feel like you have to use them all. Your leader will focus on the ones that resonate with your group and guide you from there.

The final section of each session (called "Dream") is where this study might diverge from others you have done, as you and your small group will engage in practical exercises to bring home the teaching to you. These exercises are designed to be completed during your meeting, and they will be as worthwhile as you make them. If you choose to only go through the motions or resist participating, you will find them less than satisfying. But if you give them a try, you may



discover that they will help you to rediscover your dreams and make them come alive.

At the end of each session, there are more opportunities for you to engage with the content during the week through the personal studies. These studies include activities to help you reflect on what you're learning, explore a passage from the Bible, and help you to put your dreams into action. You are invited to do at least one of these activities between sessions and to use this study guide to record what you learned.

Beginning in session two, there will be time before the video teaching to check in, share the previous week's activity, and process your experiences as a group. If you're unable to complete the between-sessions exercises or are new to the group, don't worry. Hearing what others have learned will be nourishment enough.

Remember that all this is an opportunity to explore new ways of considering what it means to *dream big*. The videos, discussions, and exercises are all intended to kick-start your imagination so you will be inspired to try things on your own. Just imagine what God could do with a whole group of people who are passionate about owning their dreams and making them reality. Let's jump into *Dream Big* and find out.

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**Note:** *If you are a group leader, there are additional instructions and resources in the back of this guide to help you lead your members through the study. Because some of the activities require materials and setup, make sure you read this over ahead of time so you will be prepared.*

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## Session One

# GET READY TO DREAM BIG

There is a path to discover and release your most beautiful and lasting ambitions into the world.

**BOB GOFF**



## WELCOME

Once upon a time, as kids or young adults, we had big dreams. Now life has become a maze of responsibilities, obligations, expectations, and assumptions about who we are and what we must do. We know there must be more to life than we are experiencing. Maybe we sense something deep inside stirring us occasionally before we are distracted by the next crisis or urgent diversion. We may even believe God put us where we are for a purpose . . . but that purpose seems out of reach. We still have dreams, but we are no longer in touch with them.

No matter where you are, know that it's not too late for you to still dream big. This study is designed to help you realize your deepest longing and your purpose by peeling away the layers of distracting buildup that have prevented you from actualizing your dreams. Layers of messages—sometimes contradictory—from family and friends, teachers



and pastors, coaches and bosses, neighbors and acquaintances about who you should be and how you should act.

God didn't create you to be defined by these layers of messages from the other people in your life! He made you unique in his own image so that you could bring your dreams to life.

## SHARE

To get started, take a few minutes to introduce yourself to anyone you do not know in the group. Then jump into the theme of this session by discussing the following questions:

- One dream I've had since childhood is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- Sharing it right now with the group, I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

## READ

Invite someone to read aloud the following passage. Listen for new insights as you hear the verses being read and then discuss the questions that follow.

*Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled*



*people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had.*

*One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”*

*“Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”*

*Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked (John 5:1–9).*

Why do you think Jesus asked the blind man, “Do you want to get well,” before healing him? While it may seem obvious that the man is there beside the pool hoping for his sight to be restored, why did Jesus consider it important to ask the man what he wanted?

Have you ever seen someone pursuing a goal for a long time only to lose sight of what he or she really wanted? What were the circumstances?



## WATCH

Play the video segment for session one. As you watch, use the following outline to record any questions you have or points that stand out to you.

It's important to go deeper if you want to explore the big dreams God has for you.

In order to dream big, you need clarity—and the way to see more clearly is to be authentic about who you are, where you are, and what you want.

Looking at your past mistakes, disappointments, and failures will often reveal vital clues about your life's purpose.



## Get Ready to Dream Big

Remembering that you are God's beloved child is the key to your true identity.

Being real about where you are in life isn't easy, but it's important in order for you to know what you want so you can dream big.

Stop merely waving at your dreams and ambitions and choose to follow them.

If you want to uncover your dreams, you need to give Jesus free rein in your life and not just a few areas here and there.



Whatever moves you from thinking about what *needs* to be done to actually *doing* it often reveals something important about your lifelong ambitions.

## DISCUSS

Take a few minutes to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts with your group.

1. Jesus told the disciples to “push out a little deeper” after fishing all night but catching nothing. What does it look like for you to “push out a little deeper” to dream big? What typically prevents you from going deeper—with yourself and with others?
2. What obstacles have blocked you from pursuing your dreams? How have you handled those barriers? How have those setbacks blurred the way that you now see your ambitions?



3. What in your past continues to hinder you from dreaming big in the present? What do these hindrances reveal about your dreams? About the way you've pursued them?
  
4. When an acquaintance asks *who* you are, how do you usually respond? If you take out your titles, positions, or status at work (manager, sales rep, vice president), as well as your roles (spouse, parent, caretaker, sibling, friend, neighbor), what is left? How do you think of yourself apart from your responsibilities and relationships?
  
5. What pops into your mind when you consider *where* you are in life right now? If you were someone else looking at your life and trying to be objective, how would you answer this question? Where are you in this season of life? In the group tonight?



6. Do you agree that knowing *who you are* and *where you are* basically reveals *what you want*? Why or why not? What dreams do you want to pursue right now?

## DREAM

*(For this activity, you will need a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Markers, colored pencils, crayons, and art supplies are optional but would be a great addition if they are available.)*

If you want to get to a place you haven't visited before, it's always helpful to consult a map. Whether digital or hard copies, maps identify your starting location and provide you with directions to a destination. A simple "you are here" notation on a map at a theme park, a museum, or trailhead can provide a foundation for you to get your bearings. Maps also provide a visual illustration of what is between your starting point and where you want to end up. Maps help you choose the shortest routes or circumvent roadblocks and dead ends. Having a map can provide clarity about what you need in order to get where you are going.

With this in mind, grab a sheet of paper and take a few minutes to create a map with your big dreams as your destination. It can look like any version of a map you want—the goal is simply to draw, sketch, or doodle a map that indicates *where you are* currently and *where you want to go* over the course of the next few years. Include any speed bumps and detours,





including the ones you already know as well as ones you anticipate. Remember there is no right or wrong way to do this and no extra points for being creative or artistic. Just have fun as you create this visual depiction of getting from where you are to where your big dreams come alive.

After you come up with your map, share with the group. Tell the other mapmakers something you notice about their maps and what it reveals about them, about their view of God, about their dreams, or about what they must overcome to reach their dreams. After everyone has had a turn, hang on to your map as a reference for future activities.

## CLOSE

Close the meeting by praying together and asking God's blessing on all that has been shared. Ask him to provide clarity as you go deeper and consider where you are and where you want to go. Let the Holy Spirit be the compass that ultimately helps you navigate your dream map.





## Session One

# BETWEEN-SESSIONS PERSONAL STUDY



If you have not already started reading *Dream Big*, now is a great time to begin. This week, you may want to review chapters 1–13 in the book (the chapters are short) before engaging in the following between-session activities. Be sure to read the reflection questions after each activity and make a few notes in your guide about the experience. There will be a few minutes for you to share any insights you learned at the start of the next session.

## REFLECT: DARE TO DREAM

Take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions and record your answers:

What were your dreams when you were a child? What kind of life did you imagine for yourself? What did you long for the most?



## Dream Big Study Guide

Which of your childhood dreams have stayed with you?  
Which ones have you totally abandoned? Why?

What obstacles have you faced in trying to dream big?  
What setbacks and barriers have you overcome so far?

How has your sense of purpose in life shaped your  
dreams? How has it shaped the way you are currently  
pursuing your dreams?

What is the difference between “sleepwalking” and “sitting  
still” as you consider pursuing your dreams? How has  
God been “waking you up” lately?



Which ambitions have you pursued only to discover they belonged to someone else—your parents, teachers, coaches, or friends? Are you still chasing something that is not part of your big dream? What do you need to let go of in order to be available to God?

## READ: KEEP FISHING

Read the following passage found in Luke 5:1–11:

*One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.*

*When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."*

*Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."*

*When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.*



*When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.*

*Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*

It must have seemed strange to these fishermen when a stranger showed up, hopped in one of their boats, taught the Word of God, and then told them to put out into deeper water. To Simon's credit, after expressing his initial skepticism, he agreed to follow what the stranger said—simply because he had directed to do so. The results exceeded anything the fishermen could have imagined as their catch burst their nets and sank their boats! After fishing all night and catching nothing, the men had risked casting their nets just a little farther out, just a little deeper, and—bam!—they had more fish than ever before.

All too often, we are like these disciples. We put in years of hard work, sleepless nights, and bait our hooks again and again . . . but continually come up empty. We wonder why we should keep going—why we should keep doing what God has instructed us to do when we can see no tangible results for all our efforts. But then push out in faith just one more time . . . and find a catch beyond our wildest dreams!

There is no doubt that we must do our part if we want to realize our dreams. We won't make our dreams come to life by sitting around and only thinking about them. Flying requires wings and—as the Wright brothers discovered—



sometimes you have to keep tweaking them until they are just right. You change the angle, try a lighter wood, alter the wingspan. Then you catch the wind . . . and next thing you know, you're airborne!

Why do you think Jesus finished teaching before telling Simon to try again in deeper waters? If you had been in Simon's place, how would you have responded?

What role has faith played in the formation and pursuit of your dreams? When have you taken a risk or made a leap of faith and discovered more than you expected?

What does obeying God in faith have to do with making your dreams come alive? Why is it impossible to birth your biggest ambitions *without* following God's lead?



What risk is God calling you to make right now as you consider old dreams and new possibilities? What have you sidelined or given up on that you need to try again?

## **ACT: COLLECT PIECES OF YOUR PUZZLE**

While none of us enjoy looking at our biggest failures, they can provide vital clues to help us recognize our dreams, ambitions, and deepest longings. Our mistakes, disappointments, and losses are important pieces of our “dream puzzle,” and looking at them can illustrate our dreams in new ways and reveal areas in which some pieces fit and others do not. Today, use the following questions to collect and analyze some of your life’s puzzle pieces.

### **WINS**

List five examples of times you have reached a goal, achieved a milestone, won an award, earned a promotion, or been recognized for something you are good at doing.





Which of these do you consider your greatest achievement in life? Why?

Which of these do others usually consider your greatest achievement? If these are different than your choice, what do you think accounts for the difference?

What goal, pursuit, ambition, or dream is not on this list but remains alive in your heart?

## LOSSES

List five examples of times when you have failed to reach a goal or complete something important you started, made a crucial error in judgment, suffered a loss you didn't see coming, or endured a disappointment that you think you could have prevented.



Which one of these has caused the greatest consequences or the most collateral damage in your life? Do you consider this your life's greatest failure? Why or why not?

If someone else looked at your list of losses, which item would they choose as the most painful setback or biggest failure? If these are different than your choice, what do you think accounts for the difference?

What mistake, failure, or loss is not on your list but nonetheless one you worry about? How has this prevented you from taking risks and dreaming big?



## REFLECT

Take a minute to reflect on how you felt as you wrote each of these items on your “wins” and “losses” lists. How did you feel as you thought about your life’s greatest wins and losses? Why do you think you felt this way?

What did you notice that surprised you the most? What dream-big clue, direction, or indicator can you take away from this exercise?

***For Next Week:*** Use the space below to write any other key insights or questions from your personal study that you want to discuss at the next group meeting. In preparation for next week, review chapters 14–18 in *Dream Big*.

