

January 15, 2014

EXTREME FAITH

Dreams & Goals

"Dreams become Goals and goals have plans that make them become reality..."

Take me home!



GO FOR IT

Keep your eye on the ball...

Have you ever heard the phrase "keep your eye on the ball"... Chances are if you have ever engaged in any type of sport, you have heard this phrase. You might even have heard it in a sport that doesn't even have ball. The phrase simply put means don't lose sight of your goals, keep them in front of your eyes. Lets face it we have all had goals and dreams that we wanted to seem to true in our lives. What has caused those dreams to become goals, and those goals to become reality? We stayed focused on the point and in the end we achieved our goal. What happened to all the other goals, well they were forgotten and we took our eyes off the ball.

So I want you to think about the challenge that we are putting before you to become third in your life. Putting God first and others second. Sounds great and it is a goal worth going after. Like any goal if we don't keep our eyes on the ball we will not see it come true. So how do we make this goal happen? Well, we are going to break the goal down into three steps that will help all of us achieve this goal. The first part of this Goal is God becomes number one in our life, and we process everything through God. So lets take a look at the greatest commandment again. Matthew 22:37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with

all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

So how do we keep our eye on the ball? How do we keep a vision on the end point of the first part our goal? For starters you could memorize the first part of this verse, and reference it every day. Put something in your room, that reminds you of this goal, put something in your locker that reminds you of this goal. If you want to achieve something you have to keep it in front of you. You have to see your end point, if you can't see where you are going you probably won't arrive.

Think about the goal as you look at the verse. What does it mean for you, to love God with all of your heart? What would that look like? You have to think about it and then envision yourself doing it each day if you want to achieve the goal.

Goals are important for us, if we don't have goals that we are running after well we will end up living each day with no real purpose other than just getting what we can. You are better than that you need to have goals so that you can advance the kingdom and grow each day. We need to get out of our comfort zone and grow!



The challenge...

The challenge is to become third. Thinking of God first and then others second. Can you imagine a world where everyone lived like they were third and thought of God first and others second. It is a pretty nice picture. That has been God's plan for all of us from the very beginning. God longs for us to be a people who love Him and because we love Him we will naturally love others before ourselves. That is a big challenge because we live in a world that does not think or process things the way that God does. So it is anti culture to think this way. So when it comes to living out this goal you are going to have to be committed. Of course the culture will never tell you that it doesn't support this goal, it will try to make you believe that it does support you. if you don't believe me just watch TV commercials and tell me how many of them encourage you to love God First, than others. You will be watching a long time...

Real Life Heroes

Linh. Dao

Vietnam 1991

"What Harm Can a Little Girl Do?"

Four police officers suddenly burst into ten-year-old Linh Dao's home. They forced her father, an underground pastor in North Vietnam, to remain seated while the authorities ransacked the home searching for Bibles. "I remember when the police came," Linh Dao recalls. "They searched around the house all of that morning and asked many different questions. It was scary to talk to the policemen, but I knew what they were looking for, so I concentrated and tried my best not to be scared or nervous." As the police questioned her parents, Linh courageously hid some of the Bibles in her school knapsack. When the police asked her about the contents of the knapsack, Linh simply replied, "It is books for children," Linh Dao's father was arrested that day and sentenced to seven years of re-education through hard labor. "When the policemen decided to take my dad away, all of my family knelt down and prayed. I prayed first, then my sister, then my mom, and last of all, my dad.



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CHARACTER

EXTREME APPLICATION

Putting God First changes your character, it sets you up to be a servant leader. It positions you to be the person God uses to help others, it puts in front of many people as you are pointing others to God. Putting God first strengthens your character and allows you to become who you were made to be!

Think About it The tension of (putting God first)

Who takes care of you? Who watches over you?

God does! So when you put him first and run after Him with all your heart you beat ya there will be some tension. People will know that you are a follower of Jesus. And when people know you are a follower of Jesus they expect that you are different. Putting God first is not something that you can keep secret, it flows out of us and affects every decision that you make. Putting God first well it sets up everything else that you do in your life. You want to check in with Him and learn more and more about Him. You want to see all that He is and experience Him more than any thing else! You want to see His kingdom advanced. As you fall more and more in love with God, you realize that you keep changing and you see that your friends and the world around you need to know Jesus.

Putting God first means that He is our No. One and we will do anything that He asks us to do and we will follow Him no matter what. Putting God first means that we do seek Him and we become excited to follow him because He loves us.

People will notice that we are different because we put God first. When we put God first we say that we are not really part of this world but we are only in it for a little time.

Putting God first may cause you to let go of some things that you have in your life, but if they are things that God does not wish for you to have in your life well you can bet that those things are things you don't really need.

When you put God first you know that your life will be all that it can be and that it will be the best that it was meant to be. Putting God first means that you really trust that His ways are the best. Choosing the best is the only way to live who wants to choose something that is second best?

God First = The Best life

Others Second = The Best life

You third = The Best life



DIG IN

1. What is the biggest goal that you ever completed?

2. What goal have you not completed that you really wanted to complete?

3. What is keeping you from completing the goal?

- A. _____ You aren't really motivated enough to complete the goal.
B. _____ You could not see the end of the goal
C. _____ You lost hope in the goal

4. Read Matthew 22:37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

Write this verse out in your own words:

5. If this was a goal for your life what would change in you life. (Circle all that apply)

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Closer to God | Make better choices | Impact others more |
| Read Bible More | Lose friends | Be happier |
| Do better in school | Love people more | Be a better friend |
| Share Jesus more | Have less questions | Be more interested at church |

6. What keeps you from making this a goal for your life?

- A. _____ Afraid of failing.
B. _____ Don't want to change
C. _____ Not sure how to make it a goal that becomes reality.

7. Write out some steps or things you would need to do to start making this a goal for you life. (What would you do tomorrow if you wanted to make God No.1 in your life?)

Real Life Heroes

Continued from page 2

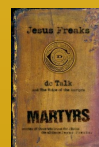
I prayed that my dad would have peace and remain healthy and that my family would survive these hard times. We were all crying, but I told myself I have to face what's happening now." Word quickly spread about the arrest, and neighbor children began to ask Linh what criminal acts her father had done. She told her friends, "My father is not a criminal. He is a Christian, and I am proud of him for not wavering in his faith!" As each day passed, Linh Dao made a mark on her wooden bookcase as she prayed for her father. She remembers, "I cried

almost every single night because I worried how my father was doing in prison and how the policemen were treating him. "Before my dad was in prison, I was just a child. I didn't need to worry about anything. It was a lot different after my dad left. My mind got older very quickly. I told my sister that we had to help Mom do the work around the house, so she could continue to do my dad's work in the church. "I prayed every day and every night. My faith grew very fast. I knew one thing that I had to concentrate on and that was spending time learning from the Bible so when I grew up, I could be like my dad, sharing and preaching. When I think about this, I feel my heart burning inside me, pushing me, telling me this is the right thing to do." Finally, after more than a year, Linh, her mother, and sister were able to visit their father in prison. When they reached the compound, they were separated by a chain fence, Linh quickly discovered that she could squeeze into the prison yard through a chained gate. She ran to her father and hugged him tightly. The guards watched the little girl but, surprisingly, left her alone. What harm can a little girl do? they must have thought. Little did they know! Armed with innocence and childlike faith, children are a secret weapon against the kingdom of Satan.

During that first visit to her father's prison, Linh was able to smuggle him a pen, which he used to write scriptures and sermons on cigarette paper. These "cigarette sermons" traveled from cell to cell and were instrumental in bringing many prisoners to Christ. Linh Dao's prayers were answered. Her father was released early, before he had served all seven years of his sentence. "It was a big surprise when I came home from school one day and saw my dad had been released from prison. I ran and then gave him a big hug. We were so happy. I was proud of my family and I wanted to yell and let the whole world know that I wasn't scared of anything because God always protects each step I go in my life." Linh Dao is now a teenager. She desires to follow in the footsteps of her father and be a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She knows firsthand the dangers of sharing her faith in Communist Vietnam and remains determined to obey Christ rather than men. In spite of a "grim future," she spends her time in intense Bible study.

Don't underestimate what you, as one person, can do. God will work through anyone who is submitted to Him — of any age — to accomplish His will on the earth. Just look at what Moses discovered: If one man or woman is willing to obey God, it can change the destiny of millions.

Featured Story from
the book
Jesus Freaks dc Talk
and the voice of the
Martyrs



Champion's

"The Fog"

Most long-distance swimmers crank out between 60 and 70 strokes a minute. A 10-hour swim requires 42,000 strokes. A 15-hour swim would require 63,000 strokes. That's what 34-year-old Florence Chadwick was ready to do on July 4, 1952. She was going to swim 21 miles in the Pacific Ocean, from Catalina Island to the California shore, a feat no woman had ever accomplished. Ocean swims bring up a whole new set of variables. Open-water swimmers who tackle ocean swims almost always encounter currents, waves, and wind. A swimmer attempting a 21-mile swim might actually swim several miles farther, depending on currents. Add to that many of the obstacles they might face: sharks, jellyfish, kelp beds, and oil fuel patches. Open-water competitors often emerge from the ocean swollen and scarred from jelly-fish stings, sunburn, and swimsuit chafing. But Florence Chadwick was used to enduring through these conditions. Her 21-mile swim on this foggy July day wouldn't be her first feat of this kind. She had been swim-ming long distances in open water her entire life. Florence grew up on the beaches of San Diego, competing as a swimmer for the first time at age six when her uncle entered her in a race. As a young girl it was already evident that Florence had a knack for endurance races. She didn't care much for sprints— Florence loved distance! At 11 years old, Florence won first place in a six-mile rough water race across the San Diego Bay Channel. This kid was probably one of the only 11-year-olds who would have survived an escape from Alcatraz At 13, Florence came in second at the U.S. national championships. For the next 20 years she competed in swimming events, thriving in any venue that offered long distance.



In 1936 she actually tried out for the U.S. Olympic team. She didn't qualify because all the events were short distances. In 1950, Florence decided to tackle the greatest open-water swimming challenge at the time—the English Channel. The distance across the Channel was about 23 miles. Fewer than seven percent of those who attempt the swim actually complete it. On August 8, 1950, Florence not only made the swim from France to England, she beat the world record by over an hour, with a 13 hour and 20 minute swim. In an interview after the swim Florence said, "I feel fine. I am quite prepared to swim back." Swimming back might not sound problematic for someone like Florence, but it proved to be a much more daunting task. No woman had ever swam the channel from England to France before, a much more difficult swim because of the winds and tides. But on a September morning in 1951, Florence finished the swim in a record time of 16 hours and 22 minutes. So it would seem as though the 21-mile Catalina Island swim on July 4, 1952 shouldn't have been a problem. Florence had done greater distances and conquered more formidable challenges. She was prepared for sharks, jellyfish, currents, winds,



and tides. She was in shape for the distance and motivated to be the first woman to accomplish it. But there was one element that Florence wasn't ready for ... fog! Californians who live on the coast are familiar with fog. When Florence got into the icy cold waters that morning and began the swim, the fog was so thick she couldn't even see the boats that followed her. It's a good thing Florence had support boats that day. Several times her support crew had to scare away sharks with rifles. But Florence wasn't worried about the sharks or any other elements. Her concern came every time she looked up to see her goal—the North American coast. Nothing. She saw nothing but fog. Florence swam for more than 15 hours while America watched on television. Her trainer and her mom encouraged her from one of the support boats. "Keep going! You're almost there!"

But every time Florence looked up ... Fog. At 15 hours and 55 minutes Florence looked up one last time. As she scanned the water in front of her, desperate for a glimpse of her goal, she wrestled mentally, fighting to persevere, thinking about all that she had accomplished: She swam the English Channel both ways, she was the first woman to complete many of these swims, and she beat the men's record almost every time. Today would be yet another victory ... if she could just see her destination. But all she saw was fog. Just before 16 hours, Florence asked her support boat to take her out of the water. Florence gave up. It was the only time Florence Chadwick ever quit. Florence was only a half a mile from the California coast when she gave up. Why? She couldn't see her goal. As Florence sat on the beach, feeling the true agony of defeat, she told a reporter, "Look, I'm not excusing myself, but if I could have seen land I know I could have made it." The fog had defeated her.

Do you have a clear vision on your goals?

Do you see clearly or is there fog in your life?

You can achieve anything that you put your mind to if you can see the goal that you are going after.

Don't let Fog Defeat You!

TAKE SOME TIME AND JOURNAL.

Look it over, read the story again, dig into the questions and write out your

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Living life with

Extreme faith
and
Extreme vision

EXTREME FAITH MAGAZINE

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