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BRUCE
WILKINSON

NEW YORK TIMES #1 BESTSELLER

with DAVID and HEATHER KOPP

The

DREAM
GIVER



Following Your God-Given Destiny

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WILKINSON

Author of the *New York Times* #1 Bestseller *The Prayer of Jabez*
with DAVID and HEATHER KOPP

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MULTNOMAH
BOOKS

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*This book is for anyone who has ever hoped
or believed they could achieve something
remarkable with their lives.*



*David and Heather Kopp have been a vital
part of creating this book.
Their commitment, skill, and encouragement
have been a deep inspiration.
Thank you, my good friends,
for being Champions to this Dreamer.*

*Most of all, I wish to acknowledge the Dream Giver Himself.
For without Him, none of us would have a compelling
Dream to trade our lives for.*



PREFACE

Do you believe every person on earth was born with a dream for his or her life?

No matter where I travel in the world—whether among hard-charging Manhattan urbanites or villagers in southern Africa—I have yet to find a person who *didn't* have a dream. They may not be able to describe it. They may have forgotten it. They may no longer believe in it.

But it's there.

I call this universal and powerful longing a Big Dream. Like the genetic code that describes your unique passions and abilities, your Big Dream has been woven into your being from birth. You're the only person with a Dream quite like yours.

And you have it for a reason: to draw you toward the kind of life you were born to love!

Welcome to my new book, *The Dream Giver*, a practical and innovative guide to achieving your Big Dream.

The Dream Giver is made up of two parts.

Part 1 is “The Parable of the Dream Giver.” This is the story of Ordinary, a Nobody who leaves the Land of Familiar to pursue his Big Dream. The parable follows Ordinary on the journey to his Dream. This story will introduce you to the big ideas I want to talk about in the next section.

Part 2 is called “The Journey to Your Big Dream.” I will serve as your Dream Coach in these pages, helping you to problem-solve and to reach for important personal breakthroughs. This section is designed to inspire you along the journey toward your Dream. For even more help, I invite you to visit www.TheDreamGiver.com, where you will find creative, interactive solutions for people pursuing their Dream.

In choosing a parable to teach about Dreams, I seek to follow in a long and honored tradition of conveying important life principles through a simple story. C. S. Lewis and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, for example. Or John Bunyan and *Pilgrim's Progress*. And who can forget the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son? For communicating truth to people of all times and cultures, the parable just may be the most powerful teaching tool available.

If you read *The Prayer of Jabez*, you met a little-known Old Testament man who refused to settle for less. He

desperately wanted to break out of the confining circumstances and expectations he had been born into. So he cried out to God for blessing, for larger borders, and for the power and protection to go with them. And God said yes.

If you pray like that, your life will change. God will expand your borders. He will move your life in a direction where you can thrive, but also where you'll face greater challenges than you've ever faced before.

In this book, I call this direction His Dream for you.

Every Dreamer soon learns that the road to the future you really want is clogged with Dream-threatening obstacles. That's why so many turn back. But what many don't realize—and what I missed for years—is that each obstacle is also an important *opportunity*. The obstacles come in a predictable sequence, and each for a very promising reason.

The better you understand the journey to your Dream and what God is doing in your life, the less likely you are to abandon your Dream.

So let me ask: Did you have a dream as a child that you lost along the way? Do you have a dream right now that seems impossible to pursue? Do you feel like God forgot to even give you a Big Dream? Or are you pursuing your dream, but experiencing setback after setback?

If your answer to any of these questions is yes, then this book is for you! Please join me for the journey of your life.

May your heart sing as you embrace what you were
created to be and do.

Warmly,

Bruce Wilkinson

Johannesburg, South Africa



P A R T I

THE
PARABLE
OF THE
DREAM GIVER



ORDINARY EMBRACES HIS BIG DREAM

Not long ago and not far away, a Nobody named Ordinary lived in the Land of Familiar.

Every day was pretty much the same for Ordinary. In the mornings he got up and went to his Usual Job. After work, he ate almost the same dinner he'd eaten the evening before. Then he sat in his recliner and watched the box that mesmerized most Nobodies on most nights.

Sometimes, Best Friend came over to join Ordinary in front of the box. Sometimes, Ordinary went to his Parents' and they watched together.

For the most part, not much happened in Familiar that hadn't happened before. Ordinary thought he was content. He found the routines reliable. He blended in with the crowd. And mostly, he wanted only what he had.

Until the day Ordinary noticed a small, nagging

feeling that something big was missing from his life. Or maybe the feeling was that *he* was missing from something big. He wasn't sure.

The little feeling grew. And even though Nobodies in Familiar didn't generally expect the unexpected, Ordinary began to wish for it.



Time passed. Then one morning Ordinary woke up with these words echoing in his mind: *What you're missing, you already have...*

Could it be? Ordinary looked and looked. And then he discovered that in a small corner of his heart lay a Big Dream. The Big Dream told him that he, a Nobody, was made to be a Somebody and destined to achieve Great Things.

Jumping out of bed, Ordinary discovered something else—a long white feather resting on the sill of his window. Where did it come from? What did it mean? With a jolt of excitement, Ordinary decided he'd been visited by the Dream Giver.

Now, Ordinary had heard rumors of various Nobodies in Familiar waking up to a Big Dream. But he had never imagined that it could happen to him.

He rushed to get dressed, his Big Dream beating brightly in his chest. He couldn't wait to get to his Usual Job and tell Best Friend the news.

But on his way to work, Ordinary realized he had a problem. His Big Dream was *too* big for a Nobody like

Ordinary. He would be embarrassed to tell anyone. Even Best Friend would probably laugh.

Still, Ordinary was too excited to keep his dream to himself. As soon as he saw Best Friend, he blurted out the news: “The Dream Giver gave me a Big Dream! I was made to be a Somebody and destined to achieve Great Things!”

Best Friend looked surprised, but he didn’t laugh. “That’s very...*big*,” he said. “But if I were you, I wouldn’t talk about this Dream of yours too much. Nobodies around here might take you for a fool.”

Ordinary didn’t want to look like a fool. So after that he kept his Big Dream to himself.



Day after day, Ordinary showed up at his Usual Job. But while he worked, he thought about his Dream. He thought about how wonderful it would be to do what he loved to do instead of just dreaming about it.

Ordinary’s longing for his Big Dream grew and grew, until finally he realized that he’d never be happy unless he could pursue it. Why didn’t the Dream Giver make it possible?

If the Dream Giver didn’t, how could Ordinary ever leave Familiar? He had payments and expenses. He had regular duties. A lot of Nobodies counted on him for a lot of things.

Ordinary felt completely stuck. Time passed, but nothing changed.

He began to hate his Usual Job. *This isn't what I was made to do*, he'd say to himself. *I just know it!*

After a while, he began to worry that maybe he hadn't received a Big Dream after all. Maybe he'd just made it all up.

And he grew sadder by the day.



One evening after work, Ordinary went to his Parents' to watch the box. But their box was broken, so the house was very quiet. It was even more quiet because his Mother was out shopping at Familiar Foods.

In the quietness, Ordinary started to think about his Dream again. He looked over at his Father sitting in his recliner, staring at the single page of *Nobody's News*. Maybe *he* could help.

"Father," said Ordinary, "I'm growing sadder by the day. I don't like my Usual Job anymore. In fact, I think I hate it."

Father looked up. "That's terrible!" he said. "What happened?"

Before he could stop himself, Ordinary started talking about the Dream Giver, and about his Big Dream. "I was made to be a Somebody and achieve Great Things!" he said. And then he told his Father the Name of his Dream. As he spoke, his voice trembled. He was sure that his Father would laugh or call him a fool.

But his Father didn't. "I'm not surprised to hear you say these things," he said.

“You’re not?” said Ordinary.

“No,” his Father said. “You’ve had that Dream ever since you were little. Don’t you remember? You used to build that same dream with sticks and mud in front of this very house.”

Then Ordinary *did* remember. He’d *always* had his Dream! It was what he’d always wanted to do, and what he’d always thought he’d be good at doing.

His eyes filled with tears. “Father,” he said, “I think I was *born* to do this.”



Ordinary and his Father sat together quietly. His Father seemed to be remembering something, too. After a while he asked, “When you woke up to your Big Dream, Son, did you happen to find...a feather?”

Ordinary was shocked. “How did you know?” he asked.

“A long time ago, I woke up to a Dream, too,” his Father said. “And it came with a long white feather. It was a wonderful Dream. I kept the feather on my windowsill while I waited for a chance to pursue it. I waited and waited. But it never seemed possible... One day I noticed the feather had turned to dust.”

Of all the sad words Ordinary had ever heard, these were the saddest.

Before he left that night, his Father hugged him. “Don’t make the same mistake I did, Son,” he said. “You don’t have to stay a Nobody. You can be a Dreamer!”



When Ordinary got home, he went straight to the window and picked up the long white feather. He turned it over carefully in his hands. He thought about his Father and the Dream he'd left behind.

Then he had a surprising idea. Could it be that maybe the Dream Giver gave *every* Nobody a Dream, but only some embraced their dreams? And even fewer pursued them?

The more he thought about it, the more he thought it had to be true.

One thing Ordinary did know for sure: He didn't want to repeat his Father's mistake. He wouldn't waste another day waiting for his Dream to seem possible. He would find a way to pursue it.



Time passed. Ordinary worked hard on his plan to begin his Dream. He made hard choices. He made difficult changes. He even made big sacrifices.

Finally, one morning, he was ready.

Ordinary ran all the way to his Usual Job, his Dream pounding hard in his chest. As soon as he saw Best Friend, Ordinary blurted out the news: "That Big Dream I told you about—I've decided to pursue it!"

Best Friend looked concerned. "You know as well as I do that Nobodies who pursue their Dreams leave Familiar," he said. "They set off like fools into the

Unknown, in search of a place where—”

“Yes, yes, I know,” Ordinary broke in, “and I can’t wait to get started!”

“But Ordinary, that journey is anything but sensible or safe. Why leave Familiar? It’s so comfortable here. And besides, you’ve *always* lived here.”

“I’ve thought about all that, too,” said Ordinary. “But my Big Dream is too important and too wonderful to miss.”

Best Friend shook his head. “So you’re going to become a Dreamer,” he said.

“I *am* a Dreamer!” answered Ordinary. “Today I’m going to tell my Boss that I’m leaving my Usual Job. Tomorrow I will begin my journey. Hey, Best Friend,” added Ordinary eagerly, “you can have my recliner and my box!”

And with that, Ordinary walked away, humming a tune that he’d never heard before.

The night before he left Familiar...

Ordinary decided to use the long white feather to help him remember the Truth. He pulled out a notebook and wrote “My Dream Journal” on the cover. Then he dipped the quill in permanent ink, and wrote on the first page:

- *The Dream Giver gave me a Big Dream before I was even born. I just finally woke up to it!*
- *My Dream is what I do best and what I most love to do. How could I have missed it for so long?*
- *I had to sacrifice and make big changes to pursue my Dream. But it will be worth it.*
- *It makes me sad to think that so many Nobodies are missing something so Big.*