

GOD CAN DO IT! GOD CAN DO IT THROUGH ME!

“Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.” Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

Let’s review our previous lesson on the Dream Workshop for a few moments.

Remember: the hope stirring within you for a peaceful, secure future is real, possible and just waiting to be explored! Your dreams and hopes can become **GOD’S OPPORTUNITY** to show *you* His love and power.

In his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Author Stephen Covey stated, “Being proactive means more than taking initiative. It means that we take responsibility for our lives. Instead of blaming circumstances, conditions, or chance for our behavior, we choose our own responses and make our own decisions.” Our greatest obstacles are sometimes our own thoughts and feelings:

- We become overwhelmed with the challenges ahead or lack of resources;
- Don’t feel worthy of a blessed life;
- Too afraid to try;
- Allow the past to overshadow hope in the future.

Deborah, a Prophetess and Judge of the Old Testament, could have claimed any one of those excuses, but she didn’t (Judges 4 and 5). Her true story is fascinating and can apply to your life. Deborah’s story is one you can read again and again to your children, and they will never roll their eyes or lose interest!

If you think our world is crazy (and sometimes it is!), check out Deborah’s situation: After Ehud’s death, the Israelites again did evil in the Lord’s sight. So the Lord turned them over to King Jabin of Hazor, a Canaanite king. The commander of his army was Sisera, who had 900 iron chariot and ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years... people avoided the main roads, and travelers stayed on winding pathways. There were few people left in the villages of Israel... war erupted at the city gates, yet not a shield or spear could be seen among forty thousand warriors in Israel!

Deborah faced great obstacles that would have caused anyone to lose hope and stay in the shadows. Consider this about Deborah’s story:

- Deborah was a woman in a day and age where women were to be keepers at home, given in marriage without consent of their own, had no rights to earn money, were not permitted to speak to men in public and were valued by the number of male children they could produce. *Talk about low self-image!*
- She lived in a culture that worshipped pagan idols, a land of dangerous attitude and great depression, choosing evil over the laws of their One True God.

- Poverty ruled the land, where employment was a hopeless thought because *village life ceased*.
- The people lacked resources of any kind and could not safely travel the village.
- The enemy was armed, trained and well fed while the Israelites had no weapons at all and were starving.

Economic recession, moral decline, fear and depression, lack of resources – does that sound familiar in some places in our culture today?

“But Deborah was a judge,” you might say. “She had a title and power!” This is not really true. Her resume consisted of being a wife and mother who sat under a palm tree and judged problems. Try flaunting that in a job interview! **But this palm tree siting is very important in the story.** Think about it: poverty surrounded her from the moment she left her door in the morning, and in the streets of her village, she was daily confronted with complaints from restless, hungry villagers. But Deborah chose to get up and walk away from the depression and despair by sitting under the shade of a palm tree. How far she had to go to find something living, possibly the only green in that barren area, we do not know. But, the significance of getting up and making an effort to choose to look for God’s provision in the midst of desperation must be lost on us.

Sometimes just changing the places you go and the people you surround yourself with can completely change YOU.

Deborah’s reputation as a woman of God defined her in Judges 4:

She sat under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would go to her for judgment. The people came to her for advice, but gave them the wisdom found in God’s word. So respected was she for her spiritual life that one day she sent for General Barak son of Abinoam, who lived in Kedesh in the land of Naphtali. She said to him, *“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: Call out 10,000 warriors from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun at Mount Tabor. And I will call out Sisera, commander of Jabin’s army, along with his chariots and warriors, to the Kishon River. There I will give you victory over him.”* This general did not hesitate to believe, but wanted more than her word. Barak told her, *“I will go, but only if you go with me.”*

Reputation cannot be purchased, but it is a highly valuable asset. Such honor and trust for a woman in those days was unheard of, yet God blessed Deborah and used her life!

God overcame the obstacles with opportunities to trust Him! Do you wonder why a General would ask a Mom to lead the way to battle? Simple: they had no weapons, no armor and no chariots. Their only asset was a leader named Deborah.

Have you ever thought that life's road was too steep to climb, too barren to survive and the lot you were dealt just unfair? I wonder if Deborah thought that. God asked her to lead 10,000 untrained, unarmed and unruly men on a 30-mile climb to the top of a mountain to face 100,000 trained, armed men with 900 chariots of iron. The weakest nation against the strongest, and against all common sense, she was instructed to take them 50 miles away, a week's journey by foot or beast, and then 30 miles up to the top of mountain.

If you think the journey seems long and rough, imagine listening to 10,000 grumbling, complaining, foul mouthed men for the entire trip. She had no idea how this would all end, but she was a warrior of genuine courage and faith in her God. In the same passages in Judges 4-5, she forged ahead like a true leader, crying out, *"Get ready! This is the day the Lord will give you victory over Sisera, for the Lord is marching ahead of you."*

The battles of life are not ours, but the Lord's to fight and His to win.

It looked hopeless, yet Barak led his 10,000 warriors down the slopes of Mount Tabor into battle. When Barak attacked, the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and warriors into a panic. Sisera leaped down from his chariot and escaped on foot. Then Barak chased the chariots and the enemy army all the way to Harosheth-haggoyim, killing all of Sisera's warriors. Not a single one was left alive.

How is that possible? The song written and recorded for history by Barak and Deborah tells us that the earth trembled and the cloudy skies poured down rain. The stars fought from heaven. The stars in their orbits fought against Sisera. The Kishon River swept them away— that ancient torrent, the Kishon. The enemy was trapped in a flash flood, and all 900 iron chariots and 100,000 mightily men were useless!

This is a fantastic, TRUE story given to us that we might know and understand that this great God, who made the heavens and earth, has the power to overcome the most desperate of times and situations.

People sometimes ask, "God, what do you want from me? I try so hard!" All He asks of us is to have a *willing heart*. It was loudly sung in celebration that day (Judges 5): *"Israel's leaders took charge, and the people gladly followed. Praise the Lord!"*

You, mom, can and must do the same. Take charge by believing in God's love for you; His promises to provide and declare these to your children and those around you. Offer yourself willingly to Him by abandon of heart and offer Him praise. He will remove the obstacles and use the needs of your life as opportunities for you to trust and for Him to bless!

List the obstacles that you think are keeping you from living a victorious life and leading others for positive impact as a godly woman. This isn't a guilt trip exercise; it's just a look into reality.

Are any of these too big for God? Does He have ways you cannot imagine?

Think about it: The Lord tells us in Isaiah 55:8: *“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts, says the Lord. And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.”*

What resources are you lacking? Pray now with your mentor and ask the Lord to give you the faith to trust Him.

What “opportunities” are before you, where God might want you to trust Him?

In the book of Mark, a father brought his son to Jesus for healing. All his life, the boy couldn't speak and was controlled by seizures. The father called to Jesus:

“Have mercy on us and help us, if you can. What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. ‘Anything is possible if a person believes.’ The father instantly cried out, ‘I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!’” Mark 9:22b-24 (NLT)

Have you felt that way? You believe, you do! But oh, Lord, please help my unbelief. We see over and over that He can, He wants to and He will.

Perhaps the great Apostle Paul was thinking of Deborah as he wrote in his dark, damp prison: *“Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength... And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches given to us in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:11-13, 19 (NLT)

**Lead on, Mom!
God can do it!
God can do it through you!
God can do it through you right now, where you are.**

What Do I Value Most?*
*Ruth Williams, Mother of 19 and
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As a single mom for many years and now the mother of 19, I know the importance of good time management. But it's more than to-do lists and appointments, although we certainly do have those. It's more about doing what's MOST important. Years ago I adopted Matthew 6:33 as the foundation of my life: *"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need."*

In those days as a single mom on my own, I would often repeat, and still do, the promise of Jeremiah 29:11: *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

I believed then and I believe now that God loves each of us unconditionally, and His plan for us is a hopeful future. We are unique in creation; that is, we have unique talents, personalities, dreams and hopes. As you look toward your future, don't be tempted to look around at what others have or even what you don't have. Instead, think about what YOU want for your future and believe that God will help you get there.

GET STARTED:

- On a blank piece of paper, draw a small circle and put your name in it.
- Draw 5 spokes in the circle so it looks like a bicycle wheel.
- Now, think for a few moments about what's most important to you. **What do you value most?** On each spoke, write the most important things in your life, i.e. children, finances, career, relationships, etc. If you need more spokes, add them.
- Connect the outer edge of your spokes with a big circle to complete your wheel and label that circle, "My life is surrounded by the God Who loves me."
- Take a few minutes to discuss with your mentor, or a friend, what each of you wrote and why it is important.

Remember: God is for you! He wants you to succeed more than you do yourself, and He is ready, willing and able to assist you.

Think: If you could live out these important values YOUR way, what would you be doing? **Not *thinking*, but DOING.**

Let's dream a little. What would these look like for you? Your ideals and dreams will look different because we were all created to be unique. As you shared, did you find some things in common? Did you also find some things that are different? How boring it would be if we were all the same!

NEXT STEPS: Allow 5 minutes to write statements for living out your values. Write 2-3 statements for each value. **For example:** "I want to be organized in my home."; "I am a healthy eater."; "I go to bed early so I can give my best at work."; "I like spending time learning and reading."; "I want to teach my children the Bible." It can be as small as you like, but make it practical and about **YOUR** life. If these truly are the most important things in your life, then you need to **PLAN** to live them out daily!

*"Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity,
but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty."*

Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)

Let's look at how we can actually put these in your schedule, no matter what kind of calendar you use like a phone, tablet, paper or computer.

Three Simple Steps to Planning:

- 1. Connect with your values.** At the beginning of each week, connect with your wheel and statements. Read them, aloud if it helps, and pray over these, asking the Lord for strength and guidance in specific situations.
- 2. Ask the BIG VALUE question.** What do I want to focus on this week? Pick one of your statements you wrote for your values and write something you can actually DO about it this week. For example, if your value is children and one of your statements is, "I love spending time with my children," then what's one thing you can do this week to spend special time with your children? Write it down. Be specific, like "read a story to them" or "watch a movie with my children" (or their favorite show on TV). Just make sure it's specific: something you could actually check off on a list. Take a moment right now and review those statements you wrote. Pick one value and one statement, specifically writing down one thing you can do this week.
- 3. Schedule it.** For each value, you will pick one thing to do this week and those 5-7 tasks will go into your schedule for the week. So, you just wrote down one thing you could do for one of your values this week. What day can you do that? Write down the day and whenever you access your calendar, mark it for your preferred date.

Congratulations! You put the most important things first by planning them into your schedule before your week begins. Then as other things come up that you need to schedule, you can schedule them around what's most important. I have worked with thousands of people and organizations teaching time management, and I know that these 3 simple steps allow people to focus on what's most important in their lives. I've received letters and emails attesting to the fact that these 3 simple steps can change your life, can create more balance in your life. I know that no matter what comes at me during my week, the most important things are taken care of. When we put the "main things" in writing, we are much more likely to keep them the main thing! Dr. Stephen Covey stated:

"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."

**Ruth Williams lives in Orlando, Florida with her husband, Pat, who is Senior Vice President of the Orlando Magic. Her unique family of 19 biological and adopted children has been featured in Sports Illustrated, Reader's Digest, The Wall Street Journal, Focus on the Family and major television networks.
More Reference? Where did above information come from?*