

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE + STREAMING VIDEO

SIX SESSIONS

RICK WARREN

#1 New York Times Bestselling Author
of The Purpose Driven Life

Created

to

Dream

The 6 Phases God Uses
to Grow Your Faith

Previously published as *Everything Is Possible with God*

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BIBLE STUDY GUIDE | SIX SESSIONS

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HarperChristian
Resources

Created to Dream Bible Study Guide
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The *Created to Dream Bible Study* is an updated and expanded version of the previously published *Everything Is Possible with God*.

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Contents

A Note from Rick Warren v

Understanding Your Study Guide vii

Small Group Sessions

SESSION 1: How Faith and Dreaming Are Connected 1

SESSION 2: Discovering God’s Dream for You 15

SESSION 3: Making Wise Decisions 29

SESSION 4: Persisting Through Delays 43

SESSION 5: Dealing with Difficulties 57

SESSION 6: From Dead Ends to Deliverance 71

Small Group Resources

Top Ten Ideas for Helping Your Group Succeed 85

Frequently Asked Questions 89

Group Guidelines 91

Circles of Life 93

Small Group Calendar 94

Small Group Prayer and Praise Report 95

Answer Key 96

Key Verses 99

About the Author 101

A Note from

Rick Warren

What does God think of you? What is his opinion of you? When God thinks of you, he doesn't shake his head about your past. He dreams about your future. He doesn't say to himself, "Well, I guess I made a mistake when I made this one." He says, "Wow, have I got plans for your life!"

God thinks about you all the time. And his thoughts are good thoughts, filled with hope and purpose. The Bible says, "*How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!*" (Psalm 139:17-18 NLT).

Are you getting the message? God isn't mad at you. He's mad about you. Your picture is taped to his refrigerator. You are the constant object of his attention. He created you to love you—and he created you to dream.

You might be thinking, *Surely you can't be talking about me. I doubt that God ever thinks about me, or if he does, I'm sure he's disappointed. He can't possibly have a dream for my life.*

Whoever told you that was not telling the truth. It is never too late to follow God's dream, because his plan takes into account all the mistakes you have made. There is nothing about you that is a surprise to God. He has seen every moment of your life—every failure, every sin, every heartache—and he invites you even now to pursue his plan for you.

Friend, our God is a God of miracles. He has a plan and a purpose for your life, and he always keeps his promises. Do you believe that everything is possible with God? Jesus said, *“According to your faith let it be done to you”* (Matthew 9:29 NIV). I pray this study will strengthen your faith and prepare you to go after the amazing dream God has for you.

— RICK WARREN

Understanding Your *Study Guide*

Here is a brief explanation of the features of this study guide:

Looking Ahead/Catching Up: You will open each meeting by briefly discussing a question that will help focus everyone's attention on the subject of the lesson.

Key Verse: Each session you will find a key Bible verse for your group to read together. If someone in the group has a different translation, ask them to read it aloud so the group can get a bigger picture of the meaning of the passage.

Video Lesson: There is a video lesson for the group to watch together each week. Fill in the blanks in the session outline as you watch the video, and be sure to refer back to these outlines during your discussion time.

Living on Purpose: Each video segment is complemented by four application questions for group discussion. There is no reason to rush through the answers. Give everyone ample opportunity to share their thoughts. If you don't get through all the discussion questions, that's okay.

Prayer Direction: At the end of each session, you will find suggestions for your group prayer time. Praying together is one of the greatest privileges of small group life. Please don't take it for granted.

Putting It into Practice: This is where the rubber meets the road. We don't want to be just hearers of the Word. We also need to be doers of the Word (see James 1:22).

These assignments are application exercises that will help your group discuss ways to put into practice the truths they are learning.

Between the Sessions: To encourage participants to engage with Pastor Rick's message throughout the week, a personal study is provided after each session. This non-video-based section of the study guide includes additional reading and reflection questions, divided into three days.

A Tip for the Host

The study guide material is meant to be your servant, not your master. The point is not to race through the sessions; the point is to take time to let God work in your lives. Nor is it necessary to “go around the circle” before you move on to the next question. Give people the freedom to speak, but don't insist on it. Your group will enjoy deeper, more open sharing and discussion if people don't feel pressured to speak up.

Session 1

How *Faith* and *Dreaming* Are Connected

Looking Ahead

Take a few minutes to introduce yourselves to your group and to review the Group Guidelines on page 91. Then discuss this question: How do you describe faith?

Key Verse

"Everything is possible for the person who has faith."

MARK 9:23 GNT

Video Lesson

Watch the session one video lesson now and fill in the blanks in the outline on pages 2 to 4. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

Lesson Outline

“Everything is possible for the person who has faith.”

MARK 9:23 GNT

“According to your faith let it be done to you.”

MATTHEW 9:29 NIV

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

HEBREWS 11:6 NIV

The Six Phases of Faith:

Phase 1: _____

Nothing happens in your life until you start dreaming.

How to Know If a Dream Is from God:

1. God’s dream will always _____

God . . . is able to do far more than we would dare to ask or even dream of—infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes.

EPHESIANS 3:20 TLB

If a dream comes from God, it’s going to be so big, you can’t do it on your own. You can only do it by faith.

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

HEBREWS 11:6 NIV

2. God’s dream will never _____

Phase 2: _____

Nothing is going to happen to your dream until you wake up and put it in action.

The Decision Phase:

1. You must _____.
2. You must _____.

Phase 3: _____

There is always a waiting period between dream and fulfillment.

“These things I plan won’t happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!”

HABAKKUK 2:3 TLB

God will not fulfill your dream immediately. Why? Because God wants to work on you before he works on the project.

Phase 4: _____

God uses difficulties to work on your faith and character.

At present you may be temporarily harassed by all kinds of trials. This is no accident—it happens to prove your faith, which is infinitely more valuable than gold.

1 PETER 1:6-7 PHILLIPS

Phase 5: _____

Dead ends are a part of God’s plan for your life.

At that time we were completely overwhelmed, the burden was more than we could bear, in fact we told ourselves that this was the end. Yet we believe now that we had this experience of coming to the end of our tether that we might learn to trust, not in ourselves, but in God who can raise the dead.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-9 PHILLIPS

They said to Moses . . . “We told you to leave us alone and let us go on being slaves of the Egyptians. It would be better to be slaves there than to die here in the desert.”

EXODUS 14:11-12 GNT

Dead ends are a part of God's plan for your life.

He has rescued us . . . and he will rescue us in the future. We are confident that he will continue to rescue us.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:10 GW

I am expecting the Lord to rescue me again, so that once again I will see his goodness to me.

PSALM 27:13 TLB

Phase 6: _____

The best response to a dead end is to expect God to act. What are you expecting God to do in your life?

Where God guides, God provides.

*Great faith inspires great dreams.
Great dreams require great faith.*

Living on Purpose

1.

Which phase of faith are you currently in? Briefly explain your answer.

2.

Of all the people you know personally, who do you believe has the strongest faith in God? Why is their faith so strong?

3.

How does God's dream go beyond anything you could ever think up or imagine on your own?

4.

When you understand the six phases of faith—dream, decision, delays, difficulties, dead ends, and deliverance—it prepares you for all that God wants to do in your future. Why is this so?

Prayer Direction

In what area of your life do you need your faith to be strengthened? Share your prayer requests, and then pray for each other. Use the Small Group Prayer and Praise Report beginning on page 95 to keep track of your requests.

Putting It into Practice

As you conclude this session, in what ways do you want God to help you grow spiritually and emotionally while you are pursuing his dream for your life?

God is faithful, and what he promises to do, he will do. Where God guides, God provides. But it doesn't happen overnight. You've got to go through all six phases of faith—dream, decision, delay, difficulty, and, finally, dead end—and then comes the deliverance.

Between the Sessions

Dreaming Is an
Act of Faith

DAY 1

God Holds

Everything Together

Did you know that God dreams? Just look around! Everything in the universe is something God dreamed up. You can't get past the first phrase of the first verse of the first chapter of the Bible without coming face-to-face with God's creativity. Genesis 1:1 says, *"In the beginning God created"* (NIV). God imagined and spoke everything into existence. It all began in God's mind. *"All things were made by him, and nothing was made without him. In him there was life, and that life was the light of all people"* (John 1:3–4 NCV).

If it weren't for God's loving control over all things, the world would stop spinning, and there would be no gravity. Everything would fall apart! Your life, your family—your whole existence—are held together by him. In fact, the Bible says, *"He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together"* (Colossians 1:17 NLT).



In what specific ways do you see God's creativity displayed all around you?

2. Even though you know God holds everything in the universe together, are there still things you have a hard time entrusting to God? What are those things?

Prayer: God, thank you that I can learn so much just by looking around me at all you have made. Help me to see with eyes of faith everything that reminds me that you are in control and care about every detail of my life.

DAY 2

God's Creativity on Display

We can learn a lot about God just by looking at nature. We see that he is powerful and that he loves beauty. We see that God cares about details and that he is organized. He has created all kinds of coordinated systems that interrelate—in the galaxies, in our environment, in your body, and in many other ways—and science continues to uncover new relationships between systems. He is a God of order and beauty.

Most of all, we see God's *creativity* in nature. Our Creator is extravagantly creative. Just think of all the plants and animals that fill the earth. He dreamed up every tree, every mountain, every planet—the whole universe! He dreamed up all the millions of variations in creatures and vegetation—and then he created you. He gave you the ability to create, too, by giving you the capacity to dream, imagine, and plan.



If God loves creativity and beauty and order and you are made in his image, what does that say about his dream for your life?

2. Do you think God wants you to apply your own creativity to the plans he has for you? Why or why not?

Prayer: What a beautiful creation you have made, God! When I think about your dream for me, please show me how to apply the spirit of creativity and imagination that you gave me and have modeled for me.

DAY 3

Your *God-Given* Ability

Before you took your first breath, God had already given you the gift of imagination. He hardwired creativity into every cell of your body. The Bible says that you were created in God's image (see Genesis 1:27). What does that mean?

You are a spiritual being. Your spirit is immortal and will outlast your earthly body.

You are intellectual. You can think, reason, and solve problems.

You are relational. You can give and receive love.

You have a moral consciousness. You can discern right from wrong, which makes you accountable to God.

You have the ability to dream. You can imagine doing something you have not yet experienced.

Your ability to dream of something you have not yet experienced is a God-given capacity that sets humans apart from the rest of creation. Fish can't imagine flying or even living out of water. Birds can't imagine living underwater. But humans have dreamed of both of these, and so much more, for ages.

What does all of this have to do with your spiritual development? Everything! Most people are unaware of the important connection between dreaming and faith. The truth is, men and women of deep faith have always been great dreamers.

We see examples throughout the Bible: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Esther, and many more. Instead of settling for the way things are in the world, people with strong faith imagine the possibilities of what *could* happen if they just trusted God a little bit more.

1.

In what ways do you believe you have used your full potential for creativity? How have you seen someone else use their gifts for creativity in amazing ways?

2.

If you knew your plans would not fail, what would you dream up for your life?

Prayer: Father, I want to have the kind of faith that inspires great dreams for my life and encourages other believers to dream big in faith. Please strengthen my knowledge of you and my trust in you so that I expect you to do great things in my life.

What Is Faith?

Faith stretches the imagination.

Faith risks failure.

Faith expects the best.

Faith waits for the answer.

Faith follows instructions.

Faith rebounds from setbacks.

Faith persists always.

Faith inspires great dreams.
