

2 Thessalonians 1 (11-12) – I Pray Your Dreams Come True

Everybody has dreams. I don't mean those things that come to you in your sleep. I mean those things you think about and get happy about and excited about when you are awake. I mean those things you desire most. Those things that capture your imagination. Those things that give you motivation. Those things that you might make goals to work toward. Or things you wish you could do, or wish would happen.

Dreams are a part of everyone's life. But did you know that God wants to make your dreams come true? Not every dream, not every desire, but those dreams, those desires, that he puts in you. I'm not saying that God gives everyone some big dream where you change the whole world. I'm talking about dreams and desires that change *your* world. I'm talking about God giving you dreams and desires to live for him. And to *enjoy* living for him. The text says that it is *every resolve for good*, those dreams and desires that God shapes in you, as God changes you. What are you dreaming about?

God does put godly desires in your heart, and he does plant godly dreams in your mind. Dreams of doing good things, desires for *every work of faith*, for God, his people, and his kingdom. Things that will give him glory. Do your dreams glorify God? Because when you follow what God is leading you to, what God himself is empowering in your life, it gives him glory, and it brings you satisfaction, a godly satisfaction. You should pray for it.

The big idea in this passage of scripture is that God wants you to pray that those resolves for good, those kinds of dreams, come to you, and that they all come true. And God wants you to pray, not only for your own dreams, but for the dreams of others. God wants you to dream. He wants to give you a dream. He wants to shape your dreams. He wants to fulfill those dreams. In a way that will glorify God, and satisfy you. And others. Amen.

Imagine that. It isn't too good to be true. It can be true for you. Because that is what this text is about. Making your dreams come true.

Let's set the stage for this message by travelling straight through this text, asking four questions, and answering them with the text. Then, you will clearly see what Paul is trying to communicate to you. And then we will examine the text a little closer in its individual parts, and put it all back together again. When we finish, you will understand why I chose the title of this message. And you will know how God's power can manifest in your life, for your good, and his glory. And you will know a better way to pray.

So, here we go. Paul starts the passage by saying – *To this end we always pray for you.* Now, look right at the text and follow along...

What does Paul pray for? *that our God may make you worthy of his calling.*

How does God *make you worthy of his calling?* By fulfilling *every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power.*

What is God's calling? *that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him.*

What is the basis of God's calling? *the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Once again. What does Paul pray for? *that our God may make you worthy of his calling.* How does God *make you worthy of his calling?* By fulfilling *every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power.* What is God's calling? *that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him.* What is the basis of God's calling? *the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

So, Paul is praying for believers to fulfill God's call on their lives. He prays that God would graciously give them good desires, and that those desires would come to pass because of God's power. It looks like this: God gives a dream, God makes it happen, God gets the glory, and you get to enjoy glorifying God. Amen. That is what the grace of God is meant to do in your life. Grace is not about granting your every wish, or empowering your sinful desires. Grace gives you godly desires, and it empowers faith filled works to

God's glory, your good, and your godly enjoyment of God himself. Hallelujah! You see, the purpose of God's people is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. That's what you were created for, and what you are called to. That's what you will do for eternity, and what you should strive to do now. As 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, you are to do all you do to the glory of God.

Now, let's define what glorifying God and enjoying God are really all about. To glorify God is to reveal his character and his worth through your life. To enjoy God means to find your satisfaction in glorifying him. These two things, to glorify God, and to enjoy God, fit together. They are one purpose, not two, but like two sides of the same coin. The more you glorify God, the more you enjoy him. And the more you enjoy him, the more you glorify him.

This "glorify God and enjoy him" will reach its fullness when Jesus Christ returns to establish his kingdom on earth. And in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, Paul prays for this future reality to become a present reality in the way you live your everyday life. In other words, to glorify God and enjoy him now. And our text pictures this process in this way: God gives a dream, God makes it happen, God gets the glory, and you get the enjoyment of glorifying God. Again, God gives a dream, God makes it happen, God gets the glory, and you get to enjoy it. Amen.

To this end we always pray for you – Paul is always praying for a certain result. This looks back to vs.10, and also forward in vs.11-12. Vs.10 says – *when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.* This is describing what will happen at the return of Christ, and how believers will marvel at Jesus, as we are glorified, which will bring him glory. This future glory is a prophecy, a promise, for all believers.

So, in vs.11-12, Paul prays that believers will start living with this marvel and with this glory in their lives now. To walk worthy of God is to walk as if God is worthy. So, Paul prays that *the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him,* in the way you live your everyday life.

Paul is not only describing what will happen when Jesus returns. He's also describing how focusing on this future consummation of your call can begin to make this call a way of life now. You are called to salvation, but also to sanctification. This can happen only *according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ*. So, Paul asks for *our God to make you worthy of his calling*. To do this, Paul asks God to *fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power*. Paul is praying for the Holy Spirit to stir you up to desire good works, and to fulfill these desires in and through your life.

These two phrases, *every resolve for good and every work of faith*, are not two separate things. The phrase *every resolve for good* is explained by the phrase *every work of faith*. The prayer is that those thoughts and desires you have to do good things are made manifest as works of faith in action. Resolves are fulfilled, they are turned into works, *by his power, God's power*.

Paul is praying that you would be stirred in your mind and heart to live now in light of the last day, in light of the return of Jesus. So, he prays that your faith would cause you to desire good, godly actions, and that God would make those desires reality through your faith in his power. Have faith, God is at work! He is putting godly desires in your heart. He wants to make those dreams come true! So, have faith in his power to give you godly desires and to fulfill those desires in and through your life. When that happens, the result is that by God's grace, Jesus is being glorified now, and his people are enjoying him now, in the same way as it will be then. It will be more fully and finally realized in that last day. But it can begin to be realized in your life now. This is what you've been called to, and what Paul is praying for.

Our prayers for ourselves and for each other should reflect this same kind of focus. Praying that we would be living for today by having an eye for tomorrow. Our prayer is that God's grace would allow us by faith to lay hold of God's power, so as to take these good desires and manifest them as good works. And this will be a worthy manifestation of Jesus being glorified in us, and us in him. It is going to happen to all believers when Jesus returns. We should pray that we see this happening with believers now.

Think about this. Every resolve for good. Every work of faith. Fulfilled by God's power. All those thoughts you have about doing something good. The little things. The big things. Becoming a better disciple. Improving your character. Growing in grace. And all those godly plans and purposes you are working towards. For ministry. For family. Helping others. Serving others. Teaching others. Discipling others. Enduring the hard times to the glory of God. Enjoying the good times to the glory of God. And God is empowering you through all of it, for his glory, and your good.

All of this can happen, but all of this can only happen by the power of God. But by the grace of God, that power is there, in us, to us, for us, through us, for God's glory, in God's name. This isn't a promise that you'll never have pain or problems. God is not going to give you a dream that you'll never suffer. God's dream for you is that when you suffer, you can still praise his name. And amazingly, marvelously, sometimes God fulfills a dream you never even had. And it's better than you could have ever even imagined.

As Paul says in Colossians 1:9-12 – And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Paul is always praying that God will give you godly desires, and that God will use your faith in God's power to fulfill those desires in your actions. God gives a dream, God makes it happen, God gets the glory, and you get the enjoyment of glorifying God. And that is what will be forever for the Christian. God's ultimate dream will come true. We will all live with him for eternity. Our dream should be to live for him now.

I'm praying for you. Please pray for me too. That we will glorify God, and enjoy him forever, starting right now. May God make our dreams come true.

For the Christian, it is a glorious ending, when Jesus returns and ushers in our eternity. And it is a glorious possibility, of God's glory being revealed in us, to us, and through us, even as we have to endure in this life.

But now, we must also see the other side of this. Because these verses fit in the context of the Judgment Day. It's going to be great for true believers. But it is going to be horrible for the unbelievers. So, let's read vs.5-10, and you'll see the context, and the contrast. Between those who are rebellious and those who are repentant. This again is describing what will happen at the return of Jesus. And also, how someone is living before he returns. Those who are repentant will have all their good dreams come true. But for those who are rebellious, it will be worse than their worst nightmare. It will be hell.

Now you see the context of vs.11-12. Believers are being afflicted and persecuted. They suffer bad things, but they still want to do good things. The faithless are against them, but they still want to do works of faith. This is because of God's grace and his power working in their lives. Those who live their faith, and those who are without faith. Vs.5 says this is a sign.

Chapter 2 starts by talking about the Antichrist, and how he will be, and who will follow him. Of course, as 1 John 2:18 says – *Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.* This matters, for you, right now.

2 Thessalonians 1:10-12 talks about how God works in the lives of the repentant, in other words, those put their trust in Jesus Christ. And 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 talks about how Satan works in the lives of the rebellious, in other words, those who don't live for Jesus. *With wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* So, what are you dreaming about? And do your dreams glorify God? Because your godly dreams, or your ungodly nightmares, will all come true. What happens now is up to you.