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1 } **SO YOU'VE GOT AN IDEA?**

IT ALL STARTED FOR ME ON a mountain in Russia. In a blizzard. At 16,000 feet. I could've written it off to oxygen deprivation, but something within me said it was more. God placed something big in my heart that day.

The blizzard pummeling our side of Mount Elbrus made our attempt to summit the highest peak in Europe an exercise in futility. We gave up for the day. Secretly, I was relieved. I realized earlier that morning when we pulled out the ice axes and roped our team together that I was in way over my head. This was above my climbing level; I had no experience ice climbing and only basic knowledge of how to use the axe in my hand. I was still loving it, but the situation made me remember there was some real danger involved.

On the way back down, we discovered that the blizzard was causing a whiteout that covered the trail markers. We stopped to reorient.

“Wait here. I find trail,” my Ukrainian guide, Oksana, said in her flat Russian accent.

I nodded and knelt down in the deep snow. Ahead there was a break in the storm. Through the clouds I could see the Cheget Valley far below us—an encouraging sign.

I looked at my watch. It was noon. I thought of my family, soundly asleep back in Texas. They had no idea how dangerous conditions had become.

In that instant something hit me. It was one of those moments of transcendence. I felt alive and alert. I realized just how much I loved this kind of thing. I loved the thrill of climbing mountains. It was a spiritual experience for me, a way of deepening my sense of dependence on God and feeling connected to the sheer power of the vast world He created.

Travel experiences like this shaped my worldview. They gave me a wider perspective on life and a greater appreciation for God’s amazing world—the people, the geography, the diversity.

I thought of my friends back in the US. They thought I was crazy when I announced I was planning to go climb a mountain in Russia. “Why would you do that? It’s expensive isn’t it?”

I tried hard to explain it, but they had no experience with mountain climbing, no frame of reference. I wished there was a way to show them how much they were missing. I thought of a favorite quote of mine from St. Augustine: “The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.”

In that moment of transcendence, I realized something. I finally knew what I wanted to do with my life. I was on track to go to law school. That’s what everyone said I’d be good at. I believed them, but I was never thrilled about the prospect.

In the midst of a blizzard hiding our way down the mountain, toward the safety of base camp, God placed a dream into my heart. He gave me a vision to start bringing people with me on these kinds of trips. I wanted to start helping others create spiritual adventures.

YOUR PROBLEM TO SOLVE

I'm convinced that God has given each of us a message to share with the world to bring Him glory. I'm also convinced that along with that message we all have a problem that God has uniquely equipped us to solve.

Let me establish something at the outset. God can solve any problem He wants to solve with the flit of an eyelash. He doesn't need us. For whatever reason, He chooses to let us participate in ultimate goal of bringing Himself glory. It's definitely not the most efficient method. I'm slow. I fumble the ball a lot. Inexplicably, God still chooses to use people like me. You are no exception. He wants to use you.

You may not have received a vision on a mountain in a blizzard. Your vision may have started by seeing a simple need. God works differently in each person. The circumstance surrounding how you got your God Idea isn't the important thing.

Doing it is.

Whether your goal is to write a book, go to college, pay off a huge debt, or start a business, never discount the dream God placed in your heart, however it may have come to you.

This book is about taking practical steps toward sharing your

unique message and solving the problem God has equipped you to solve.

This book is for *those* people. Those who are certain God has given them a vision or dream. If you've got it, you know what I'm talking about. It's a burning desire to do something for God. It doesn't have to be clear, but there is something within you that yearns to solve some problem or share a unique message you think the world needs to hear.

How do you know if you are at that place?

Well, when you have a dream or vision that God has placed in your heart, you are obsessed with it. It's what you talk about *ad nauseam* with all your patient friends at the dinner table. You think about it all the time. Working on it feels like a moral imperative. Conversely, not doing it would feel almost sinful.

If you are at that place, I think you'll find this book helpful.

If you aren't there yet, I hope this book will inspire you. Read through it prayerfully. Then keep praying, explore, read lots of books, and start serving. God wants to show you His unique calling for your life.

If you had a dream that now seems impossible, or you wonder if your moment has passed, I want to encourage you. If you are still alive, then the dream is still alive—no matter how dead or impossible it may seem. I pray this book will revive the vision in your heart.

I've started quite a few things in my life. It hasn't always been easy. At times it can be downright hard. It often takes years.

In this book, I want to share the process I stumbled upon for taking a God Idea that seems so overwhelming that you don't know where to start, and breaking it down into smaller steps. I'll tell a little of my story along the way.

One warning: If you don't have a God Idea, this book might still help you, but you'll probably think some parts of it seem a little too hands-off.

You see, this book is for folks who have a dream and vision in their hearts that is so big it will be impossible to accomplish without God's direct intervention and miraculous provision. That's how I define a God Idea.

One of my main focuses is making sure God is always in the center of the mix. If yours isn't that kind of dream, you probably don't need this book.

So if you've got a dream—a really big, crazy vision that is impossible to accomplish without God—I think you might find this book helpful.

Enough set-up. God has a plan for us. We need to get moving!

*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus
for good works, which God prepared beforehand,
that we should walk in them.”*

—EPHESIANS 2:10