

January 21, 2024

You In Five Years – Too Small To Fail

WHO will you become by 2029? I hope you have been doing some BIG thinking on the subject, because BIG thinking is more motivating than small thinking.

Maybe you can imagine some great changes to aim for! BIG changes.

But HOW to get there is the real question, right?

Today's title is "Too Small To Fail".

The reason for this idea is that as noted in part 1, so many of us have already given up on New Year's resolutions because of past failures. Some of the reasons for this is because of the "**HOW**". We covered how so often New Year's resolutions are often all about self help, But if self is the problem, how can self help?

So, **HOW** do we aim for BIG exciting accomplishments that are motivating ... that won't defeat us?

That's a great question, I'm glad you asked!

Sometimes big accomplishments seem too big... and big goals seem too lofty, and unrealistic. Because of this we are often easily defeated when we don't see BIG results quick enough. So, we give up.

So, what do we do?

Let's open our Bibles and read about this common human experience! We turn to Deuteronomy in a predictive pep talk!

Deuteronomy 7:17–18 (NIV) You may say to yourselves, "These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?"¹⁸ But do not be afraid of them; remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt.

Backstory: This is part of the bigger story of how God chose one unremarkable and ordinary person named Abram (later renamed by God Abraham) and gave him a promise. This was after he revealed himself to him a few times. And Abraham believed him. That promise had elements that were fulfilled in his lifetime, but some elements were so big, they were for the future, and yet Abraham believed God. That carried forward a promise from Adam and Eve's time. Abraham believing God, placed him on a powerful faith journey! Something foundational for his family, that would become a nation, and a particular descendant who would bring salvation.

Deuteronomy is the record of Moses' speech just prior to entering in the Land God had promised to Abraham, and the nation he would make from his descendents.

But there was a big problem. That land was occupied with fortified cities, and super fortified armies, with trained warriors FAR bigger than they were. They seemed like giants to the people.

How does that relate to us?

Ever faced a big challenge that seemed too big?

“You may say to yourselves...

- HOW can I possibly drive these bad habits out?
- Or how can I possibly make that big change?
- Or how can I possibly achieve this big challenge God placed on my heart?

I love what Moses was saying here!!! Are you ready for point 1?

I. Don't look to your LIMITATIONS look to the LORD

Don't look at how big the challenge or problem is, look at how big God is!!

There is an advantage of being small in your own eyes! This motivates you to depend on GOD!

There is a lot on this theme in the Talk It Over (Group discussion guide).

Deuteronomy 7:21 (NIV) Do not be terrified by them, for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.

As we continue this passage in Deuteronomy we discover that...

II. Victory will come INCREMENTALLY

Deuteronomy 7:22 (NIV) The Lord your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little...

That is not what they wanted to hear, I guarantee it. What they wanted to hear was how God would blitz them. They wanted to hear how it would be easy.

Are we any different? We want everything fast. We want one prayer, then one quick corresponding miracle, instantaneously. Why not? He's God. He could do it.

Perhaps your goal is to be DEBT FREE by 2029.

- You might start out super motivated. You give up buying expensive coffee drinks, and apply that to debt reduction. But after 6 months drinking coffee you don't like as much, you look at how little your debt was reduced and you feel like this is your GIANT, and you want God to DO IT FOR YOU ... You want a miracle, not all these little steps... you want a big one, so you stop the little steps.

QUESTION: What is the advantage of God doing this through the incremental plan?

QUESTION: What do you think would happen if he always did it for us the easy way? Does this really strengthen your faith for the long haul or will it keep you in the same weakened place?

QUESTION: Why does God lead us one step at a time?

- Why does He give us one day's worth of strength at a time?
- Why does he instruct us to pray ***“Give us today our daily bread”*** and remembering that Jesus is “the bread of life.”
 - God wants to walk with us, helping us every day.
 - Today’s prayer doesn’t fully cover all of 2024,
 - It doesn’t fully cover the next 5 years.
 - Faith is daily relying on him, taking steps with him.
 - DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE SMALL STEPS.

God knows that always providing instantaneous miracles AND bypassing all your small steps would not be best for your faith.

We gain strength through these ongoing steps of faith--through our perseverance.

We walk with God only in the present tense. We express faith in the present tense. We live in the present tense. And we gain kingdom ground ***“little by little”*** *Deuteronomy 7:22.*

Victory isn't one huge thing and then all of a sudden you're undefeated, it's a small thing continually repeated.

–Levi Lusko

III. Make your HABITS too SMALL to fail

They need to be small enough that you will actually do them. Maybe you should take more time to make sure your steps are stupidly small, so that you will do them.

- If you have not been working out, don’t start with 100 push ups.
- If you do that on day one, **there will probably not be a day two!** You will be in too much pain.
- It would be better to have a goal of doing **1 push up.**
- What happens when you start doing your small thing?
- Without realizing it you will be proving Newton's law of motion to be right.

An object at rest stays at rest, but once you get in motion, it's easier to stay in motion than to stop.

Take a step. Then keep taking steps. It gets easier.

LIKEWISE: if you have never established a Bible reading habit for yourself, you might want to start with a smaller goal rather than a larger more intense goal.

Rather than do a whole through the Bible plan...start with the goal of 5 minutes a day. If you aren't reading anything in a daily habit yet, why not start today, 5 minutes. May I suggest the shortest Gospel—Mark. Just read about Jesus. Can you commit to 5 minutes a day?

Why do we keep emphasizing the habit of Bible reading? Because it is one of those keystone habits.

What's a keystone habit?

A keystone is that key stone in an arch that holds the other stones together.

A Bible reading habit is a keystone habit that holds so many other habits together.

In fact, FAITH comes from this habit, and the strengthening of your faith comes from this habit!

Romans 10:17 (NIV) Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Some habits are more important than others when it comes to taking steps from wherever you are to where God wants you to be!

If you don't have a daily habit in God's Word, I urge you to start one.

Also, "Don't do life alone." If you don't already have a group to encourage you in your journey of faith, try one!! Go to GROUP CONNECT!

Hurts, habits, hangups...ADDICTIONS seem like GIANTS too big for you?... Consider ReGen (ReGeneration).

Thank you for coming today. I hope you have been encouraged.



Talk It Over

You In Five Years
Part 3
"Too Small To Fail"

SMALL TALK

1. Share a personal experience when you felt genuinely humbled, weak, or small. How did that experience affect your perspective?

VIEWPOINT

2. **Read 1 Samuel 9:21; 10:1 and 15:1-23.** How does Saul's disobedience highlight the failure of remaining small in one's own eyes before God?
3. **Read 1 Samuel 17.** How does David's approach to facing Goliath demonstrate the idea of being small in one's own eyes while relying on God's power?

GETTING PERSONAL

4. Where may pride be hindering your reliance on God? How can you become "small in your own eyes"?
5. Share a situation where you felt overwhelmed and relied on God's power. How did this experience impact your faith, and what did you learn about trusting in God's strength?
6. In what areas do you find it challenging to accept or admit weakness? (**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**) How might embracing your limitations and weaknesses lead to a deeper reliance on God?

MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

1. Choose a specific aspect of your life (work, relationships, personal goals) and intentionally surrender it to God each day for a week. Journal your experiences and observations, noting how being small in your own eyes and relying on God's power impacts your perspective and outcomes.