

## BOOK

*It's Not Over: Leaving Behind Disappointment and Learning Again*

## AUTHOR

Josh Gagnon

## PUBLISHER

Harper Collins

## PUBLICATION DATE

February 2020

## SYNOPSIS [From the publisher]

"Pursuing a dream is essential to living a life with purpose. Yet we often bury our burning desires and dreams deep in our hearts because it seems as if there's *no way* we can accomplish them. In *It's Not Over*, pastor Joshua Gagnon, founder of the Next Level Church network, reminds us that we were *born* to dream – and to dream *big*. In fact, our dreams have the power to shape our lives."

---

"It's all about the power dreams have to shape our lives – to influence both who we are and what we can become."

"I know firsthand how amazing it feels to achieve that kind of dream. It's life-changing in so many ways! But I also know what it's like to carry the disappointment and despair of watching a treasured dream slowly wither over time and feeling as though there's nothing you can do to stop it from dying completely."

"In 2008, my wife and I officially launched Next Level Church in Dover, New Hampshire. We had no money. We had no congregation. And we had no experience as church planters. At that time, we didn't even realize we were trying to plant a church in the least church region of the United States. All we had was the dream."

"There have been many obstacles along the way – we still face some today – and there have definitely been times when I've felt as if everything were about to come crashing down. And yet, each day when I go to work, I feel like a kid on Christmas morning who somehow got exactly what he wanted with every single gift."

"But that's the thing about God-sized dreams: they don't give up. They keep burning, even when we do everything in our power to stuff them down and snuff the flame to ashes."

"There is no use in running before you are sent; there is no use in attempting to do God's work without God's power. A man working without this unction, a man working without this anointing, a man working without the Holy Ghost upon him, is losing time after all." –D. L. MOODY

"A God-sized dream is a compelling vision, goal, or longing that drives us toward something way too big for us to accomplish on our own. It's a dream or a yearning we feel inside – usually it's something that we deeply desire to achieve or experience – and yet we often have no idea how to bring it about."

"God-sized dreams are those desires inside us that simply won't be ignored."

“So many people have rejected living out their God-sized dreams because they are focused on who they are instead of who God is.”

“God-sized dreams are often planted in our hearts when we encounter a specific need.”

“When God breaks your heart over a specific need, it’s often the first sign that God is planting a dream inside you.”

“Remember this: you don’t have to force your way into God’s plan; you just need to move in His direction when He opens a door.”

“When it comes to finding God’s will for your life, your heart matters more than your decisions.”

“Opposition is a prerequisite to achieving any great dream. Especially a God-sized dream. Don’t be concerned when you are facing opposition; be concerned when your dreams are so small there is no reason for opposition.”

“What’s at the root of our experiences with serious, life-altering disappointment? What causes it? Some people say that our hopes and desires are the root. They think that if we can just limit our dreams – if we can just be realistic about life – we’ll eliminate the risk of getting hurt. But that’s not easily done. Our hopes and desires are often planted in our hearts by God’s design, and they serve a necessary role in spurring us on to pursue our dreams.”

“When we feel like we have earned or deserve what it is we are hoping, praying, and dreaming for, we are often left in despair when it doesn’t happen.”

“That is the antidote for disappointment caused by our unsundered expectations: actively, deliberately choosing to trust in God even when our circumstances don’t make sense – even when our circumstances still cause us pain.”

“What could have motivated me to do such a thing without any planning or even any real thought? I’m afraid I know the answer: discontentment. When I saw how nice the project house turned out on TV, my own home suddenly seemed insufficient. Not good enough for me and my family.”

“Here’s something I’ve learned the hard way: discontentment is a major obstacle to achieving our God-sized dreams. That’s because it constantly distracts us from our purpose – from what we are designed to desire, pursue, and achieve.”

“Discontentment distracts us from our God-sized dreams. It points us toward what doesn’t matter at the expense of what does.”

“I told everyone in attendance that we were about to experience God’s blessings – that our church would one day expand outward to many locations and that our ministries would affect thousands of people by connecting them with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

“I feel like God has called me to be a pastor.” Whew! I’d done it! I told him all about my God-sized dream and all the fears and insecurities that came with it. Then I waited for him to respond. He was quiet for a long time, focused on his shot. Then he swung, hooking the ball to the left and landing it in the woods out of play. His face was grim when he turned to me and said eleven words I will never forget: “No, Josh, I don’t think you’re called into full-time ministry.” Oh no, I thought. It’s happening! The first person who’d heard about my God-given, God-sized dream had shot it down like a clay pigeon.”

“Today, I don’t harbor any bitterness toward that pastor; I believe his criticism was well-meaning. In the end, though, he was wrong, and his words—just like those from the lady on our launch day at NLC—were just another form of resistance I needed to push through in order to pursue and accomplish my dreams.”

“In my life, I never allow someone to speak into my dreams who hasn’t first offered to sweat with me while I’m chasing them. In other words, not all opinions are created equal.”

“My primary goal in writing this book is to help you move past the obstacles that have interfered with your dreams so that you can once again feel the joy of pursuing your God-inspired purpose—your God-sized dream. What we’ve explored together so far has really focused on the first half of that equation: moving past obstacles. After defining God-sized dreams, we addressed how disappointment tempts us to surrender those dreams and can even shut down our ability to dream at all. Next, we saw how discouragement distracts us from pursuing our dreams, and finally, we talked about the resistance we’ll face whenever we choose to chase a God-sized dream. This chapter is a turning point, because now it’s time to move into the second half of the equation I described above: learning to dream again.”

“You need people who can help and support you on the journey, and you need people who can bring strength and energy and wisdom into your life when the going gets tough. I call such people encouragers, and there are two types in this category I want us to focus on: sidekicks and heroes.”

“I learned an interesting fact about draft horses. Each of these massive, muscular animals is strong enough to pull up to 8,000 pounds—but when two of them are teamed up, together they can pull up to 24,000 pounds. What’s more, when the two horses have trained together and have synergy, they can pull up to 32,000 pounds in tandem!”

“We’ve covered two types of relationships that have influence over our dreams, and it’s easy to see where each of them fall. Enemies are bad and cause harm to our dreams, while encouragers are good and help us achieve them. The categories are obvious. But things are different for the third group of relationships, which I refer to as experts. That’s because experts can both help us and harm us as we pursue our dreams—which means we need to be wise in how to approach them and allow them to speak into our lives.”

“Experts can provide a lot of value and a lot of help as we pursue our dreams. However, there’s a big difference between experts and heroes. Namely, an expert is someone who has information but no relationship. Experts have facts, but they rarely understand your story and they have not invested in your pursuit of your dreams. They are outside observers.”

“For the first time, I realized that our prayers and our dreams are not two separate expressions of who we are. Instead, they are directly connected. When our ability to dream becomes weak, the same happens to our prayer life.”

“You can use God’s unchanging nature as a foundation for your prayer life. As you seek to restore the intimacy in your connection with Him, start this way: “God, please help me trust Your character over my circumstances.”

“God is standing beside you. He is in the fire with you. You may feel the intensity of the heat, you may be scared, and you may think you’re all alone. Or it may feel as if your dreams are on fire, and you may feel discouraged and uncertain of the future.”