

Open Your Eyes

By

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"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." John 4:35



If you know me, it's no secret that my favorite movie of all time is "It's a Wonderful Life" with Jimmy Stewart, made back 1946. I think this movie has become such a classic because we all relate to George Bailey. I sure do. We all tend to think we have some destiny out there that appears more exciting and romantic than the life we're living. Often, it feels like we're stuck at our particular station in life. I relate, as I live in Tulsa, OK, running a small business, sometimes feeling very insignificant. As it says in the movie, while others go off to do other great ventures, I fight the "Battle of Bedford Falls." I think we all feel discontent at one time or another. 1 John 4:1 says "test the spirits to see whether they are from God." I believe one evil spirit which tries to speak into the lives of believers is "the spirit of discontentment." I think many believers who get on fire for the Lord begin to feel like they have an adventure awaiting them in full-time ministry. "If I could only spend all my time talking about God, studying God's Word and doing His work," we think. I think most of these promptings are not callings to full-time ministry, but temptings from the "spirit of discontentment."

A few years ago, God really helped me in my thinking, when he showed me Acts 17:26-27:

"From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each of us."

Wow! Could it be? God determined that I would live in Tulsa, OK at this time in history, and that He did it so that I would reach out for Him, and furthermore, that I might help others reach out for Him. All of the sudden, I felt an anointing and a purpose on my life here in "Bedford Falls." As I look back on the last 8 years since I met Rocky Fleming, and we engaged in The Journey here in Tulsa, I see that God has been doing a great work in my hometown. Over 800 men (and even some women) have gone on The Journey, and I've heard countless stories of transformation. Just to know that I played a small part in all of this helps me give praise to God and realize, "I have a wonderful life."

Lately, I've been inspired by my brother Les Pearsey and the Influencers of Bakersfield as I feel the Holy Spirit prompting me to lead this army of 800 Influencers in Tulsa to "Live it Out" in Tulsa. Believing that God has strategically placed at least 800 Men of God in Tulsa "for such a time as this" to be part of His kingdom harvest. I've encouraged our men to begin opening their eyes and looking around our community, and we will see many unmet needs. I think of another of my favorite movies, Superman, with Christopher Reeves, when he first goes public, as he flies through sky, casting his sight over the city, looking right and left for someone who needs rescue. I think also of the scene in Rocky's book, "The Journey to the Inner Chamber," as Influencer rides his horse through the Refugee Camp, looking for someone who needs help. Brothers, if we open our eyes, right where we are in life, we will see many opportunities to live out the life God has given us.

I looked up some statistics in Tulsa the other day, as I pondered the needs in my community. I was startled to discover:

- Over 92,000 people live in poverty
- In 2013, there were 66 homicides, 373 rapes, 994 robberies, 2400 aggravated assaults, 5935 burglaries, 12,653 accounts of larceny and 2389 stolen cars
- 500-1000 teens are homeless at any given time
- The divorce rate is 13.5%, but that rate is only lower than I thought because in today's culture, people aren't getting married
- 12% of new births are to girls 19 and younger
- We are 3rd in the nation in teen suicide
- 43% of our population (over 240,000) do not have any religious affiliation

Yes, Tulsa is a mission field! The time is NOW for Influencers to begin turning the statistics. So, what do we do? We pray, we then open our eyes to the needs around us, and then we insert ourselves into difficult, dark situations and bring Light. Like

Influencer in Rocky's book, we come alongside refugees and help meet their basic needs first like food, clothing, and shelter. But we cannot stop there! Jesus told us to MAKE DISCIPLES! It's not enough to feed the homeless. It's not even enough to lead people to Christ and connect them with a church. Jesus told us to MAKE DISCIPLES!

God has given us a wonderful discipleship tool in The Journey. I've led 8 groups of all different types of men, and even some couples, and I can tell you unequivocally THAT IT WORKS! One of the key aspects of starting a Journey Group is to reach out to those in your sphere of influence, believing that God has given us "Influence" with certain individuals. When a Journey Guide truly prays before he launches a group, asking God to send the men, God guides his heart to invite the right men. I believe God is going to call some of us to begin reaching outside our comfort zones into the darker corners of our communities to MAKE DISCIPLES of "the least" in our cities. It is here where we will find some of Satan's greatest strongholds.

One man, who was in our original Journey group in Tulsa, is now a high school teacher at a school with a 98% poverty rate amongst students. It has been very difficult, and he feels like he is in a war zone every day. He asked a group of Influencers to go to the school and pray over it right before school started, and we did. While on the prayer walk, he showed us the Teacher's Lounge, which was old, dirty and empty. He said the teachers had no place to find refreshment and solace from the difficult teaching environment. God OPENED OUR EYES to a need. A few weeks ago, Influencers in Tulsa did an Extreme Makeover of the Teacher's Lounge and transformed it into a wonderful haven for these embattled servants. Along the way, we added the fruits of the Spirit, the word "Hope" and a cross in our decorating. These extra touches of God were not unnoticed by the teachers. Also, out of this, an FCA chapter was started at the school and several students have already given their lives to Christ.



This is just one small example of the opportunities all around us. So, listen all you George Baileys out there! God has placed you where you live, in your current job, with your certain gifts, FOR A REASON.

OPEN YOUR EYES!