



Sermon Series: Dream Ladder

Part One: Determination and Dedication

Proverbs 29:18

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Objective Sentence: Everyone can make their dreams become a reality by building a four rung ladder to them.

Introduction: Proverbs 29:18 Amplified: Where there is no vision—no dream [no revelation of God and His word], the people lack discipline and cast off restraint. **Tom Brady:** The only thing I ever wanted to be was a professional football player. **Source Unknown:** As is your desire so goes your will. As is your will so goes your deed. As is your deed so goes your destiny. **E. Stanley Jones:** You are made into the image of that on which you habitually concentrate. Whatever gets your attention gets you.

Charles William Paddock represented the USA at the 1920 Summer Olympics in Belgium. He won a gold medal in the 100 meter final, he placed second in the 200 meter event and won a third medal in the 4 x 100 meter relay. He was the first person to be named "**The fastest man alive.**" Paddock spoke to one thousand kids in a packed school auditorium in Cleveland, Ohio. He walked to the front of the stage, put both hands in his hip pockets and in a full strong voice shot out the question, "Do you know who you are? You don't do you? Well, I'm here to tell you. You are Americans, and you are the children of God. You can be anything you want to be if you have a goal and will work, believe, and exemplify good moral character. God will help you to become what you really want to be! A poor black Junior High student by the name of Jesse Owens was in the audience, listening intently as this famous athlete talked. He decided that he too wanted to be the fastest human being on earth. He shared his dream with Charles Riley his track coach. Coach Riley said to him, "It's great to have a dream son, but to attain your goal it is necessary to build a ladder to it; and on the ladder you must have steps that will support the weight of all you hope to achieve. The first step on your dream ladder must be **determination** and the second **dedication**. The third step is **discipline!** The fourth step enabling you to build your dream is **attitude!**" This young man did just that and won a record eight individual NCAA championships at Ohio State University and was affectionately known as the Buckeye Bullet, but he was not allowed to live on the college campus. In 1935 he set three world records and tied another in less than an hour at the Big Ten track meet which has been called "the greatest 45 minutes ever in sports history and his achievement has never been equaled.

#1. Dream Ladder

A. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: The heights that great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night.

- 1. Determination** (*1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Amplified Bible*: Do you not know that in a race all the runners run [their very best to win], but only one receives the prize? Run [your race] in such a way that you may seize the prize *and* make it yours! ²⁵ Now every athlete who [goes into training and] competes in the games is disciplined *and* exercises self-control in all things. They do it to win a crown that withers, but we [do it to receive] an imperishable [crown that cannot wither].
- a. *Tom Brady*: I think that at the start of a game, you're always playing to win, and then maybe if you're ahead late in the game, you start playing not to lose. The true competitors are the ones who always play to win. *TB*—You can't go out and practice average on Wednesday, average on Thursday, okay on Friday and then expect to play well on Sunday. *TB*—I am not a person that's self satisfied just being out there. I want to go out there and play great. If you don't play to win, don't play at all.
 - b. *Ephesians 3:20* Now to Him [Jesus Christ] who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power working in us
 - c. *Pastor Dan*: There is greatness in you. *Acts 1:8, John 7:37-38, Philippians 4:13*
 - d. *Claude M. Bristol*: It's the constant and determined effort that breaks down all resistance and sweeps away all obstacles.
 - e. *Calvin Coolidge*: Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.
- 2. Dedication** (*2 Timothy 4:7-8* I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing).
- a. *Napoleon Hill*: Every person who wins in any undertaking must be willing to cut all sources of retreat. Only by doing so can one be sure of maintaining that state of mind known as **a burning desire to win** which is essential to success.
 - b. *Orison Swett Marden*: The successful men and women of today are those of one overmastering idea, one unwavering aim, people of a single and intense purpose.
 - c. *Pastor Dan*: In our walk of faith it is imperative to narrow our interests to a single purpose in pursuits. *Matthew 7:13-14* You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴ But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it
 - d. *Pete Carroll*: We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. Our program is built around being great in every moment, because all the little moments eventually add up to the big events down the line, whether on Sundays or otherwise. Let's get our habits right.
 - e. *James 1:5-8* If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God ... with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.)
 - f. *Bunker Hunt*: To be successful you must decide exactly what you want to accomplish, and then resolve to pay the price to get it.

Closing and Invitation: Nick Foles: After a time in the **NFL** ... I wanted to retire. I really struggled and couldn't pick up a football for eight months. I had no love for the game, and it was tough. My faith drove me back to the game. I kept reading scripture, I kept praying, I kept asking God ... for signs ... 'Hey God, please just put it on the wall ... I want to know,' but that's not how it works ... He's not always going to do that. He was shaping me. He was bringing me down to my knees At that moment, through that prayer, He spoke to my heart, 'Hey, just take a step of faith. You're either going to stop playing the game of football and go onto a different area of your life and I'm going to be with you ... or you're going to step back into football and you're

going to continue to play and I'm going to be with you every step of the way and you're going to play to glorify me. Choosing to return to football was the "greatest decision I ever made. My struggle resulted in me receiving a "completely reinvigorated outlook on the game of football." My story is centered around **2 Corinthians 12:9 Amplified**: He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you [My lovingkindness and My mercy are more than enough—always available—regardless of the situation]; for [My] power is being perfected [and is completed and shows itself most effectively] in [your] weakness.