

International Best Selling Author of *Live Love Lead*

BRIAN HOUSTON

THERE IS MORE

**WHEN THE WORLD
SAYS YOU CAN'T,
GOD SAYS YOU CAN**

**SNEAK
PEEK**



**SAMPLE
ONLY**



THERE IS MORE

WHEN THE WORLD SAYS YOU CAN'T,
GOD SAYS YOU CAN

BRIAN HOUSTON



WATERBROOK

SNEAK PEEK  SAMPLE ONLY

Buy the whole book at WMBooks.com/ThereIsMore

Introduction

Exceeding, Abundant, and Above

Please, sir, I want some more.”* These famous words of a starving Oliver Twist have undoubtedly echoed in the hearts and minds of millions of people who also long to have just a little bit more. Perhaps you long for more time, more resources, more space. Maybe you simply need to find a bit more energy and motivation to continue along the path you currently find yourself on, or maybe you have a dream in your heart that continues to evade you. Maybe you’re walking in your calling but still find yourself asking, *What is this all about? Should I be doing more with my life?*

The narrative of this book is not about selfishness and greed. It’s not about acquiring more, about avarice and indulgence. It’s not even an essay on satisfaction and self-fulfillment. It’s about calling—God’s amazing plans for your life and the sufficiency of His grace in superseding your wildest dreams, all for a purpose bigger than you are.

Have you ever stopped to wonder what God’s response would be to

* Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, in *Works of Charles Dickens, Household Edition* (New York: Sheldon, 1864), 34.

your heart's cry for more? It is my firm belief that, unlike Mr. Bumble (the tyrannical caretaker of the orphanage in Charles Dickens's classic novel), the Savior of the universe would bend down and in the most caring of manners say, "More what? And how much more? My supply is unending. My mercy is limitless. My grace is more than you need."

You see, the more that God wants for your life is beyond comprehension. It's not limited to space and time, not able to be measured with earthly devices or human minds. Ephesians 3:20–21 tells us plainly, "God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us" (MSG). Other translations put it this way: He can "do above and beyond" (HCSB) or "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Have you ever stopped to think about that? God can do *anything*. And not just a little bit more than you have already asked for or dreamed of. *Far* more.

What are your wildest dreams? Your craziest ideas, deepest longings, and grandest plans—the things you've not dared tell anyone and barely allowed your soul to imagine? Because it is exactly that dream, that vision, those grand plans of yours that I'm telling you aren't enough. What a small thinker you are! All of heaven is looking down upon you, shaking their heads, and saying, "Is that *all*?! Is that all he wants? Is that all she can dream of?"

Allow me to stretch your thinking here, dear reader, because we serve the ultimate Big Thinker. No plans of yours even *compare* to His. Your heart's cry for more has been answered with a chuckle and a grin from a Father's heart that takes what you see and expands it into something you can't see.

God can take every limitation that has been put on your life—by yourself or by others—and expand your heart and purpose in a way that is *way* bigger, *way* higher, *way* more effective than anything you could imagine.

I've seen it in my own life. I can testify to His faithfulness when it comes to more—more than I wanted, more than I dreamed, more than I ever thought I would need. I'm not speaking of simple material matters, of monetary things or things that can be counted or valued by earthly standards. I've watched as God has exceeded the dreams in my heart, the visions I've had for my own life and the lives of my family and those closest to me. I've experienced the “much more” favor of God when it comes to my marriage, leadership, children, and friendships.

For many years, while standing in one of our Hillsong Church auditoriums or by the side of the stage at one of our annual conferences, people have asked me, “Could you see all this when you started?” You know, I have always been a determined visionary, but in my wildest dreams I could not have imagined all God has done and is doing. I couldn't have planned it, executed it, or dreamed of the days we are living in now. And I've stopped trying to. You can never out-dream God.

I've learned to trust God with the secret desires of my heart—the things I don't know that I need and the things I thought I didn't need. Many a time, I've discovered there is more to the valleys I walked through than simply the pain I experienced. There is more to learn in storms than what my eyes were fixed on in the natural. There is more purpose to my provision than simply my own fulfillment and enjoyment—so much more.

In fact, in the sentences preceding the glorious verse I already quoted (Ephesians 3:20–21), we are given a glimpse into the reason for our more:

I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (verses 14–21)

Filled with all the fullness of God. Glory to all generations.

This book is about exactly that: the character and nature of the God we serve and His desire to see each and every one of us experience that Ephesians 3 life—His desire to see us filled to overflowing with every good, wonderful, and perfect gift from Him, purposed to build the church, expand the kingdom, and echo His name throughout the generations. The following chapters unfold the purpose of our more, the source of our more, and the understanding that more is less about us, more about others, and all about Him. But first you need to understand that our heavenly Father sees more in you than you could ever see in yourself.

My prayer is that you will turn each of these pages and discover something new within the ancient text scattered throughout. I hope that regardless of the prayers you have prayed, the triumphs you've celebrated, the failures you've lived or perceived, you will come to understand that

there is more grace, goodness, mercy, kindness, love, forgiveness, and favor waiting in your future. God's will for your life—heaven's perfect purpose—is indeed beyond your wildest dreams. And if you have ever asked for more and, like *Oliver Twist*, been met by angry words or an indifferent spirit, or if you've ever had your motives questioned or been unjustly assailed, I pray that through my personal experiences and revelation, you will find healing as you discover a little bit more about the true character of our giving God and His desires for your life.

There is always more to uncover—more to discover about who He is and who He says you are. There is more ahead of you than you've allowed yourself to dream or allowed yourself to believe. There is more room in your life for the things of God and the people of God than you even thought possible—more space to be made for God to make His presence known in and through you. And if for some reason you've stopped dreaming big things for your life, stopped imagining that your life is a story to tell or a legacy to be remembered, then this book is a good place to start again.

Dreams and Destiny

Seventeen. What did you dream about when you were seventeen? Did you dare to dream? Were you allowed to dream? Were you laughed at for your dreams? Perhaps family or peers were threatened by your dreams. Or are you the product of an environment where you were encouraged to think big and dream impossible dreams? And if you are not yet seventeen or are well beyond seventeen, what grand things do you dream about now?

I was a dreamer. You see, I came from a land that was then said to have three million people and seventy million sheep. That's great if your life's grand ambition is making woolen jumpers or Roquefort cheese, but it's not necessarily a launching pad for dreaming of building anything with worldwide influence and impact. Interestingly, this small land in the Southern Ocean has produced (among many other fine endeavors) the first man to climb Mount Everest and the first man to split the atom. It is home to the famous landscape displayed in the splendor of the Lord of the Rings movies, as well as many world-renowned entertainers, actors, athletes, and businesspeople. Plus of course it boasts the world's most successful and famed rugby team, the New Zealand All Blacks. So

maybe, just maybe, humble beginnings are the perfect soil for a blossoming and fruitful life.

In the 1960s, my family lived in a state house, which was a government-owned, timber-lined dwelling that stood like a sullen soldier among all the other similar houses in Taita, Lower Hutt, New Zealand. It was a working-class suburb, with all the associated social problems, just outside Wellington.

Nothing in particular stood out about me as a child or teenager. I found it impossible to concentrate in school, and my long legs were more of a hindrance than a help when it came to the sporting field.

I have vivid memories of my journey home from Hutt Valley High School. I began my daily walk from the train station onto High Street before turning left past the Tocker Street Dairy, our local convenience store, where, if I had any change, I would stop to buy hokey-pokey ice cream (vanilla ice cream with small bits of honeycomb toffee throughout). Then I would veer right onto Reynolds Street, past Pearce Crescent, Molesworth Street, and Compton Crescent, before finally turning into Nash Street, and I would walk past three houses before arriving home at the corner of Nash Street and Taita Drive. And day after day, on that repetitious walk home, my young, shy, but adventurous mind used to dream and dream and dream. It was a dream that always seemed to follow a similar narrative.

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to someday serve Jesus and preach the gospel. In fact, I cannot remember a time when that wasn't what I dreamed of doing. I dreamed in the school classroom, I dreamed on that journey home, and I dreamed while sitting in church twice on a Sunday, every Sunday throughout my childhood.

It was then that I imagined speaking to big crowds or traveling the

world, leading thousands of people to Jesus Christ and maybe one day building a great church. I would also wonder who my wife would be, what she would look like, where she was, and what she was doing at that very moment. And I dreamed that maybe I would meet her—that one person who would want to pursue this dream with me.

Fast-forward forty-plus years, and I have found myself on a much longer journey than that childhood walk home from the train station. It's been this ongoing adventure called life, in which this small-town day-dreamer has found himself living in the realization of those dreams and in the wonder of even bigger ones.

Dare to Dream

As I mentioned, concentration was never my strong point. I distinctly remember that the comments of my schoolteachers followed a theme: “Brian doesn't listen”; “Brian could do so much better if he didn't day-dream”; “Brian procrastinates.”

In the 1960s, our church congregation was about five hundred to six hundred people. At the time, it was possibly the largest church in the country, but it was still not an especially large group. Looking back now, I realize that if I had shared my wide-eyed, wonderful, and global dreams out loud, many would have politely laughed or perhaps shared a patronizing smile with other adults nearby. For a young pastor's son from a low-income neighborhood in an astoundingly beautiful land of millions of sheep, what outrageous dreams they were! Although I never got the feeling that anyone had high expectations about my future, I just kept on dreaming anyway.

When I was seventeen years old, I held eleven different jobs to raise

Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.” (Genesis 37:1–11, ESV)

Sheaves of grain bowing down to him, and even the sun, the moon, and the stars! From where Joseph sat, tending sheep in the land of Canaan, his dreams looked absurd. Talk about shooting for the moon—he imagined that even the moon would be within his grasp!

When I dreamed as a child about traveling to places I had learned about in school, there was nothing in the natural that made these dreams look possible. I would take a pen and doodle on the back of my school-books pictures of such places as Paris, with its outdoor cafés, poodles, and endless baguettes. I dreamed about London, with its unique black cabs, double-decker buses, and destinations I knew from our family Mo-

nopoly board, such as Fleet Street, Coventry Street, Park Lane, and Mayfair. And I was always fascinated by bigger places, such as Australia or other countries that then seemed so far away. The United States of America and everything it offered seemed like another world back then. Today those dreams have become so much a part of my life that I hardly think about the fact that they were once a dream.

How often do you believe for the impossible?

About twenty years ago, I spent an afternoon in my office with a blank piece of paper in front of me and wrote down the words “The Church That I See.” Quite miraculously, the amazing thing is that thirty years on, in many ways, those words I wrote down are reflective of the church we now lead. But it wasn’t always that way.

In 1983, Hillsong Church was a gathering of less than one hundred people in a tiny school hall. It was a passionate, vibrant, young community of believers, along with a few almost believers and even nonbelievers, putting out chairs, sweeping the floor, and praying in a broom closet before and after services each Sunday. The “stage” was a road case, and the quality of the band was modest at best. Hillsong Church looks very different now, but many of the values that we built on are the same today.

Hillsong has always been a worshipping church. Before there was Hillsong UNITED, before there was Hillsong Young & Free, before there was “Shout to the Lord,” “Mighty to Save,” or “Oceans,” there was worship. Passionate worship. It wasn’t always polished, there weren’t always lights, and in those early years, there wasn’t even a stage, but we worshipped. We sang and we began to take baby steps in writing songs that resounded in the hearts of the people in our community. Sure, the piano had one or two notes that didn’t work and was out of tune, and the drummer didn’t keep a steady beat. Jack, our smiling senior accordion

first albums that the songs of God and the sound of our house were established as a priority, an arrowhead, and a cornerstone of who we are—all because of a God-breathed dream.

The Bible tells us in Zechariah 4:10, “Do not despise these small beginnings” (NLT). Whatever it is God has entrusted into your hand—your family, your career, your ministry, or whatever—don’t count it as insignificant. Whatever dreams are in your heart and still seem like a world away, don’t be discouraged! I believe that in the eyes of God and with His leading, wisdom, favor, and provision, if you hold fast to that dream He has placed in your heart, you, like Joseph, will see it come to pass.

Dream Killers

Among the youngest of the sons in his family, Joseph probably took his fair share of mocking and rough-ups from his older brothers. Yet when Joseph dreamed of his mother, father, and brothers bowing down to him, he didn’t hesitate to share with them the God-sized dream. It had the predictable effect: it enraged his family.

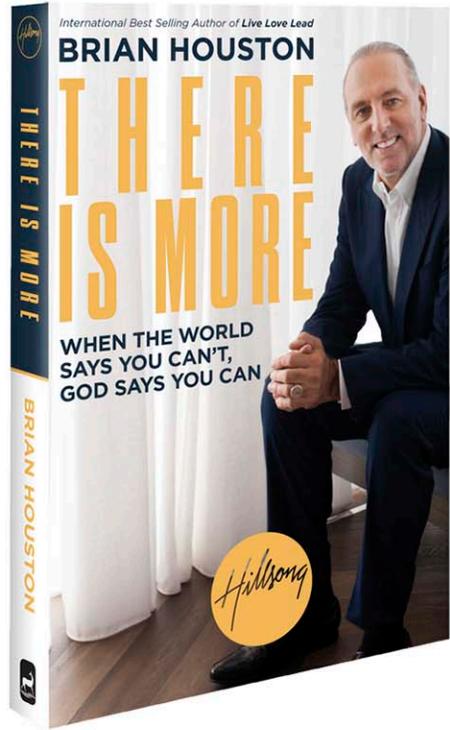
Joseph’s brothers waited for their chance to get back at him. When they were out with the flocks one time and Joseph came to them, they knew their chance had come. “They saw him in the distance, and before he had reached them, they plotted to kill him. They said to one another, ‘Here comes that dreamer! Come on, let’s kill him and throw him into one of the pits. We can say that a vicious animal ate him. Then we’ll see what becomes of his dreams!’” (Genesis 37:18–20, HCSB).

Because of Joseph’s dream, his brothers tried to kill him. He was captured, thrown in a pit, and sold into slavery. Talk about dream killers!

But Joseph didn’t stop dreaming.

Continue
Reading...

Order
*THERE IS
MORE*
now!



BUY NOW



WATERBROOK