



Rescuing Ambition

Dave Harvey , C.J. Mahaney (Foreword)

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Many think of ambition as nothing more than the drive for personal honor or fame. As a result, ambition—the God-implanted drive to improve, produce, develop, and create—is neglected and well on its way to paralysis.

For some, dreams are numbed. For others, there are no dreams; life just happens. And for those who are dreaming, motives are often confused. One thing is certain: ambition needs help.

Dave Harvey is calling for a rescue. He wants to snatch ambition from the heap of failed motivations and put it to work for the glory of God. To understand our ambition, we must understand that we are on a quest for glory. And where we find glory determines the success of our quest.

Has your God-given ambition been starved and sedated for too long? Are you ambitious? It's time to reach further and dream bigger for the glory of God.

Rescuing Ambition Details

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From Reader Review Rescuing Ambition for online ebook

Gage Herrmann says

I originally bought this book thinking it could help me understand why I was going to work for 8-hours a day, 5 days a week, doing things of varying amounts of usefulness for the last decade of my life.

Am *I* wasting my time working for this company?

How can *I* possibly be doing anything important in Christ's kingdom if all I'm doing is making little websites for small companies?

Instead of answering those questions, God used this book to focus my mind. Now, when I step on the discontent scale, I can see that I'm at least 30 pounds lighter.

All my life I've had some sort of untamed ambition lurking behind everything I did. I wanted to have this or that important job. I wanted to be a great musician and tour the world. I wanted to create just one great work of art, and get just a little bit of recognition. Please God? Just 10 to 20 devoted fans is all I'd ever ask for. I assumed I'd be famous one day.

All the while, I also had no actual drive to do anything except for when I was *really bored* or under some kind of tight external deadline. No, the irony didn't escape me, but I still had no idea what to do to get out of that rut.

The key thing I've gained from this book is a feel for when I'm starting to nurture my own glory. Then, having killed that sin, the goal is to figure out what God would have me do instead. *Rescuing Ambition* covers various ways Godly ambition can manifest, culminating in the final chapter about seeing future generations take the lead after us.

Jerry says

Dave Harvey's *Rescuing Ambition* is very good, in large part due to the nuanced view of ambition it gives. One entire chapter is titled *Ambition's Contentment*, describing the patience and wisdom that go along with godly ambition. Another chapter is dedicated to ambition for the church, and not just the church in general or the heavenly church where no one ever offends you, but the lowly local one where we're called to belong.

The book is about ambition for everyone, and it really ought to be. Not everyone is called into leadership (or else who would follow?), but everyone is called to pursue excellence in everything. Everyone will have some opportunity for leadership in the informal sense since everyone talks to others, is called to friendship, and has opportunities however small for influence.

Harvey relates one story particularly helpful in a book about ambition. Bill Patton was a pastor involved in leadership training and church planting. When something came up in his family that made it clear he needed to step out of leadership, he actually did so, appointed faithful men to replace him, and got this, "publicly committed himself to be an active and enthusiastic member of the church he'd founded—to support this church through the transition and to serve them long into the future. He also dedicated himself to leading his

family with gospel humility” (p. 195). In Bill’s own words:

The gospel answers my questions of identity. It tells me I am God’s nonobservant, his child, a worshiper, and a functioning member of his church. My identity as a pastor was always a secondary identity. I have not lost my main identity.... I responded to the call to ministry in order to glory God. Being a pastor was never, rightly, my chief end. I do not presently have opportunity to serve as a pastor, but I do have daily opportunities to fulfill my main purpose in life. Asking the question, “How do I glorify God now?” wonderfully liberates me.

True ambition isn’t selfish ambition, what Thomas Watson called the mother of all schisms. The local church needs leaders and members who are committed to the mission of the gospel, one that goes beyond personal circumstances and hopes. Such commitments enable the biblical qualifications for leadership to be upheld and relieve the pressure that is felt when “indispensable” men become disqualified, the kind that Charles de Gaulle said fill our graveyards. True ambition has courage and takes risks, but it is also selfless and humble.

Randy Alcorn says

Dave Harvey thinks well, writes well, tells good stories and cites people of substance and insight. I have long appreciated Dave’s integrity, wisdom and perspective. Were I not afraid of feeding his ambition for greatness, or my ambition to write a memorable endorsement, I would add that *Rescuing Ambition* is biblical, honest, witty and sometimes amusing. I’m happy to recommend this fine book on an important and overlooked subject.

Jeremy McMorris says

Don’t know that I’ve ever read a book (other than the Scripture) that so immediately and poignantly met a need in my life.

Larry says

Pretty much wrecked me. Now to see if I can put the principles into action in my own life. Pray for me.

Brian Pate says

Whether you are an overachiever or a procrastinator, this book gives gospel advice on how to deal with our ambitions.

Harvey begins by explaining that we pursue what we prize (ch. 1). Although ambition is a good thing, the problem is that we are glory thieves, hijacking the honor that is due to God alone (ch. 2). However, we can still demonstrate proper ambition if we understand that we are already accepted by God; we should not be ambitious in order to be accepted (ch. 3). “Approval should inspire ambition” (p. 59). Because of the truths of the gospel, we should get busy (ch. 4)! Ambition takes faith (ch. 5), should stem from deep humility (ch.

6), and will result in genuine contentment (ch. 7). We should be "ambitious to move downward" (p. 104). Harvey also addresses how to respond in the face of failure (ch. 8) and reminds us that godly ambition should find its center in the local church (ch. 9). Ambition takes risks (ch. 10) and looks to the next generation (ch. 11).

Rescuing Ambition provided some very helpful nuggets of advice. My only critique of the book is that it took a meandering path toward its conclusion. Harvey seems to admit that the book takes "some unexpected turns" (p. 156).

Gabriel says

One of my top ten most influential books. Read it twice.

Douglas Wilson says

This is a very fine book. Not only is it solid in its teaching, it is solid in a area that just about nobody addresses. Ambition sanctified is the need of the hour. Ambition unsanctified is a deadly peril.

Liz says

Ambition should not be a dirty word in the Christian's vocabulary. Godly ambition is different than selfish ambition, and that's what God would have us cultivate in our lives.

This book is an excellent help in understanding how to pursue godly ambition. I would recommend it to pastors and those who serve in their local church, as well as the Sunday morning pew-sitters, who need a vision for serving in their church.

Gene Helsel says

This is a very good book that addresses a little-discussed and much-misunderstood topic: Ambition. "Rescuing Ambition" is at the same time profoundly deep and winsomely accessible. The two chapters on contentment and failure alone are worth the price of the whole book. The modern church has been, and is being, increasingly "feminized." Harvey's expositions and applications of God's Word regarding such topics as desire, glory, ambition, failure, risk and reward are intensely practical and powerful antidotes for much of the aimlessness, apathy and indolence so prevalent in the church today (especially Christian men.)

Shu Lindsey says

"The true soldier is an ambitious being. He pants for honor, seeks for glory. On the field of strife he gathers his laurels, and amidst a thousand dangers he reaps renown. The Christian is fired by higher ambitions than

any earthly warrior ever knew. He sees a crown that can never fade. He loves a King who best of all is worthy to be served. He has a motive within him which moves him to the noble deeds - a Divine spirit impelling him to the most self-sacrificing actions."

--- Charles Spurgeon

Lindsey Doolan says

Great call to stop shining your chair with the seat of your pants and do something. Last chapter/"Why I Wrote this Book" was phenomenal.

Heather Denigan says

An excellent book: careful, thoughtful, nuanced, passionate and full of heart. Highly recommended. Turned out to be a very timely read for me and spoke to several questions I've been struggling with. Harvey's placement of the church as the locus for ambition and action is excellent. I wish my pastor would read this book!

Jesse says

Do Hard Things for grownups? Works well with our office of kingship...

Jonathan Celaya says

I would honestly recommend this book to new and old believers in Christ. The reason this book gave me affirmation was due to the fact that I am in a very ambitious man. Sometimes we need to reflect and look to where our ambitions are pointed to, is it self-seeking glory? Or are we doing all things for the glory of God and enjoying him forever? In Romans 2, God blesses those who are ambitious for His glory with eternal life.
