

Dream So Big That You Can't Accomplish It On Your Own (Scott Rigsby)

When Scott Rigsby was 18 years old he was in a serious automobile accident. He was riding in the back of a pickup truck returning from work on a summer landscaping job. The pickup truck was pulling a trailer with thousands of pounds of mowers and landscaping equipment. From his perch on the toolbox in the pickup he could see an 18-wheeler following them for many miles on a rural Georgia two-lane road. The semi attempted to pass them not realizing that a narrow bridge ahead would not allow both vehicles to be side by side. Realizing his mistake the driver of the semi tried to back off but sideswiped the trailer with the lawn equipment.

(Severe Injuries from the accident: If you are hesitant to hear details of the accident, fast forward to the next paragraph. I am merely trying to show the severity of Scott's injuries.) The collision with the 18-wheeler ejected Scott from the bed of the pickup. He landed between the pickup and its trailer with his legs and back dragging on the pavement for more than 300 yards. Scott's left leg was torn off and the other sustained so much damage that it would later need to be amputated. Every bounce off the pavement tore away at the flesh on Scott's back. His head hit the pavement at least once, but miraculously it was kept above the roadbed the rest of the time. Scott was in deep trouble and would be lucky to survive. He would eventually undergo 26 surgeries to recover from the accident.

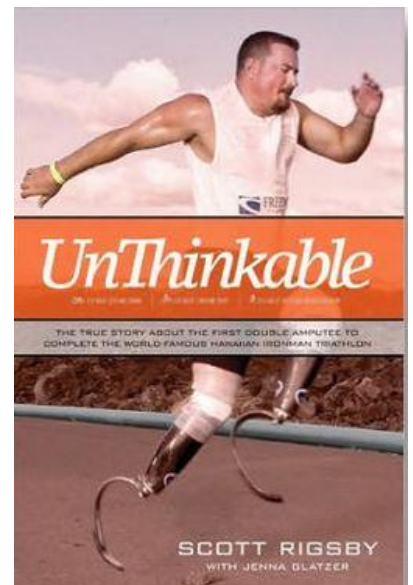
At the time of the accident Scott was just a few weeks from starting his freshman year of college. The plans and dreams Scott had for his life were forever gone. After an excruciatingly painful recovery and physical therapy he was able to walk again, but for the next 20 years Scott suffered from depression, fear and uncertainty. If he was to continue living in this world he knew he needed to change his life.

After much soul searching Scott decided on a new dream. His dream was to become the first double amputee to finish an ironman competition. He set his sights on the Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon, the most challenging ironman competition in the world. Completing this event would require him to swim 2.4 miles, bicycle 112 miles and complete a 26.2 mile marathon, all within 17 hours' time. This was to be done in the 100+ degree temperatures along steamy roads lined with lava fields in Hawaii. It was an unforgiving environment. Finishing this event this would be difficult for a healthy athlete. How could a man with no legs, running on dual prosthetics, have any chance of completing an ironman competition? Completing this task was unthinkable.

Gutting it out and in much pain, Scott competed in that ironman triathlon competition in 2007. He finished the event in 16 hours 43 minutes, with just 17 minutes to spare. He earned the title of ironman, and was the first double amputee in the world to do so.

I had the opportunity to hear Scott speak in person twice this past year, both times at YMCA Christian mission events. His talk was very inspirational. Scott's quest to accomplish the unthinkable came down to this thought: "If I can accomplish my dream by myself I am not dreaming big enough." Scott Rigsby knew that his dream had to be big enough to involve God. No double amputee could become an ironman based on human will. You and I often set our goals knowing our human limitations. We usually don't think of anything bigger than what we can accomplish ourselves. Our goals are usually something achievable with just a little more effort than previously expended. God is not needed to accomplish them. When we do that we overlook the power of God to help us achieve something much bigger -- the unthinkable. The Bible tells us to think bigger. *But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).*

If you read Scott Rigsby's book, Unthinkable, you will easily recognize that Jesus was always at Scott's side from the moment of impact of the accident. Scott never should have survived. God put in place exactly what was needed to save Scott's life. It was not by chance that Scott lived through that ordeal, but God's plan all along. Still, it took 20 years of depression for Scott to fully realize and seek God's dream instead of his own. And now Scott asked Jesus to fulfill his unthinkable dream of being an ironman. He prayed that "if God opened a door for him he would go through it." That is what God was waiting for.



It wasn't easy. For Scott, faith helped him to overcome fear. Scott told me, "The worst thing that happened to me was not losing my legs, but losing my life to fear." He finally let go of his fear and then was able to use God's power to achieve the unthinkable.

If you were to seek to accomplish the unthinkable, what would that be? If your dream just takes dedicated human effort it does not need God. It doesn't take any faith to just try harder. Instead, dream bigger. Dream so big that you know it can only be achieved with God's power. How strong is your faith? And, is it aligned with God's purpose for your life? Then, you can do great things in His name.

Scott's finish line in Hawaii became the starting line for a ministry to "inspire, inform and enable individuals with disabilities to live a healthy, active lifestyle." God's plan for Scott wasn't just becoming an ironman but beginning a life of service to others suffering from reduced physical abilities and depression. He created the Scott Rigsby Foundation, to help veterans and others with physical disabilities to get their lives back in order. Scott's life has become a clear example that "God has a plan, purpose and destiny for each one of us." What is your plan, purpose and destiny? Is it big enough? God can help you accomplish the unthinkable.

Prayer: Heavenly Father. You don't cause us pain. You don't set us up to have to overcome a terrible ordeal. But when bad things happen to us you are there with us. You have the power to work something good from even in the most difficult situations. And, when we recognize that and put our faith in you, you lead us to accomplish far more than we could ever do ourselves. Amen.