



DANAE DOBSON

Let's walk **THE TALK!**

girlfriend to girlfriend on faith,
friendship & finding real love



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Let's Walk the Talk!: Girlfriend to Girlfriend on Faith, Friendship, and Finding Real Love

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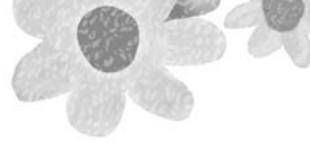
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To Flo Waltrip, who has prayed for me daily since I was a teen. I will always be grateful to her for this expression of love and kindness.



Introduction

Do you ever wish you could get into the minds of other Christian teens and find out what they think about the issues you're concerned about? Would you like to ask them how they manage to survive and thrive while remaining true to their commitment to Christ? If so, then I have good news: I've already done the asking!

During the course of one year, I conducted table discussions, Internet chats, phone calls, and one-on-one conversations with people from various states and church backgrounds. I interviewed girls and guys, as well as youth leaders, teachers, and counselors on the matters that are important to you. Each person had something interesting and thought-provoking to share. Throughout this book you'll discover their responses to issues such as identity in Christ, family dilemmas, postmodernism, peer pressure, dating, maintaining a healthy weight, clothing choices, and how it's possible to be a Christian and still be cool. You'll also receive my girlfriendly advice and biblically based commentary every step of the way. My goal is to direct you toward God's immeasurable love for you and His desire to help you succeed in all areas of your life.

To be a follower of Christ is the most rewarding experience you'll ever encounter, but it's also a challenge to take a stand and be set apart from the rest of the world (see Romans 12:2). Everyone who is a Christian has experienced hardships along the way, but having Jesus (and

other Christian friends) in your life means you don't have to go it alone.

That's why I wanted to provide you with this book. When I was your age, I would have appreciated the opportunity to read about others' struggles and experiences. I would have benefited from getting some advice and a fresh perspective on what I cared about, but I wasn't aware of any such books at the time.

Times have changed! In this book you'll hear from plenty of people who understand what you're up against and want to help you achieve victory. Hey, you're not alone—we're in this together. So read on, and let's discover what it means to take our talk and make it walk.



-How to Be a Winner

Check it out:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Would you like to know the secret of success? I'm not talking about how to acquire cash, cool cars, and designer clothes. If success were defined by the things we own, then Paris, Nicole, Lindsay, and Britney would all be respectable role models. No. When I mention success, I'm referring to a genuine sense of fulfillment that comes not from the outside but from the depths of the soul.

Every girl desires to feel good about herself, but what happens when she bases her contentment on something temporary like physical attractiveness, popularity, money, or fame? Well, it's no secret that money can't buy happiness, and as far as good looks are concerned, the Bible teaches that "beauty is fleeting" (Proverbs 31:30). Fame and social status are shaky too. I could give you a list of celebs, beginning with Marilyn Monroe right up to Anna Nicole Smith, who discovered that fame didn't bring the satisfaction they craved. In fact, the success of those two beautiful women was short-lived, ending in tragic drug overdoses.

A friend and I were shopping in a clothing store recently

and couldn't help but feel disturbed about some of the products that were on display. The store featured drinking games, sexually inspired books, and T-shirts with disturbing messages on the front. One read "I Live for Kicks" and another, "Pleasure Victim." Think about it. Those messages encourage you to believe that life is all about getting satisfaction from the world through fun and pleasure, but that's a straight-up lie! Living for "kicks" won't amount to anything substantial. It's just short-term gratification—a way to feel good for a little while.

The world will tell you to rush after your passion to find happiness, but after you've obtained it and the fairy dust settles, you will still have emptiness of soul and spirit. Having money in the bank, credit cards, and a hot body won't give you a real sense of purpose. The only way you can obtain lasting fulfillment is through someone who is not of this world—the Lord Jesus Christ! Only He can help you achieve the kind of success that endures.

You may have heard of the '90s rock group Nirvana. The lead singer was Kurt Cobain, and if anyone appeared to have it all, it was this former teen idol. Cobain had screaming fans around the globe, and his albums sold millions. He'd won awards and Grammys, and had earned more money than he could spend. In addition to all this fame, he had an adorable baby daughter. There wasn't one thing the world had to offer that Kurt Cobain hadn't obtained. Yet in 1994, he ended his life with a gunshot. Why? From a worldly perspective it didn't make sense, but from a spiritual viewpoint, it came into sharp focus. Without a relationship with Jesus Christ, Kurt Cobain didn't have peace and contentment. He might have felt the temporary rush of newfound success, but once the excitement wore off, he was still surrounded by everything he

despised, including himself. He was so discontented, in fact, that he chose to abandon it all and take his own life.

Obviously, not every person who's not a follower of Christ will become suicidal, but there's something to be learned from Kurt Cobain's horrific death: a person can have everything and nothing at the same time.

Jesus said in John 10:10 (NKJV) that He came so you could have life and have it abundantly. That doesn't mean you're not going to suffer trials and times of sorrow. You may have already been there—I know I have had my share of tough times. But what sets you apart from people like Marilyn Monroe, Anna Nicole Smith, and Kurt Cobain is that even in the midst of heartache, you can experience the peace that passes all understanding (see Philippians 4:7, RSV). Your life can have meaning and purpose, regardless of whether or not you have everything you desire. That's the promise Jesus has given you!

In my own life, things haven't always turned out the way I planned or hoped. I know what it's like to suffer anguish and broken dreams, as I'll describe in a later chapter. But through my tears, I've clung to the knowledge that my sense of value isn't dependent on people or circumstances. During those difficult moments, I remembered that I belong to the Lord and my identity is rooted in Him. That assurance gave me strength to move forward and trust God's plan for my future, even when things weren't going my way.

Let's return to the question I asked at the beginning of this chapter: "Would you like to know the secret of success?" The answer is revealed in one of my favorite verses, Jeremiah 29:11: "'I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" If you're completely surrendered to God

and if you follow His will, as revealed in the Bible, you cannot fail because He has already established the master plan for your life. Your obligation is to live it out. "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

To adhere to God's calling is to discover His purpose for your life. I can't suggest what His plans might be, but I can promise you they're more significant than anything you could envision on your own. And the best part is that whatever accomplishments you enjoy in life will bring glory and honor to Him.

Do you want to be a winner? Then "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

That's your formula for success!

LET'S TALK ABOUT SUCCESS

DUSTY SANDERSON (student, age 17): *I think success is living your life according to God's plan and feeling like you've given all you can to Him. If you make God happy and please Him, then you please yourself. As far as my future is concerned, I'm considering becoming a pastor. I enjoy sharing the love of God with people who are lost—telling them what He's done for me and how He's changed my life.*

MATT GODSHALL (student, age 14): *I heard a pastor say that we sometimes think of our lives as our own story, with God just kind of thrown in. In reality, we are part of God's story.*

ERIN DIEFENBACH (student, age 17): *I'm trying to focus on what God wants me to do rather than on what I think I'm good at. If I parallel my life with His purposes, I believe*

I'll be successful. Right now I think God's will for my future might be to become a marriage counselor because I enjoy encouraging my friends who come to me for advice. But I'm trying to stay open in case He has other plans. I think the best way to discover God's will is to talk to Him about everything and to read the Bible to find answers. God wants to be incorporated into our daily lives, so if we're paying attention to our circumstances and really trying to listen to Him, we'll eventually get a sense of direction.

CHRISTIAN TURNER (student, age 16): I want to be part of something bigger than myself, so I'm excited to discover the plans God has for me. One of these days I'm going to be standing in eternity, and I'm going to have to answer for what I did with my life. I want to hear God tell me that I was a faithful servant. I wouldn't want Him to reveal the wonderful things I missed because I was too busy following my own ambitions. I want to have peace in knowing that I was faithful to my calling.

PAUL HONTZ (student, age 19): Success is the direct result of our obedience to God. Through Him we are made complete.

ALYSON THOMAS (student, age 16): As far as my future is concerned, I'm still in confusion mode. Right now I'm devoting a lot of prayer to this issue. I wish God would send me an e-mail with the words, "Thou shalt do this for thy future," but it's not that easy. I'm trusting that He will reveal His plan for my life at the right time.

MARY SPAGNOLA (student, age 16): So far, a lot of things I've wanted haven't turned out the way I'd hoped, but in hindsight they turned out better than I could have planned.

I have faith that God knows what He's doing and that His ways are so much better than my own.

SARAH UTTERBACK (student, age 16): I really want to become a chef. I'd like to go to a four-year college for hotel and restaurant management and then to culinary school. Eventually I'd like to open my own restaurant and catering service. As much as I want this dream for my life, I'm willing to submit to God's plan if it's different from my own. I'm trying to keep my heart and mind open to His will.

MR. AUSTIN SEFTON (youth leader): As far as my career is concerned, I don't know where God is going to use me. Right now I'm attending a community college, but I'm not sure what I'll major in. I'm spending a lot of time reading my Bible, praying, and asking God to reveal His plan for my life. Every Christian has a specific calling, and it's different for everybody. Once we discover where God wants to place us, then it's up to us to live it out in total surrender. The definition of success is to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Success is striving after His will and discovering our place in His Kingdom.

PASTOR AUSTIN DUNCAN (youth minister): Life may seem out of control for you at this stage of your life—your hormones are raging, you're making friends, you're losing friends, you're having issues with guys. But God is on His throne [Psalm 115:3], and if you love Him, then He is using every single circumstance—both good and bad—for your good and for His glory. Every one of us has issues with discontentment, but discontentment is really the temptation to complain against the sovereignty of God. He is in control of the universe and of your life, so you can draw comfort

from the fact that where He has you today is exactly where you're supposed to be.

MR. MATT NORTHRUP (high school dean): I think the definition of success is to look more like Christ today than you did yesterday. It's learning to sacrifice as Christ sacrificed, to serve as He served, and to love as He loved. ✿

What Say You?

- 1) What is your definition of success?
- 2) How do you think God defines success for your life?
- 3) What is the promise that Jesus has given you in John 10:10?
- 4) How can you discover God's plan and purpose for your life?

About the Author

Let's Walk the Talk! is Danae Dobson's second nonfiction project. This inspirational book is a sequel to her former publication for adolescent girls entitled *Let's Talk!* Danae is also active in her speaking ministry, addressing women at church-related events such as banquets, teas, and conferences. She is also involved in seminars for teens and speaks to children at Christian schools.

Danae was born in Southern California and wrote her first children's manuscript, *Woof! A Bedtime Story about a Dog*, at the age of twelve. Upon publication, she became the youngest author in the twenty-five-year history of that publishing house. It's a title that she still holds today.

In 1990 she received her bachelor's degree in communication from Azusa Pacific University. She has authored twenty-three books to date, including the popular *Woof* series that was spun off of her original story. These best-selling books have sold more than 400,000 copies and have also been released in the United Kingdom and Indonesia. Other works include *Parables for Kids* (coauthored with Dr. James Dobson), the *Forest Friends* series, and the *Sunny Street Kids' Club* series. Danae has appeared on *The 700 Club* and *Time for Hope*, and she has been a guest on more than one hundred radio broadcasts, including *Minirth Meier* and *Focus on the Family*. She has also been a featured speaker at the Christian Booksellers Association, Hawaiian Islands Ministries, MOPS, and numerous Christian schools.

Danae is the daughter of Dr. James and Shirley Dobson of *Focus on the Family* ministry, and has a younger brother, Ryan, who is also an author, a speaker, and an Internet radio host. Danae resides in Southern California.