

The Heart of Biblical Vision

Basic Bible Instruction Concerning Biblical Vision



Introduction

You have heard the old statement that those who fail to plan, plan to fail. That statement is true. Planning is a scriptural concept with deep theological roots. We know that God is a planner. He is the one who has every hair numbered and keeps a count of each sparrow. He promises in Matthew six that he will provide for our need so we should not take thought for things tomorrow.

While God has the ultimate plan to establish his eternal throne and we are not to focus on gathering temporal possessions, he does admonish us to seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Planning is an act of faith. It is not a faithless act. Strategic planning is a result of meditation upon God's word and a heartfelt belief that God will accomplish through us what he has promised in the scripture.

Many contend that planning is a lack of faith but actually it is faith.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

The hall of fame of faith is full of men and women who understood God's mission and were moved by faith to accomplish his mission for their lives without any visible guarantees before they began their journey.

Strategic planning allows the Spirit filled saint to document what he is trusting God to do. The biblical planner will see the invisible and move by faith to see God fulfill his will through their life.

I. Desiring Biblical Vision (Heart)

Fortunately, vision is very simple in the Bible. It is the sin of man which makes the concept of vision so cloudy.

God is on a mission. He wants to restore his kingdom with beings that love and worship him. Understanding God's mission is simply knowledge if it does not move our hearts. God desires more than our head, he wants our heart!

It is one thing to know that people are perishing in a burning building and another thing to be moved with compassion to rescue the perishing. That is the difference between having God's vision and having knowledge of God's vision.

A. Biblical examples:

1. Child rearing – *Proverbs 29:17-18*

If we wish to correct our children we must have a vision (heart) for who God created them to be. We don't know the details but we know the character that is required. Without this vision people perish.

2. Samson – *Judges 16:21*

Samson lost physical vision because he didn't take God's word seriously. It is not that he didn't know what God said; it is that he didn't love God or God's people enough to keep God's word. Instead of defeating the enemies of God, he lived with them. The disregard for God's instruction started when he ate the honey out of the carcass of the dead lion and continued until his eyes were gouged out.

After losing his physical sight Samson realized his power as a Nazarite was conditioned upon obedience to God's mission and not his. Fortunately for Samson he was able to avenge all disobedience when his obedience was fulfilled in his final act of faith.

3. Samuel – *1 Samuel 3:1-10*

Samuel was not privy to God's vision because his mother was faithful or because he had been dedicated in accordance with the law and his mother's vow as an infant. He was able to hear God when he personally engaged the Lord as his Lord in conversation. This is the same way we establish our relationship with Christ. **Many times, we miss God's vision because we are too immature spiritually to discern the voice and vision of God.**

We also learn that God entrusts his vision to those who are pure on the inside as well as the outside. **1 Samuel 2:26.**

As we grow in Christ our speech should mirror God's word so that our words and deeds clearly manifest the fact that we have been meeting with God. **1 Samuel 3:19-21.**

Paul gave this same advice to young Timothy in **1 Timothy 4:15-16.**

1 Timothy 4:15-16

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

4. Daniel - Daniel 2

When Nebuchadnezzar demanded an interpretation to his dream, Daniel delivered not only the interpretation but the dream itself. We, like Daniel, should not only be able to tell people what the Bible says but why it says it!

We know Jesus was God manifest in flesh and died on the cross but what does that mean? We know that we are born again but what does that mean? We know God's word is truth but what does that mean? We know that hell is real and hot, but what does that mean?

Initially we would think the answers to the previous questions are simple and easy. Yes and no. They are simple to answer theologically but very difficult to answer when applied to the heart!

Vision is all about God's heart being revealed and quickened in our heart.

Israel demonstrates how we lose our vision to head knowledge – **Isaiah 29:9-14** (notice the parallel between **Proverbs 29** and **Isaiah 29**)

The vision was preserved in a book as it is for us today yet Israel didn't address the heart of the matter. While they went on with religion they left off relationship!

This is the danger we face in our "information & communication" age.

5. The Laodicean Church – Revelation 3:17-21

The problem today is not a lack of vision. There is plenty of vision; it is simply not **the correct vision**. We like Jesus must find time to fellowship

with the Father so we might receive the heart behind the knowledge we possess.

Knowledge is important and we should not be ignorant. The evidence of our correct vision ultimately is revealed in our charity.

Biblical Vision is the heart of God received in the heart of man.

- Salvation:

Seeing ourselves as sinners and receiving Christ as Savior is a condition of the heart. That is why **Romans 10:9-10** places the emphasis on the heart of man.

- Sanctification:

Our spiritual growth is not based in knowledge alone but in the transformation that knowledge has upon our heart.

If we look at **2 Peter 1:4-9** we see that the end of our biblical education should lead to charity. Charity is the noun form of the word love. More than an action, we should come to personify the Love of Christ. There is a difference in being in love, loving someone and being identified with the name love. Our name should be charity meaning “that is who we are, not what we do”.

As we grow in Christ his vision becomes our vision. It starts out very personal and grows as we love him. When we allow sin to corrupt our fellowship with God our vision is diminished and eventually fades. Our heart is the key to vision.

Before we engage in defining mission and developing plans of action it is advisable that we come to a place in our walk with God where we are still and hear from Him. You may need to get away, go on vacation, get up early, certainly spend time meditating not only reading and studying the word of God.

Psalms 46:10

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

B. Biblical Vision within the Local New Testament Church.

1. Revealed in God’s Word to the Leadership.

- Before the age of Grace, vision was delivered through direct revelation with the Angel of the Lord or through dreams and visions of the prophets.
- In our current age, we now have the perfectly preserved inspired word and guidance of the Holy Spirit to reveal the specific vision for a particular church body.
- God has always worked through men.

OT examples: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the Judges, Samuel, David, Solomon, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, John the Baptist.

NT. Examples: Peter, James and John, then the other nine. The leadership at Antioch in **Acts 13**. The apostle Paul.

2. The Role of the Local New Testament Church.

- Today God works through the local New Testament church which is the institution He ordained to carry out his mission.
- It is a privilege and responsibility for a man to be used as a vessel God can use to carry out his purpose and mission.
- God carries his vision for local churches through the leadership structure he ordained.

Ephesians 4:11-15

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, **pastors and teachers**; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

- God has always ordained key men to receive the vision and carry out the mission for the body of Christ. i.e. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Peter, James, John, Paul.

- Since our vision is found in scripture the responsibility of the Pastor is to pass on the vision God has given him from the Word of God.

You see this pattern in David's charge to Solomon in **1 Chronicles 22:1-6**. We see a similar pattern in the ministry of Paul and Timothy.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

2 Timothy 2:2

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

- God will give different pastors differing vision even though we are all part of a greater movement of God in this age.
- My call was found in a variety of scripture.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 gave me the call to preach the gospel.

Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8 & Proverbs 31, Ephesians 5 and Revelation 2-3 gave me the concept of the kind of church I wanted to minister in.

Isaiah 6:8 brought me to a place of decision to commit my life as a pastor.

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Ezekiel 34 gave me specific instruction to go to Harrisonville.

Numbers 13 gave me specific instruction to spy out the land.

Philippians 2 is the vision for HBF. The other verses were God's vision for my life. Philippians 2 is the vision for HBF with time limits included.

- Our Christian life is a relationship. We often don't have full disclosure when we begin any aspect of our walk with God but he gives us glimpses of his glory and we like Moses record the vision so that others may run the race with us.

Habakkuk 2:1-3

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. 2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

- It is likely that you don't have a vision for HBF but you have a vision for your particular area of ministry responsibility. This is good. Our vision for ministry should overflow out of the divine vision or perspective God has given us as Christians.

You will often hear me say, "find out why you have been saved." That is a broad statement that continues to keep us searching our hearts for our purpose in life as a ministry. If we don't see ourselves as God does we will never have the courage to take on the clearly defined mission.

C. Biblical Vision of Individual Christians.

It is imperative that each Christian recognize God's purpose for their lives. Every Christian should realize their need to pastor those in their sphere of influence. Acknowledging God's desire to use us for his great purpose will result in spiritual vision. Again, the issue of vision is simply one of heart, mind and soul. We must seek God with our heart, allow him to conform our mind because he has redeemed our soul.

Many Christians allow the world, the flesh and the devil to have so much control of their lives that they cannot break free to discover why they have been saved. Having personal vision liberates you from the daily grind and allows you the freedom to fulfill your purpose. Much of my time spent as a pastor is spent delivering people from the urgent crisis of today so they can focus on the larger meaning of their life. **It is not until you see the purpose of your salvation that you are free to tackle the circumstances of your life today.**

- 1. Discover your purpose in scripture.**

John 7:18

He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Proverbs 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Proverbs 19:8

He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

Proverbs 28:26

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

- Since scripture does not change, your vision for your life should be fixed. It is possible that you gain more insight as you go. That will be worked out in the objectives and goals portion of this personal planning section.

2. Define your personal Mission

- In one sentence boil your vision down to one statement. This in essence is your mission. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, simply say what God has saved you to be and do. **This is a statement which is not conditional and should not change regardless of circumstances.**
- It is a good idea to put the primary scripture reference(s) with this vision or mission statement to remind you of God's leading in your life.

3. Prioritize objectives

- There are multitudes of things you can invest your life in. Having a clear vision and mission will allow you to prioritize clear objectives that you can reach.
- I recommend that you have a time line; objectives are meant to be accomplished.
- Don't give the details that will come in the form of defining your goals.

4. Describe your goals.

- In order to accomplish your objectives, you must have a description of the goals you must accomplish to achieve those objectives. **This exercise will allow you to see how much it costs to achieve your**

objectives. Many people will not achieve their goals, objectives, or mission and limit their vision because they are not willing to pay the price required to achieve their goals and objectives.

- Goals can be broken down into measurable victories which give you the ability to see God at work in your life.
- Be specific, detailed and defined. **Your goals are the non-glamorous things which develop and define the things you do and who you are. They typically involve the daily discipline required to accomplish your personal mission and fulfill the vision God has given you for your life.**

5. Re-evaluate periodically to see how things are going.

- Reflect on what God has done. Don't sweat it if not all your objectives are accomplished. Regroup, re-evaluate and redefine your objectives and goals for another defined period of time.
- Be sure and praise God for his work in your life.

Personal Vision, Goals and Objectives Example

The Hedges Family Vision 2003

My Vision:

To faithfully reflect the image of Christ to my wife, family and the world unto the coming of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My Goals:

1. Be an obedient Son of God through an intimate relationship with God in and through His Word.

Philippians 2:15

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

2. Be a biblical husband by loving my wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.

Ephesians 5:23-33

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

3. Be a biblical father to the spiritual and physical fruit God grants Amy and me.

Psalms 127:3

Lo, children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

Ephesians 6:4

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Psalms 113:9

He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

4. Be a faithful minister of God’s Word in all circumstances until I have finished my course.

Act 20:24

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

John 15:16

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Annual Objectives for 2003:

Priority	Description of objective	Scripture Reference(s)
1	Intimacy with Christ	<i>Revelation 3:20-22; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18; Philippians 2:5</i>
2	Intimacy with Wife	<i>Ephesians 5:25; Genesis 2:24; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7; Proverbs 5:18</i>
3	Prepare and plan to parent	<i>Psalms 127:3; Proverbs 22:6; Luke 14:28; Galatians 4:18</i>
4	Grow as a Pastor	<i>1 Peter 5:1-10; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Timothy 3</i>
5	Improved financial stewardship	<i>Haggai 1:3-11; Luke 16:10; Matthew 6:21</i>
6	Rest & Refreshment	<i>Luke 5:16; 1 Timothy 4:15; Romans 15:32</i>
7	Improve my physical health	<i>1 Corinthians 6:19-20</i>

Daily Goals:

Objective 1: Intimacy with Christ

- Rise at 5:30 at latest to meet with God early Monday through Friday.
- Focus on hearing Christ’s voice in scripture daily.
- Intensify my prayer time on Monday mornings.
- Fast and pray as required in accordance with scripture & circumstance.
- Be as real and transparent with Christ as possible supping with him daily.
- Guard against having a mechanical relationship with Christ by changing up reading and study activity.

Objective 2: Intimacy with Wife

- Pray daily that God would bless Amy with the husband He wants her to have.
- Intensify our prayer life as a couple focusing on worship of Christ not just others needs.
- Pray privately & specifically for Amy.
- Minister as couple as much as possible.
- Eat meals together without distraction whenever possible.
- Plan for special dates: Anniversary, birthday, Valentines Day etc.
- Diligently take our date night every week.

Objective 3: Prepare and plan to parent

- Pray for child or children God would have us to bring in to our home.
- Complete DFS classes
- Complete paperwork
- Complete basement
- Prepare bedroom/house
- Prepare families

Objective 4: Grow as a Pastor

- Pray daily and get insight from the Chief Shepherd.
- Die daily
- Pray and study scripture topically to glean knowledge & wise council.
- Spend time praying over specific passages of scripture for sermons & Bible study.
- Attend WOC and other type conferences as much as possible when I go full time.
- Continuously read a book outside of what I'm studying or preaching when I go full time.
- Read the Newspaper daily when I go full time.
- Communicate regularly with other pastors.

Objective 5: Improve Financial Stewardship

- Get my budget spreadsheet back in order by May 12, 2003
- Eat cheap lunches or take leftovers when I work at Fagan.
- Plan and set aside money for retirement plan to replace 401K.
- Figure out exactly how much if any extra income I will need this year to make ends meet and prepare a way through contracting or Fagan to accomplish our financial goals.
- Purchase tools (AutoCAD, computer etc.) necessary to pick up slack for benefits etc.
- Budget & Save for one, week long vacation for Amy and me.

Objective 6: Rest and Refreshment

- Find quiet places to pray and study away from the telephone and internet.
- Go on a vacation at least once per year.

- Get away as often as possible for non “ministry” activity.
- Go Monmouth Bible conference and WOC next year.
- Find a healthy hobby that doesn’t take too much time or money.

Objective 7: Improve my physical health

- Continue to stay on my current diet
- As much as possible be in bed by 10:30 PM
- Do 100 sit ups and 50 pushups 3 times per week (before bed time)
- Run on the treadmill or walk three times per week. (5:30 A.M. – 6:00 A.M.)