

Keeping Your Vision Alive & Fresh

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I. Introductory Remarks.

In this message I want to talk about the importance of keeping our vision alive and fresh. This would involve our corporate vision as a body and our personal visions as individual members of the body.

We all have been dealt a measure of faith from God, this measure encompasses the vision God has given to us as individual members of His body.

Romans 12:3-5 *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

We are a many membered body moving and functioning together in the corporate vision God has given to the body.

II. The Importance Of Keeping Our Vision Alive & Fresh.

It is vision that moves us forward in God. Without it we have a tendency to get caught up in drifting aimlessly in God not really knowing what we are doing, where we are going nor even what we are all about.

Proverbs 29:18 *Where there is no revelation (or prophetic vision), the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.*

- **Illustration:**

In a "Leadership" magazine article, Lynn Anderson described what happens when a people lose their vision. A group of pilgrims landed on the shores of America about 350 years ago. With great vision and courage they had come to settle in the new land. In the first year they established a town. In the second, they elected a town council. In the third, the government proposed building a road 5 miles westward into the wilderness. But in the fourth year the people tried to impeach the town council because they thought such a road into the forest was a waste of public funds. Somehow these forward-looking people had lost their

vision. Once able to see across oceans, they now could not look 5 miles into the wilderness.

We all have a need for long range vision and short range vision. When we lose sight of the overall purpose & vision of what we are all about, we also lose sight of our immediate goals.

The apostle Paul is a good example of this. In many cases he simply stepped out in faith to pursue his calling, because of his overall vision and understanding of what God wanted to do in his life. But as he did that God would give him specific instructions that would bring short term clarity to his overall vision and calling in God.

Acts 15:36 *"Let us go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."*

Paul was simply responding to his burden and responsibility in the Lord, which was a part of his overall vision and purpose.

Acts 16:6-10 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."*

- There should always be the overall vision and purpose of which God has birthed into our hearts through His Word and Spirit. This vision remains constant.

We need immediate vision and purpose so that we can experience victories and a sense of accomplishment to encourage us to keep going towards the long range goals and vision.

We have a need of fresh vision and direction that will keep us in alignment with God's overall purpose and vision.

III. The Overall Vision & Purpose For The Body Of Christ.

God's overall vision for the church is for it to be a mature body that is joined together bone to bone so that it represents His fullness in the earth. As a result the gospel will go forth to all the nations bringing multitudes to Christ.

Ezekiel 37:1-11 is a passage of scripture that speaks of the faith picture or vision of what God has in store for the Body of Christ...and the bones came together, bone to bone...

Ephesians 4:11-16 speaks of the church coming to the measure of the stature of Christ to a perfect man being joined and knit together by what every joint supplies for the growth of the body.

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

This is the bigger picture of all that we are to do in Jesus and of which must fit into our corporate vision as a body and our personal vision in Jesus Christ. What ever measure of faith that God has given to me relates to the bigger picture. You need to be continually reminded and refreshed in the big picture so that your own personal vision is renewed accordingly.

IV. Ways in Which Satan Tries to Dim Your Vision.

It is important to understand that we have an adversary who wants to keep us from doing God's will and he knows if he can blind us or dim our vision in God, he can rend us ineffective in God.

2 Corinthians. 4:3-4 *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of, God should shine on them.*

- **We are told that we are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices.**

2 Corinthians 2:11 *...lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

In this portion of the message I want to share with you some of the ways in which Satan tries to dim our vision in God.

1. Unrepented Sin Causes Vision To Grow Dim.

Isaiah 59:9-12 *It says here, they grope for the wall like the blind and stumble at noonday as at twilight, because of their sins being multiplied before God.*

The reason their sins are multiplied before God is that there is not an ongoing repentance. When there is an ongoing repentance for our sins, God is able to forgive them one by one.

Acts 3:19 *Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.*

2. Broken Relationships in the Body Cause Spiritual Blindness.

When we allow offenses from a brother or sister to turn to bitterness rather than dealing with it and forgiving one another, we open ourselves up to the devices of the devil and our spiritual eyes become blinded.

1 John 2:9-11 *He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. he who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

3. Too Much Focus on Carnality or the Lust of the Eyes Causes loss of vision.

Genesis 3:6 *When Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, she partook of the fruit and her eyes were opened to their carnal state rather and closed to their spiritual state.*

Genesis 13:10 *Lot's desire for earthly and carnal things caused him to lose his vision in God and as a result he became a very carnal person with no vision in God.*

Psalms 119:37 *Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things and revive me in Your way.*

4. Too Much Focus on the Past Can Cause Dimness Of Vision.

When Lot and his family came out of Sodom His wife looked back because her affections and concerns were still very much focused on the past. As a result she turned into a pillar of salt and was prevented from seeing what God would have had for her in the future.

Genesis 19:26 *But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

Remember what the apostle Paul said, "but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."

5. Spending Too Much Time Looking at Difficulties Causes Blindness.

Satan tries to point our focus on the difficulties that lie ahead rather than the promise of God's Word that builds faith and vision into our hearts.

In Numbers 13:27-33 we have the story of the spies who came back with a bad report because their focus was on the natural, which represented insurmountable and devastating difficulties.

Joshua and Caleb were the only ones who had their focus right. Their focus was on what they new God was able to do and what His promise towards them was. As a result of the nation of Israel focusing their attention on the difficulties before them, their vision in God was dimmed and they failed to accomplish what God had set before them.

Matthew 14:29-30 *Peter attempted to walk on water, because of the spiritual vision he had, but when he began to focus on the problem around him, he lost his vision and began to sink.*

V. The Most Important Ingredient For Keeping Our Vision Fresh And Alive In God.

1 Corinthians 13:12 *Now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

Because of the fact that we do not see clearly it is important that we incorporate into our lives the necessary ingredients that do keep our vision alive and fresh in God.

1. Communion and Fellowship with The Holy Spirit Is Essential.

John 16:13-15 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you..*

Relationship and communion with the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary if we are to keep our vision alive and fresh in God.

2 Corinthians 13:14 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

VI. Closing Illustration.

A Quote By Woodrow Wilson

"We grow great by dreams. All big men are dreamers. They see things in the soft haze of a spring day, or in the red fire on a long winter's evening. Some of us let these great dreams die, but others nourish and protect them; nourish them through bad days till they bring them to the sunshine and light which comes always to those who sincerely hope that their dreams will come true."

Don't let anyone steal your dreams! (Woodrow Wilson)