

## Keys For Living

### Part 2 – Getting God’s Vision

In our last message in this series on Keys For Living, we saw the importance of perseverance.

If we’re going to last the distance, we need perseverance; it’s an important key for living.

Another important key for living, is “the ability to anticipate and make provision for future events; foresight; insight.”

That’s how the Webster’s Dictionary defines vision – the ability to anticipate and make provision for future events; foresight; insight.

What do you want for your future?

If you want something tomorrow, you’ve got to plan something today.

So today, I’m talking about Getting God’s Vision.

Phil 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, (14) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul had something to live for – he lived in the day, but he was aiming for something in the future.

He had vision, he had a goal.

Everybody needs a vision for their life.

What are the benefits of having a vision?

#### **1. A vision gives us a sense of purpose**

People can achieve amazing things when they have a sense of purpose.

ILLUS – “Dick and Rick Hoyt are a father-and-son team from Massachusetts who together compete just about continuously in marathon races. And if they’re not in a marathon they are in a triathlon – ... 26.2 miles of running, 112 miles of bicycling, and 2.4 miles of swimming. Together they have climbed mountains, and once trekked 3,735 miles across America.” Amazing when you realise that when they first started competing, Dick – the father – couldn’t swim, and hadn’t ridden a bike since he was 6-years old. Even more amazing when you realise that Rick – the son – was born with his umbilical cord round his neck and can neither speak nor walk. Dick is now 65, and they still compete regularly as they have done for the past 25 years.<sup>1</sup>

What gives Dick such an amazing ability to sacrifice for his son?

No doubt, it’s the love of an outstanding father, but it’s also that he has a sense of purpose.

When the doctors said they should institutionalise Rick because he’d be a vegetable for the rest of his life, Dick and his wife became determined to raise him as normally as possible.

Eph 1:18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Each one of us has a calling in life, a purpose.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His **purpose**.

Eph 1:11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the **purpose** of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

2 Tim 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own **purpose** and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

So God didn't put us on earth to bide our time while He figures out what to do with us.

He has a plan and a purpose for us that He wants us to fulfil.

That purpose gives us something to aim for

## **2. A vision keeps us on track**

ILLUS – When Allison and I first got married, both of us were working full-time. I was on an average wage. Allison was on a good wage. But we hardly saved a cent. We did what most people do. We lived to the level of our income. Apart from normal living expenses, I don't know what we spent our money on.

It's so easy to waste money, or resources, or even time – those of us who are getting on a bit can look back and think: It doesn't seem that long ago that I was 20.

And time just seems to disappear.

Time is another thing that's so easy to waste.

ILLUS – In one church in the UK, the elders had spent two board meetings from 7pm to midnight discussing whether to change the bulbs in the sanctuary from 60 watts to 100 watts.<sup>2</sup>

But when you have a vision, and a goal, you're more careful, because you want to achieve something.

You have something you're aiming for, so you want to stay on track.

## **3. A vision keeps us motivated**

I hear about people losing their motivation all the time – motivation to pray, to read the Bible, to study, even to keep living.

Motivation is so important, so how do you keep it?

I bet they had to face this problem back in the early church too.

Paul is a prime example.

ILLUS – In 2 Cor 11, Paul tells us that he was whipped by the Jews five times (each time 39 stripes), beaten with rods three times, stoned once, shipwrecked three times, often in prison, often hungry and thirsty, sometimes cold, sometimes naked, living in constant danger.

Why? Because he preached the gospel.

If anybody was tempted to give up, it must have been Paul.

How did he stay motivated?

He stayed motivated because he was able to look back to when the Lord gave him a purpose, gave him a vision for his life.

He could look back to when the Lord knocked him off his high horse on the road to Damascus and called him for a purpose.

Gal 1:15-16 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, (16) to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

So strong was that call to preach the gospel that Paul said, "... woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16)

The vision keeps you motivated.

So if the vision is so important, how do we get that vision in the first place.

## **How To Set Your Vision**

### **1. Pray**

ILLUS – I don't have a great deal of interest in how cars work. My knowledge of what's under the bonnet of my car is very limited. But about twenty years ago, when the hand brake cable on our car snapped, I bought a manual, bought a replacement cable, followed the instructions, and replaced the cable.

Even a dummy like me can follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Life is the same, you get your instructions from the manufacturer.

Get the vision for your life from God.

He's the manufacturer, so He knows best.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

We don't just need any old vision, we need God's vision for our lives.

He knows exactly the purpose that He created us for.

So begin to ask Him, and seek Him for His plan for your life.

Moody reputedly said on his deathbed, "If God be your partner, make your plans large."

God's plans are always bigger than our ability. Bob Orr.

### **2. Get the necessary training**

ILLUS – I've been interested in the stockmarket for many years. But recently, I've really decided to look at what it means to be a trader. They say it takes nerves of steel, and a high tolerance for risk.

But how many of you know that the stockmarket is a great way to lose a bundle of money?

What can make it work for you, so that you're not just gambling your money away?

Training – entering the stockmarket without training is like going to battle without the necessary weapons.

So I look for training.

There are lots of ways to get training.

You can take a course at college or university, you can invest in good books, or maybe you can get alongside someone who knows what they are doing.

It doesn't matter how you get trained.

The point is, if you need training, get it.

Don't just assume you know everything.

Even if God has given you the vision, lack of training is a great way to fail.

### **3. Set achievable goals**

The ultimate vision may be much bigger than you are, but set goals all along the way that are achievable.

ILLUS – I reckon that if someone had gone to Bill Gates when he was in grade 10 at high school and said, "I have a message from God for you: You will one day be the richest man in the world." He almost certainly would have said, "Yeah, right."

The end goal is often very daunting.

We can't achieve it all in one hit.

ILLUS – There would be no point in 15-year old Billy, turning to his classmates and saying, "Hey, guys, gimme money. I'm going to be the richest man in the world. And I intend for this to happen by tomorrow."

Every great achievement has to be accomplished one step at a time.

ILLUS – If it had been his goal to be the richest man in the world, he had to get a skill first. Then he had to figure out a way to make his first \$1000 out of that skill. Then his first \$10,000. Then his first \$100,000. Then his first million.

Nothing happens overnight – it happens one achievable goal after another.

#### **4. Exercise faith and look for God’s help**

God has a vested interest in our success.

He wants us to succeed.

And if He has a plan and a purpose for our lives, it makes sense that He would be willing to help us.

But it takes faith.

I call faith spiritual muscle.

If we want God’s help, we have to use our spiritual muscle, because that’s the way the spiritual realm works.

#### **5. Don’t let the past determine your future**

ILLUS – Put a wall eyed pike in an aquarium with some minnows and it will eat them. Put a sheet of glass between the pike and the minnows and the pike will charge them and bounce off the glass. Gradually the pike charges more slowly and less often until it finally comes to the conclusion that the minnows are out of reach. Remove the glass and the pike will starve to death with its favourite food swimming around it. It has given up.

Too often, we allow our experience to decide exactly what we can achieve in the future.

ILLUS – There’s a branch of Maths called probabilities: If you took a coin (not a trick coin) and flipped it 100 times and 100 times in a row it turned up heads, what are the chances that it will turn up heads the next time too? Some people think: Wow, one in a gazillion. But the probability is still one in two.

Do you know why? Because the coin can’t remember what it did last time.

The coins future is not determined by its past.

We need to give ourselves the best chance of success for the future, and for fulfilling God’s vision for our lives.

We do that by: Phil 3:13 ... forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.

ILLUS – In 1845, in the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia, the Southern Baptist Convention was organised. As a tribute to the faith of the founding fathers, the church placed this inscription in the building: “Men who see the invisible, hear the inaudible, believe the incredible, and think the unthinkable.”<sup>3</sup>

Will you dare to do that?

Daniel 11:32 tells us that: “... the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.”

Do you want to do exploits for God?

Find His vision for your life.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.teamhoyt.com](http://www.teamhoyt.com) *Racing Towards Inclusion* by David Tereshchuk

<sup>2</sup> As stated by Wynn Lewis

<sup>3</sup> Tan, Paul Lee *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations* p1564