

## The Role of Vision and Mission in Lasting Success

### INTRODUCTION:

*Do you have a Vision for work other than making it through the day, the week, or until your next job?*

*Do you have a Vision for your life, your marriage, your family, your organization?*

*Do you see yourself as being on Mission whenever you go to work and whatever that work might be?*

*Do you see yourself as being on Mission whenever and wherever you find yourself with people?*

*Most importantly, do you believe that God has a Vision and a Mission for your life?*

**VISION is our discernment of God's intentions. MISSION is our discernment of God's assignment.**

### THEME PASSAGE FROM SCRIPTURE:

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us keep fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1–2)*

- I. **CONSIDER OUR MANY FORERUNNERS** – *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...*

#### Who inspires you to run the Christian race?

##### A. **Legendary Runners in Scripture (Hebrews 11)**

*By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. [cf. Romans 12:1]*

*By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.*

*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.*

*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

##### B. **Legendary Runners in History**

William Carey / Joan of Arc / George Muller / David Livingstone / William Wilberforce / Harriet Tubman  
J.C. Penny / Henry Crowell / Mary Kay Ash / Booker T. Washington / Larry Burkett / R.G. LeTourneau

“I am serving Christ when shooting a buffalo for my men or taking an observation, [even if some] will consider it not sufficiently or even at all missionary.” (David Livingstone)

***These same ordinary people served the same extraordinary God in extraordinary ways!***

II. **JETTISON EVERY THING THAT HINDERS YOU** – *Let us throw off everything that hinders us...*

**Jettison Synonyms:** abandon, cast off, discard, expel, unload, eliminate

**What permissible things hinder you from running the race?**

- The comforts of life? (TV, books, magazines, newspapers, computers, broadband, the Internet, etc.)
- The pleasures of life? (Sports, food, movies, Facebook, YouTube, iTunes, iPods, iPhones, iPads, etc.)
- The conveniences of life? (Shopping at the malls, online gaming, online shopping, the Internet, etc.)

*“Everything is permissible”— but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible”— but not everything is constructive. (1 Corinthians 10:23)* [This was probably a slogan of the libertarian party at Corinth, which felt that since the body was insignificant (in comparison with the spirit), it did not really matter much what one did.]

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires are passing away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)*

III. **JETTISON EVERY SIN THAT ENTANGLES YOU** – *Let us throw off every sin that so easily entangles us...*

**What sinful habits hinder you from running the race?**

- Men – lust, pride, greed, pornography, vicarious adultery, etc.
- Women – bitterness, worry, anger, jealousy, a demand to be in control, etc.

*“Everything is permissible for me”— but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”— but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)*

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)*

*Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:4–5)*

IV. **BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT YOUR MISSION and RUN YOUR RACE WITH PERSEVERENCE** – *Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...*

**A. Does God have a mission for you to accomplish?**

*All my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began. (Psalm 139:16)*

*“For 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.” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. (John 15:16)*

*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them – to be our way of life. (Ephesians 2:10 – NAS/NRSV)*

*I am confident of this, that He who began a good work in and among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)*

*It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)*

## **B. What two things are critical to run any race with perseverance?**

**Strength:** *Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31)*

**Motivation:** *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1 Cor. 9:24–27)*

## **V. BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT YOUR VISION and KEEP YOUR EYES FOCUSED ON THE COACH – Let us keep fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

### **Let us keep fixing our eyes on Jesus**

When I ask Jesus to help me more clearly see the road ahead, He hands me a Bible and a blindfold.

Why the Bible? Because *My Word is a lamp for your feet and a light for your path. (Psalm 119:105)*

Why a blindfold? Because you must learn to *walk and run the race by faith, not by sight. (2 Cor. 5:7)*

But Master, I am afraid when I run in the dark. Jesus replied, *“My son, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never run in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)*

*After Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel with him abandoned the Word of God. . . He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD. (2 Chronicles 12:1, 14)*

*In everything that Hezekiah undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly, and so he prospered. (2 Chron. 31:20-21)*

### **The author and perfecter of our faith**

*I am confident of this, that He who began a good work in and among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ... for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good purpose. (Philippians 1:6; 2:13)*

### **Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God**

What was the joy set before Christ? The restoration of His glory and the redemption of His people! (John 17)

Jesus himself had to make the choice to run with perseverance the race marked out for him. (cf. John 12:23-25; Matthew 26:39)

Jesus himself expressed how intentional he was about both his vision and mission when he said;  
*I have glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. (John 17:4)*

### **The Servant's Primary Goal (Oswald Chambers – My Utmost for his Highest, March 17<sup>th</sup>)**

*We make it our aim . . . to be well pleasing to Him. — 2 Corinthians 5:9*

*We make it our aim. . .” It requires a conscious decision and effort to keep our primary goal constantly in front of us. It means holding ourselves to the highest priority year in and year out; not making our first priority to win souls, or to establish churches, or to have revivals, but seeking only “to be well pleasing to Him.” It is not a lack of spiritual experience that leads to failure, but a lack of working to keep our eyes focused and on the right goal...*

#### **VI. CONSIDER OUR MAIN FORERUNNER - Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5–8)*

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7–8)*

#### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:**

- A. Do you pray to discern God's Vision for your life, marriage, family, employment, ministry, etc.?
- B. Do you pray to discern God's Mission for your life, marriage, family, employment, ministry, etc.?
- C. **My Life's Mission Statement:** I want to increasingly comprehend and apprehend ALL that God intends for me, my marriage, my immediate and extended family, my businesses, my community and every person with whom God brings me into contact to help present them complete in Christ.

#### **CONCLUDING PRAYERS:**

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might. (Ephesians 1:17-19)*

*For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. (Colossians 1:9-12)*

## Oswald Chambers on the Topic of VISION from *My Utmost for His Highest*

### **Vision and Darkness (January 19<sup>th</sup>)**

Whenever God gives a vision to a Christian, it is as if He puts him in “the shadow of His hand” (Isaiah 49:2). The saint’s duty is to be still and listen.

### **God’s Overpowering Purpose (January 24<sup>th</sup>)**

When we are born again, if we are spiritual at all, we have visions of what Jesus wants us to be. It is important that I learn not to be “disobedient to the heavenly vision” – not to doubt that it can be attained.

### **Obedience to the "Heavenly Vision" (March 11<sup>th</sup>)**

If we lose “the heavenly vision” God has given us, we alone are responsible— not God. We lose the vision because of our own lack of spiritual growth. If we do not apply our beliefs about God to the issues of everyday life, the vision God has given us will never be fulfilled. The only way to be obedient to “the heavenly vision” is to give our utmost for His highest— our best for His glory. This can be accomplished only when we make a determination to continually remember God’s vision. But the acid test is obedience to the vision in the details of our everyday life— sixty seconds out of every minute, and sixty minutes out of every hour, not just during times of personal prayer or public meetings.

“Though it tarries, wait for it . . .” (Habakkuk 2:3). We cannot bring the vision to fulfillment through our own efforts, but must live under its inspiration until it fulfills itself. We try to be so practical that we forget the vision. At the very beginning we saw the vision but did not wait for it. We rushed off to do our practical work, and once the vision was fulfilled we could no longer even see it. Waiting for a vision that “tarries” is the true test of our faithfulness to God. It is at the risk of our own soul’s welfare that we get caught up in practical busy-work, only to miss the fulfillment of the vision.

It is essential that we live and “walk in the light” of God’s vision for us (1 John 1:7).

### **The Burning Heart (March 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

When God gives us a vision, we must transact business with Him at that point, no matter what the cost.

### **Spiritual Vision through Personal Purity (March 26<sup>th</sup>)**

Remember that spiritual vision depends on our character— it is “the pure in heart” who “see God.”

### **Spiritual Vision through Personal Purity (March 27<sup>th</sup>)**

A higher state of mind and spiritual vision can only be achieved through the higher practice of personal character. If you live up to the highest and best that you know in the outer level of your life, God will continually say to you, “Friend, come up even higher.”... Have you heard God say, “Come up higher,” not audibly on the outer level, but to the innermost part of your character?

### **The Patience to Wait for the Vision (May 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

Having the vision of God is the source of patience because it gives us God’s true and proper inspiration. Moses endured, not because of his devotion to his principles of what was right, nor because of his sense of duty to God, but because he had a vision of God. “. . . he endured as seeing Him who is invisible”

(Hebrews 11:27). A person who has the vision of God is not devoted to a cause or to any particular issue — he is devoted to God Himself. You always know when the vision is of God because of the inspiration that comes with it. Things come to you with greatness and add vitality to your life because everything is energized by God. He may give you a time spiritually, with no word from Himself at all, just as His Son experienced during His time of temptation in the wilderness. When God does that, simply endure, and the power to endure will be there because you see God.

“Though it tarries, wait for it . . . .” The proof that we have the vision is that we are reaching out for more than we have already grasped. It is a bad thing to be satisfied spiritually... Our reach must exceed our grasp. Paul said, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on . . . .” (Philippians 3:12). But if we have the inspiration of the vision of God, we have more than we can experience. Beware of the danger of spiritual relaxation.

### **Reaching Beyond Our Grasp (May 9<sup>th</sup>)**

There is a difference between holding on to a principle and having a vision. A principle does not come from moral inspiration, but a vision does. People who are totally consumed with idealistic principles rarely do anything. A person’s own idea of God and His attributes may actually be used to justify and rationalize his deliberate neglect of his duty... But wherever there is vision, there is also a life of honesty and integrity, because the vision gives me the moral incentive. Our own idealistic principles may actually lull us into ruin. Examine yourself spiritually to see if you have vision, or only principles.

Once we lose sight of God, we begin to be reckless. We cast off certain restraints from activities we know are wrong. We set prayer aside as well and cease having God’s vision in the little things of life. We simply begin to act on our own initiative. If we are eating only out of our own hand, and doing things solely on our own initiative without expecting God to come in, we are on a downward path. We have lost the vision. Is our attitude today an attitude that flows from our vision of God? Are we expecting God to do greater things than He has ever done before? Is there a freshness and a vitality in our spiritual outlook?

### **The Delight of Despair (May 24<sup>th</sup>)**

There are times when God cannot reveal Himself in any other way than in His majesty, and it is the awesomeness of the vision which brings you to the delight of despair. You experience this joy in hopelessness, realizing that if you are ever to be raised up it must be by the hand of God.

### **Visions Become Reality (July 6<sup>th</sup>)**

We always have a vision of something before it actually becomes real to us. When we realize that the vision is real, but is not yet real in us, Satan comes to us with his temptations, and we are inclined to say that there is no point in even trying to continue. Instead of the vision becoming real to us, we have entered into a valley of humiliation.

God gives us a vision, and then He takes us down to the valley to batter us into the shape of that vision. It is in the valley that so many of us give up and faint. Every God-given vision will become real if we will only have patience. Just think of the enormous amount of free time God has! He is never in a hurry. Yet we are always in such a frantic hurry. While still in the light of the glory of the vision, we go right out to do things, but the vision is not yet real in us. God has to take us into the valley and put us through fires and floods to batter us into shape, until we get to the point where He can trust us with the reality of the vision. Ever since God gave us the vision, He has been at work. He is getting us into the shape of the goal

He has for us, and yet over and over again we try to escape from the Sculptor's hand in an effort to batter ourselves into the shape of our own goal.

The vision that God gives is not some unattainable castle in the sky, but a vision of what God wants you to be down here. Allow the Potter to put you on His wheel and whirl you around as He desires. Then as surely as God is God, and you are you, you will turn out as an exact likeness of the vision. But don't lose heart in the process. If you have ever had a vision from God, you may try as you will to be satisfied on a lower level, but God will never allow it.

### **The Price of the Vision (July 13<sup>th</sup>)**

Keep paying the price. Let God see that you are willing to live up to the vision.

### **The Vision and The Reality (October 4<sup>th</sup>)**

You have had the vision, but you are not yet to the reality of it by any means. It is when we are in the valley, where we prove whether we will be the choice ones, that most of us turn back. We are not quite prepared for the bumps and bruises that must come if we are going to be turned into the shape of the vision. We have seen what we are not, and what God wants us to be, but are we willing to be battered into the shape of the vision to be used by God? The beatings will always come in the most common, everyday ways and through common, everyday people.

There are times when we do know what God's purpose is; whether we will let the vision be turned into actual character depends on us, not on God. If we prefer to relax on the mountaintop and live in the memory of the vision, then we will be of no real use in the ordinary things of which human life is made. We have to learn to live in reliance upon what we saw in the vision, not simply live in ecstatic delight and conscious reflection upon God. This means living the realities of our lives in the light of the vision until the truth of the vision is actually realized in us.

### **Individual Discouragement and Personal Growth (October 13<sup>th</sup>)**

We may have the vision of God and a very clear understanding of what God wants, and yet when we start to do it, there comes to us something equivalent to Moses' forty years in the wilderness. It's as if God had ignored the entire thing, and when we are thoroughly discouraged, God comes back and revives His call to us. And then we begin to tremble and say, "Who am I that I should go . . . ?" We must learn that God's great stride is summed up in these words — "I AM WHO I AM . . . has sent me to you" (Exodus 3:14). We must also learn that our individual effort for God shows nothing but disrespect for Him — our individuality is to be rendered radiant through a personal relationship with God, so that He may be "well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). We are focused on the right individual perspective of things; we have the vision and can say, "I know this is what God wants me to do." But we have not yet learned to get into God's stride. If you are going through a time of discouragement, there is a time of great personal growth ahead.

### **Deserter or Disciple? (December 29<sup>th</sup>)**

When God, by His Spirit through His Word, gives you a clear vision of His will, you must "walk in the light" of that vision (1 John 1:7). Even though your mind and soul may be thrilled by it, if you don't "walk in the light" of it you will sink to a level of bondage never envisioned by our Lord. Mentally disobeying the "heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19) will make you a slave to ideas and views that are completely foreign to Jesus Christ. Don't look at someone else and say, "Well, if he can have those views and prosper, why

can't I?" You have to "walk in the light" of the vision that has been given to you. Don't compare yourself with others or judge them— that is between God and them. When you find that one of your favorite and strongly held views clashes with the "heavenly vision," do not begin to debate it. If you do, a sense of property and personal right will emerge in you— things on which Jesus placed no value. He was against these things as being the root of everything foreign to Himself— ". . . for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). If we don't see and understand this, it is because we are ignoring the underlying principles of our Lord's teaching.