

Your God-Given Vision

by Harold Vaughan

Your God-given vision is a God-given dream or purpose in life that gives you direction and meaning.

Duration: 43:17

Scripture: Revelation 3:14

Topics: "Vision"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having hope and faith in God. He criticizes the defeatist mindset that limits our belief in God's extraordinary power. The preacher encourages the audience to have a vision for their lives and to set goals that they would pursue if they knew they could not fail. He also emphasizes the need for divine inspiration and calculated risks in pursuing these goals. The sermon concludes with a call to pray and seek God's guidance in formulating and refining our vision.

Transcript

I want to speak to you, I felt impressed to speak to you this morning on the subject of vision. And when I speak of vision, I'm talking about your life mission, your purpose in life. And Joseph is an excellent case study when it comes to the subject of vision.

Take your Bible and turn to Genesis chapter 37. It's here we find that Joseph was an exceptional young man. He had a mission from God, and so do you.

He had a calling from God, and so do you. He was tempted and tried, and you will be too. From ages 18 to 30, very little went right for Joseph from a human perspective.

But boy did he ever come through with flying colors. Genesis chapter 37 and verse 3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him.

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren, and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear you, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. For behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright.

And behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaves. And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated

him yet the more for his dream and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more.

And behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father and to his brethren. And his father rebuked him and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to the earth? And his brethren envied him, but his father observed the same.

Now Joseph had a God-given dream. This was not a daydream. This was not a wishful desire.

This was not a nightdream, a product of his subconscious or a figment of his imagination. But Joseph had a God-given dream. And it foretold of his future and it gave him purpose.

At the outset, Joseph was given a glimpse of his destiny. And I think that we can learn a lot about the power of vision from the life of Joseph. Now let me give you three things this morning about vision from the life of Joseph.

Number one, vision is God-given. Vision is God-given. Sight is a function of the eyes, but vision is a function of the heart.

Sight is a function of the eyes, but vision is a function of the heart. Now God gave Joseph a vision. His fathers and brothers sheaves were bowing down before his sheaves.

His brothers despised him. His father rebuked him. And Joseph's vision came in the form of things he was familiar with, yet it was a very strange dream.

I mean, sheaves doing obeisance to his sheave? This is a strange dream any way you want to look at it. Now you might not totally understand your vision. Because Joseph blabbed his vision to his father and his brothers.

He had no idea of what he was going to be going through. He had no idea of how God was going to bring the details to pass. But he spoke what he had seen.

He verbalized his dream. When God called Moses to deliver his people, remember what he did? He went out and killed an Egyptian. He had no conception of the means to deliver Israel.

So he went out in his own strength and slew one Egyptian. He didn't have the entire plan. Now I want to say that Moses may not have done the right thing, but he did something.

And God directed him the rest of the way. He was moving in accordance with the mission that he had gotten from God. And then the Lord directed Moses to the backside of the desert for 40 years to learn the ways of God.

Let me say that other people might not appreciate and understand your vision. Joseph's brothers, they were incensed when they heard about their being subject to their brother. And they said, behold, the dreamer cometh.

His father was upset at him. I want to tell you that Moses didn't comprehend what was happening in total. And the people that he was going to deliver didn't understand either.

The very day after he had murdered that Egyptian, he saw two Hebrews fighting. And he went out and tried to break up the fight. And they said to him, are you going to kill us like you killed the Egyptian? People may not understand and appreciate your vision.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to his own, but his own received him not. Jesus was rejected by his own people. I want to say that the people who have impacted their world have declared independence from other people's expectations.

And other people might not appreciate your vision. But understand that vision comes from God. Vision is something that God birthed in your heart.

And I believe that we need to identify our motivated interest. You need to identify your motivated interest. What is it that interests you? What is it that captivates you? What is it that you're passionate about? What keeps you awake at night? What is your dream? I'm wondering if you've ever had the experience of wanting something so badly, you can just literally taste it.

I want to tell you, my friend, that is the birth of God putting something in your heart. I believe that everybody today is looking for the will of God everywhere except in their own hearts. The Bible says, delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

I want to tell you that you can negotiate the will of God through sanctified desires. Delight yourself in the will of God and he will give you the desires of your heart. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit and emptied of sin and self, I want to tell you, you can discern the will of God through your desires.

When you're under God's control, you can negotiate the plan of God for your life through your desires. Pay attention to your desires. Let me say that vision is different from ambition.

Because ambition typically benefits self, but vision always benefits other people. And God-given vision always, always benefits others. It's never self-promoting, it always promotes other people.

Now let me give you some practical definitions of vision. Some practical definitions of vision I think that will help us maybe to capture the essence of what I'm trying to say. Number one, vision is a bridge from the past to the future.

Vision is a bridge from the past to the future. Number two, vision is the eye of faith to see the invisible and the decisiveness to make it visible. I think that for far too long in conservative Christianity, we are so afraid that we're going to presume on God for some definite blessing.

And here we are in a negative defensive mode. I'm telling you my friend, the time has come for the old men to dream some dreams and the young men to see some visions. Number three, notice if you would, vision is the power that causes people to make huge sacrifices in order to become all they can become for God.

Number four, what is vision? Vision is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, of self, and of circumstances. Number five, vision is adopting an action plan that will enable you to move forward in your Christian life and ministry. How many people drift through life, never have any conception of where they want to go, much less a plan on how to get there? I was in Florida, a couple of characters went out into the Gulf of Mexico in a John boat.

The motor conked out, they had no radio, no telephone, they drifted for two weeks. One of the men died. The other one was in the hospital.

The pastor and I went to visit this man. His face was terribly burnt, his lips were swollen, he had just about dehydrated to death. But there they were, drifting around.

How many of God's people drift around their entire earthly existence and never get a vision of why God put them here? Number six, vision is that inward fire which enables you to boldly communicate to your peers what the future will be like. I want to tell you, my friend, that vision looks beyond what he is to what can be. Notice number seven, vision is the dynamic that enables you to translate your faith and dreams into a new and personal walk with God.

Number eight, vision is that God-given energy which will make you become a risk taker. Vision is that God-given energy which will make you become a risk taker. Number nine, vision is that moral obligation that mandates your behavior in accordance with God's will.

I want to say this, that great gains come from taking some risk. And you can play it safe and never do much your whole life or you can pursue with vigor your God-given dream. Joseph had a vision and it came from God.

My friend, vision is God-given. But notice number two, if you would, that vision gets you through the fire. And we're all headed either into the fire, coming out of the fire or we're in the fire right now.

That's just the way it is. And vision will get you through the fire. Now, God had destined Joseph for a place of great influence, great responsibility and great power.

And you know, few things will develop character as much as adversity. Somebody said that most men are born crying, they live complaining and they die disappointed. Well, surely we can hope for better than that.

And I want to say that few things will develop character as much as adversity. Joseph had to be put on the potter's wheel. There was a pressure from within, there was a pressure without.

He was put into the furnace of afflictions. Now, notice Joseph's two fiery trials. First of all, he had a fiery trial with his brothers.

With his brothers. You know the story. They had evil thoughts.

They spoke evil words. They committed evil acts. They plotted to kill him.

And Reuben saved his life. He talked his brothers out of killing him. They stripped him of that coat of many colors.

They shoved him into a pit. And they sold him into slavery. I want to tell you that Joseph went through the fire.

He suffered great loss. He lost his freedom. He lost his family.

He lost his father. And he lost everything that he was familiar with. He also had a second trial and that was with Potiphar's wife.

Now, I want to say there's no question but what Potiphar's wife was a very beautiful woman. I'm telling you the king got the best looking women in the kingdom. She didn't need an extreme makeover.

I'm just telling you that she was a good looking person. And the Bible tells us in chapter 39 how that he had this fiery trial with Potiphar's wife. The Bible tells us in chapter 39 in verse 7 that she came on to him and said, Come lie with me.

Very bold. Very direct. And the Bible tells us that Joseph no doubt was surprised when she came with this advance.

Come lie with me. I want you to notice that he didn't initiate it. He was not the cause of it.

He did nothing that contributed to this advance. This was an external attack. There was nothing in his heart longing for this encounter.

There's no doubt that he was shocked and stunned by this woman's forwardness. But notice number two, it was a sustained assault. It was a sustained assault.

In verse 10 it says that she came day by day. It was repeated. It was continual.

It was persistent. This was not a one time attempt. She came at him continually.

Day by day. But old Joseph said no the first time. He said no the second time.

He said no every time. Remember how Delilah wore Samson down by asking him the secret of his strength over and over again? And finally Samson capitulated. He came in and told her the secret of his strength.

It was her constant nagging that broke him down. And I want to tell you that Potiphar's wife came to Joseph day by day. She was persistent.

And let me just say this. We're living in a day, my friend, with all of these chat rooms and all of this garbage. There's no reason for a child of God to ever communicate to anybody on the internet of the opposite sex.

There is never a time and never a place for this kind of stuff. What in the world is going on? I want to tell you it was a continual assault. But we can live pure in an impure world.

It was a surprise assault. It was a sustained assault. But notice number three.

It was a secluded assault. Because the Bible says in verse 11 that none of the men of the house were within. Joseph was left alone with Potiphar's wife.

He could have yielded it. Yielded it and no human being would have known. He could have kept it a secret.

The only eyes watching Joseph were the eyes of God. It was a secluded assault. But notice it was a subtle assault.

Because in verse 10 the Bible says she spoke to him day by day. She spoke to him. You see her approach was emotional as well as physical.

She flattered him and attempted to charm him. But Proverbs tells us that an adulterous woman's words are smoother than oil and sweeter than honeycomb. I want to tell you that Potiphar's wife was a strange woman.

And she attempted to lure him into immorality. You know the story. How did he escape? Leaving his garment.

Then she falsely accused him. And Potiphar threw him in prison. He was very angry.

So here Joseph is. His brothers had lied to their father. His master's wife had lied to her husband.

But Joseph overcame the lies of his brothers and the lust of his master's wife. His brothers put him in a pit. And his boss put him in a prison.

And there he sat for 12 years. But my friend Joseph went from the pit to the prison to the palace by the grace of God. And I want to say that vision imparts power, purpose and perseverance.

It will get you through the fire. You see it was his integrity and industry that caused him to be put in charge of the prison. But it was his dream that sustained him.

He knew that God had a purpose for him. And he knew that the prison was not the last thing on God's calendar for him. It was his hope for a better day.

That kept him going. And my friend adversity not only proves your faith. It improves your character.

Andrew Bonner said this. We've gotten more from Paul's time in prison than we did from his trip to the third heaven. He couldn't even speak of those holy things that he had seen.

Oh but my friend when he was in prison we had this word of God that God used him to write. You see it's the time in the furnace of affliction. When you discover how much dross is in your constitution.

I mean I'm a pretty good fellow as long as the sun's shining. But you let the clouds come and the storms come and the waves begin to beat. And then we begin to see what's really in our heart.

I want to tell you that vision is that fire in your bones that conquers the fiery trials you experience on earth. Thomas Brooks the old Puritan said a man full of hope will be full of action. A man full of hope will be full of action.

I want to tell you it's vision that keeps you going. And my dear people it's the fire in your heart that will get you through the hard times in life. There were two twins.

And they were opposites. One was an optimist and one was a pessimist. So they took these twins to the psychiatrist to try to get a little diagnosis.

And the psychiatrist put them in different rooms. He put the depressed boy in a room full of brand new toys. And he put the optimistic boy in a room full of horse manure.

And the psychiatrist went back to see how the depressed boy was making out in that room full of brand new toys. And there he was depressed and weeping and crying. And the psychiatrist said, what in the world is wrong? He said, I'm afraid I might break one of the toys.

And then he went and found the optimist in the room full of horse manure. And he found him having the time of his life throwing the manure in the air, digging around, having a party. And the psychiatrist said, man, how come you're having such a good time in here with all this manure? And the boy said, with all this manure around here, there's got to be a pony around somewhere.

I want to say something to you loud and clear. You cannot change your race. You can't change your gender.

You can't change your upbringing. But you sure can change and choose to change your attitude. And my friend, it's the vision that's going to get you through the fire.

I want to tell you, when you have a goal, it will help you to persevere. But let me give you a third thing about vision. And that is vision will determine your destiny.

Vision will determine your destiny. It was Joseph's vision that carried him through difficulties in life. Vision determines destiny.

Look at this quote. Sad will be the day for any man when he becomes satisfied with the life he is living and the thoughts he is thinking and the deeds he is doing. When there is not beating at the doors of his soul.

A desire to do something greater. Which he knows he was meant to do. Because he is a child of God.

I like that. I like that. I want to say something to you.

I want to tell you that humility and meekness are biblical virtues. But I want to tell you there's a balance between meekness and God-instilled initiative, dreams and vision. I want to tell you one of the sad things today is that we're so overreactive.

We tend to overreact. And I want to say that overreaction is never corrective. And overreaction is always destructive.

Because when you hop out of one extreme to another extreme, you create more problems that didn't exist before. Overreaction is not the answer I've seen, I think, just about every imbalance that exists. And I committed about half of them myself.

My friend, I want to tell you it's vision that will determine your destiny. And where you are tomorrow depends on what you dream about today. You know, your dominating thoughts will determine your destiny.

Helen Keller was blind in death. Somebody asked her one day when she had grown up if she could imagine anything worse than not having sight. And Helen Keller's response was this.

She said, yes, I can imagine something worse than not having sight. And that's having sight but no vision. Having sight but no vision.

The Bible talks about people who have eyes but they cannot see. Or they have ears but they cannot hear. My friend, I hope that you're in a position to where you are hearing from God.

I hope you're in a position to where you're seeing things you've never seen before. You know, the more you go along in this thing, my friend, you can either get in a rut and coast on to the finish line. Or brother,

you can gain momentum, gain speed and gain insight and understanding and get better as we go along.

God gave Joseph a vision of his ultimate destiny when he was young. I want to tell you that vision is when God shows you what the goal is. And then you can be coming what God says you already are.

I've never given this message to adults. And I don't know why God impressed on my heart to give it to you this morning. But I believe we need to learn to walk on the edge of our God-given potential.

And I want to give you some practical pointers. Practical pointers I think that will help us in this matter of vision. Number one, your vision determines your future.

What you dream about today will determine where you are tomorrow. Your vision determines your future. You will never gain momentum moving toward tomorrow if you're dragging your past behind you.

I mean, if you're bound to the past, you're blind to the future. And vision sets you free from the regrets of yesterday. My friend, the Bible says, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before.

You know what that word forget means? Neglecting those things which are behind. Every one of us here have made enough mess-ups and boo-boos and mistakes and sins to condemn the whole world. But brother, get all that mess under the blood and forget those things that are behind.

Neglect those things, purposely choose to leave those things alone, and to move forward to those things that are before. Don't let negative events be the defining feature of your life in a catastrophic way. I want to tell you that Joseph could have spent his entire life focusing on the wrong that his brothers had done to him.

He could have went around moaning and groaning and complaining, being bitter about his past. He could have opted out to be a career victim. He could have spent his whole time murmuring, and by the way, you know what murmuring is.

Murmuring is complaining to people that don't have any power to do anything about it anyhow. Vision determines your future. Joseph went from the pit to the palace by the grace of God.

Remember when his brothers came down to Egypt? And they were full of guilt when they arrived there. And Joseph, when he revealed himself to his brothers, he had a God focus. He said, you boys meant this thing for evil, but God meant it for good.

I want to tell you that having a future look gives you victory over the past. And I want to tell you that God never consults your past to determine your future. My friend, let me just tell you something.

God has put your past behind him. It's about time you put it behind you. Because you're never going to go forward in the future dragging all that mess behind you.

You know what I think? I think that conservative, fundamental, separated Christians need to get over the guilt of the past and get into the grace of God. We need to get off Sinai and get to Calvary. Brother, we need to enjoy because God has given us everything.

Everything that pertains to life and godliness. And he's given us all things freely to enjoy. I'm telling you sometimes the people of God got excited about what God has done for them and started enjoying the

Lord.

And never mind all the theological naysayers and the theological extremes that would rob the fire out of our heart. Brother, we can believe God for a better day. Let me say that your vision will determine your associations.

Your vision will determine your associations. If you've got a God-given vision, you won't let the people who are going nowhere take you along with them. Because if you hang around people who are going nowhere, they always want you to go along.

You need to let your destination determine your company. Can I say this? You can outgrow your friends. You can outgrow your friends.

The Bible says that a companion of wise men will be wise, but a companion of fools will be destroyed. You're born into the family you're born into, but you get to choose your friends. The law of association states that you're going to become like the people you hang around with.

You see, your vision determines your associations. But notice number three, your vision will determine how you spend your time. There's 24 hours in every day.

And you're going to invest your time doing something. And your vision will determine what's in your library. What's on the television screen.

How long you sit in front of the computer. I'm telling you it's your vision. You see, you can do something, but you can't do everything.

You can try to be the jack of all trades, master of none. Or you can be the jack of a few trades, master of one. And that's what Paul said, this one thing I do.

That's why he was created. That's why he was here. He gave it everything that he had.

Now you've got to determine your purpose in life and dedicate yourself to it. A Spanish proverb says this. He who does not look ahead remains behind.

Now why are you here? Gentlemen, why are you here? Dear sister, why did God put you on this planet? I'm telling you, your vision will determine how you spend your time. And we need to find out the purpose for which we were created. I hope that you've got something burning in your heart.

I am sick and tired of this emasculated, wimped out, passive kind of Christianity. They say, well, if you're really right with God, that means that you're just a passive person and all your desires are subdued. Hogwash.

Hogwash. Here's an extreme. We get over into passivity.

We get over into sitting around. We get over into fatalism. And we adopt theological perspectives that will condone the lack of fruit and the lack of the power of God.

And we're blaming God for the mess we're in when we ought to be confessing the sins of our own hearts most of the time. Oh, my friend, what about it? What about it? Let me just say this. Your vision will determine how you spend your time.

Notice this one. Your vision will determine your duty. Your vision will determine your duty.

Vance Havner said, the vision must be followed by the venture. The vision must be followed by the venture. It's not enough to stare up the steps.

We must step up the stairs. Destiny requires diligence. Destiny requires diligence.

You see, my friend, it's not just an abracadabra and God's going to throw the whole thing out there. No. It's a process.

When you get converted, it's a crisis. But, brother, the crisis has got to be followed by the process or it will become an abscess. We've got to move on with God.

What am I saying? I'm telling you to follow your dreams. Follow your dreams. Don't let the wet blanket brigade or the cold water committee put out the fire that's in your heart.

Friend, you're obligated to fulfill the reason that God put you on this planet. Just keep it simple. Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

Can I give you permission to be happy? You know, it's almost to the point now where if anybody's really prospering in any area, everybody's suspicious that they must be compromising somewhere. What in the world has happened to us? I want to tell you that God is a supremely happy God. And in His presence, there's fullness of joy.

550 references to joy and rejoicing in the Word of God. Friend, I'm just telling you, if you've got a God-given dream, go for broke. Go for it.

Bob Hassel, I want to tell you what happened to this man. He sold out to God. He put everything on the line.

And he's a moderate. He's a nice guy. He's not an evangelist.

He's a nice guy. I'm just telling you, he's a nice guy. But I want to tell you what happened to him.

He got stirred up out there in California. And he came back home and got desperate and said, God, if you're not going to do it here, put me somewhere where you're going to do something real. I just don't want to put in time and exist.

I hope you want to see something before you kick the bucket. I hope you want to see something here and now. Thank God.

Brother, I'm telling you, it's going to be great on the other side. But what about a little note of holy joy in the here and now? Oh, my friend, we're so subdued. We're God's chosen.

God's frozen. I don't know what's wrong with us half the time. Write the vision and make it plain.

You know what Habakkuk said? He said, write the vision. Document your vision. Create a plan.

You know, only one person in my entire life, I went to a Franklin Day planner thing, and he told me I ought to write down my life goals, family goals, financial goals, spiritual goals, work, whatever. And he's the only guy that ever told me I ought to do something like that. You know, back in the early 70s, here's my

observation.

We didn't know much, but we had a lot of zeal. And now what I'm finding today is my observation is, I talk about this with my son often, that people are well-educated, well-thought-out, tremendous analyzers, but precious little pioneering zeal left among people today. You see, the men have become feminized, and the women have become masculinized, if there's such a word.

We've got this role reversal going on. We've got women going off to combat in Iraq, and the men staying home to take care of children. There's something wrong with this picture, my friend, according to the Word of God.

There's something wrong with this. Now, we need a God-given vision. Now, create a plan.

Now, look at this one right here. A BHAG. The Harvard Business Review came up with this.

Said everybody needs a BHAG. A Big Harry Audacious Goal. I like to get around people that can think big.

I like to get around somebody that's looking for something out of the ordinary. We're put here for a purpose, people. With all the socialism and humanism and government dependency, and we're in the world of the people that can believe God for things anymore.

Oh, the pastors are politicized, the churches are commercialized, and the faith has become homogenized. There's something wrong with that. What is your Big Harry Audacious Goal? What is that one thing? I've been telling God, I said, Lord, I'd rather see revival and die young than live old and never see the hand of God.

You get in the middle of something where God's in town and it's exhausting, but it's good. But it's hard on your heart. I mean, there's a stress to the thing.

But how much better to get in the middle of a move of God, man? And go out in a burst of glory than to sit around with a kindling wood. Oh, bro, what's your dream? I mean, what are you shooting for? What do you really want to see? It can only be one thing. What is it? What is your dream? Oh, let me say, there's nothing wrong with a little holy optimism.

Nothing wrong with a little holy aspiration. Nothing wrong for some men and women to have some initiative. Oh, I say it again.

A Christian is not somebody who is passive and has all his desires subdued. A Christian is somebody who's got that balance of meekness, but he's got a fire burning in his bones and he can't keep his mouth shut. Got to do it.

All right. David Livingstone said, I'll go anywhere as long as it's forward. Francis Bacon said, A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.

I want to tell you, wise men and wise women have God instilled vision. Listen to this. We see facts with our eyes.

We see ideas with our minds. But we see ideals with our souls. Whatever we see with our souls is real and permanent and cannot be destroyed.

You know, if you can see it in your heart and believe in your heart, Jesus said, If you can believe, you're going to receive. Don't dispensationalize all the meat out of that. Oh, brother.

Saving faith is one thing, but living faith is another thing. We're going to move toward whatever we see in our minds. And I want to tell you, you've got to see it on the inside before you'll ever see it on the outside.

I'm just telling you, I think we ought to do some dreaming here this morning. We need some God-given visions. We need to elevate our sights, because clearly seeing your vision means you're accelerating toward the goal.

By the way, they said, Well, we can't have revival anymore because the culture has changed. And because the times are changed. And because these are the last days.

And cut them notes out of your Scofield Bible and burn them. No such thing as a Laodicean church age. God didn't foreordain us to be a bunch of Laodicean deadbeats and cause them to be like they were so He could prefigure us.

Don't you blame God? I know there's some similarities there, and that's a good let-off, is it not? But I want to tell you that Samuel Stoddard, what was it, the grandfather of Jonathan Edwards, when everybody else was gone off to deep end and fatalism, he believed God, and he saw five Holy Ghost revivals in his church in his lifetime, seasons of blessing from when the hand of God moved in. And I want to say this, if the Spirit of God doesn't come in revival periodically, we'd all be out of business anyhow. And we've limited God with our unbelief.

I'm just telling you, I think that we have gotten so into the cautious, the analytical, the theoretical, and the critical, to the point where we have lost the ability to believe God for more than what we can see. I want to tell you that God calls everybody to four things. He calls to salvation, He calls to sanctification, He calls to suffering, but He calls to service.

Friends, everyone is called to walk with God and work for God. Now, we're talking about our life mission from God, and I want to help you think about and establish your vision. So I've got a little exercise for you.

I would encourage you to write down these four questions. Write down these four questions. What goals would I set if I knew I could not fail? What goals would you set if you knew you could not fail? What would you try to do if you thought you might succeed? Can I encourage you to take a few divinely inspired risks? David took a risk, so to speak, when he went against Goliath, but it was a calculated risk.

It was not a foolhardy risk. He had already slain a lion and a bear, and nobody else was willing to take on Goliath. Success is the point where preparation meets opportunity.

And I want to tell you, old David was prepared, and he seized the opportunity, and he slew Goliath. You know, scores of people never attempt anything significant because they're afraid they might fail. Well, what about Abraham? When he left the Ur of the Chaldees, left everything that was familiar to him, and didn't even know where he was going.

What about Joshua, who marched seven times around Jericho? What kind of a battle plan is this? And what about Gideon when he defeated the Midianites with lamps and pitchers and a measly 300 men? What about Noah when he prepared an ark, even though it had never even rained? These men were risk takers. They moved in accordance to what God had put in their ark, and look at the results. Hudson Taylor

said this, Many Christians estimate difficulties in light of their own resources, and thus attempt little, and often fail in the little they do attempt.

All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His power and His presence being with them. Friend, what would you try to do if you knew you could not fail? Write that down, and just, you know, brainstorm right there. Heartstorm.

Number two, what inspires, captivates, and dominates your thinking? What inspires, captivates, and dominates your thinking? What do you want to accomplish in life? You know, when it's all said and done, I mean, when it's all said and done, and you look back, what do you want to see was accomplished? Identify that thing, and write that down. Now, you need to listen, you need to listen to the desires of your hearts, because what you're dreaming about today will determine where you are tomorrow. And what you dream of doing when your mind is at rest, that's the thing.

That's the thing that God's directing you toward. You can discern the will of God by listening to your spirit-filled desires. Listen to your desires.

Identify what inspires and captivates and dominates your thinking. Can I say this? I think we're very heavy on instruction in the local church, and very weak on inspiration. We can all parse the Greek tenses, man, but we're in the world of people that have a dream.

Let me tell you something about people who are affecting people in certain communities. I want to tell you what they're offering people. They're offering people hope.

And we can criticize them because the theology is off if we want to. And the theology is off in a lot of points in some of these cases. But what I'm telling you is they're offering people who didn't have a father and grew up in a ghetto and grew up with nothing, they're offering them some hope.

And I want to tell you, our crowd needs some hope. We're locked into a defeatism. We have put ourselves into such a cage of unbelief to where we can no longer believe God for anything out of the ordinary.

We can no longer believe God for something extraordinary. Why? Because we have limited God by our unbelief. Somebody wrote a book called Limiting God.

I want to tell you, unbelief is a wicked, wicked, wicked, wicked, wicked vile sin. Oh, my friend, delight yourself in the Lord. Number three.

Number three. Write this one down. What price am I willing to pay? You've got to be willing to step out on faith.

Friends, we've got to take responsibility for our own lives. I want to tell you that David slung the stone at Goliath, not God. David's the one that went out and picked up those five stones.

He was completely trusting in God, but he picked up the rocks and he wound up the swing and he flung one at Goliath. Somebody said, well, why did David pick up five stones? Was he afraid he was going to miss? Somebody said, no, he had four other brothers. I don't know about that.

I can't verify that. But I want to tell you, that man, that boy, that shepherd boy, man, he had a heart full of faith. He was believing God.

D.L. Moody said, pray like it's all up to God, work like it's all up to you. That's good theology. And from a man that won millions, maybe we ought to listen to him instead of Dr. So-and-so who wins nobody.

By the way, you know, the soul winning fire is at an all-time low, I think. I was just in a church. It's a straight church in North Carolina.

This is tobacco spitting, beer drinking, NASCAR going, the country down here. NASCAR, by the way, you know what that means? Non-athletic sports centered around rednecks. Sorry, I shouldn't have said that.

I shouldn't have said that. But anyhow, no offense to the Carolina brethren, all right? No offense. My mother was born in Valdez, North Carolina.

All right? No offense. But I was just at a church. And I want to tell you, I went in there on Sunday morning.

They had Asian people. Indian people. Black people.

White people. Mixed couples. And the atmosphere was rife with the love of God.

And I said to the people, the pastor had mono, so he couldn't even come to the meetings. And I said, man, down here where there's prejudice, they've run very high on both sides of the fence. And there's always reasons for all of that.

But yet, they seem to have overcome all of this. And I said, how did this come about? And by the way, my father's house shall be a house of prayer for all white people. No, my father's house shall be a house of prayer for all nations.

All people. You know, the best that we can do is to form subcultures, but only God can transcend culture and overlook all the racial and linguistic differences and bring people together. I'm just telling you, friend, I'm just telling you, when the power of God comes, it's not going to be just a bunch of people that think exactly like us on every point.

We're huddling up. Half the crowd's moving to Montana to escape the corruption. But I just want to say this, God didn't call us to a holy huddle.

God called us to raise our children for the glory of God and to make an impact in the culture in which we live. And I want to tell you, if we're not able to assimilate anybody, all we can do is immigrate people. I'm telling you, there's something wrong with that picture right there.

I said, well, how come you got all these kinds of people? He said, well, it's intentional. A pastor won't tolerate prejudice. Don't praise God.

All these people in there, man, it was a blessing. Now, listen, don't spiritualize lazy habits. Aggressively follow up everything God leads you to do.

You can't expect God to work if you're not. Let me give you this final thing. What sacrifices am I willing to make? Are you willing to give up other things for this one thing? Joseph sacrificed immediate gratification for a preferred future.

He sacrificed the right to become bitter. He sacrificed the chance to feel sorry for himself. He sacrificed the opportunity to become a career victim.

Friend, what are you willing to sacrifice in order for your dream to become a reality? I'm talking about vision, and I want to encourage you to get a vision for your family. Get a vision for your family. You can't do anything about what's been lost, but you can sure do something about what's left.

Get a vision for your children. Get a vision for your home. Get a vision for your ministry.

See God. Find what God wants you to do, man, and move toward that goal. Oh, I hope you have a vision for revival.

I think this is probably one of the most revival-minded crowds that I know anything about. Ah, brethren, we can believe God. God's doing some things in churches.

God's doing some things in some places. God's doing things in the world. Why can't God do something where we're at? Oh, put that longing, man, indulge every desire to pray.

Get a vision for your work. Not everybody's going to go to the mission field. We need some senders as well as goers.

Get a vision. Believe God. You know, I told my boys the other day, I said, God's put it on my heart.

This ain't my thing, but I'd like to give X amount of dollars before I die to the work of God. I'd like to give so much money away. Now, this is an astronomical figure, and I want to tell you, it's a God-size situation, and I think we could use some God-size dreams.

Amen. Well, get a vision for your business. Get a vision for God and of God.

And we need a vision for eternity because we're all going the same way. And when we get there, I want to tell you what's going to count is what we did here. And I want to tell you, there ought to be some other people there because we were down here.

Amen. A vision. A God-given vision.

My friend, write the vision. Make it plain. Could I challenge you to get alone sometime today and answer these four questions and formulate.

At this point in time, and by the way, vision is fluid. It will evolve and shift and change and ebb and flow as you go along, but you can refine it. But figure out where you're going and in God's name, go for it.

Write the vision and make it plain. Could we pray for just a moment? Just a moment here this morning.

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