

# DEVELOPING A VISION

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### PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Proverbs 29:18 tells us, *“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained.”* So, the question is, “Do you have a vision?” If you say, “What is a vision?” maybe you do not have one. If you have a vision, you probably know what it is. For some people, it is just a dream. For some people, it is kind of a physical thing. Actually, according to the Bible, it is something like a practical dream. It is something of faith. It is something that God gives to us.

Sometimes, when we say God spoke to us, it is not very concrete how that happened. Often, we cannot explain it. It is just some idea, or the way we feel. Then a week later, if it does not happen, we say, “Well, I must have made a mistake. Maybe it was not God talking to me.” That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about a vision that is very **concrete** to you. A vision that is a **reality**. A vision without which you **cannot** live.

Now my wife is called to be a missionary. A calling and a vision is not the same thing. But the element of reality about her calling is the same as the element of reality in a vision. We were working on a farm one time together, and she said, “Abe, sit down. I want to talk to you.” She said, “I did not marry you to become a farmer’s wife.” She was called of God to be a missionary. So when we went to Ukraine, she moved from a big nine room private house, to a small three room apartment in Ukraine. I asked how she felt about it. Her answer was “I am not complaining, am I?” Because she had this calling. And the calling was real.

# I. ELEMENTS OF A VISION

## A. Obsession

Jeremiah said he had a fire within him, and it was eating him up. The apostle Paul said he had something that he could not deny or live without. He must preach the Gospel.

Now that is a calling. This calling was very real for the prophets and apostles of God. A vision can be just as real. It is a divine plan that comes very concretely into your life, and you will do everything to **fulfill** that plan.

It says, *“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained.”* (Proverbs 29:18). For instance, economically I do not see such a vision in Ukraine. I do not see that economically. And because of that, there is little economic progress in this country. It is economically falling apart. There are many, many problems, because there is no economic vision. What about spiritually? Is there a vision in Ukraine? Do you have such a vision?

## B. Dedication

Somebody came to me yesterday, and he said, “I worked in one area of the country, and there were some difficulties, so we left that area and moved to another area and I was trying to teach Churches to prepare themselves with classes for evangelism later on, but they do not want to. They are not interested. I cannot get anything done.”

“But at the same time I discovered something else. I met two men from the same province, and these two men are a New Life Ministry Director and a New Life Administrator and they are holding Bible classes all over. And in those Bible classes something beautiful is happening. Two Saturdays a month, these men hold conferences for pastors and other leaders. They are doing a fantastic job. We are so excited about that.”

Now there is something in that province that is way high up, totally different from the rest of the Christians. There are some New Life leaders there in that province that have a vision. They *know* what they want to do. They have a plan of action. They are working hard every day, but they are also looking to the future. They are thinking about the summer. They are thinking about the next school year. There is a vision, there is a hope, there is a desire to bring to fulfillment that which God has given to them and shown to them. And while other Christians in the whole country and also some churches in the same area are dying, those people who are in the New Life Bible classes are alive.

## C. Action

Noah had a vision. God said “build an ark”. Nobody had ever built an ark before. It was a stupid idea. It was a laughable idea. To think that animals were going to come by themselves into this boat thing. However, Noah had a vision and Noah acted it out. For a hundred years he gave a testimony about his vision and what he was doing. He preached to everybody that wanted to listen. He said, “A lot of water is going to come.” It had never rained before. Nobody had ever used an umbrella. Nothing had come from the sky. God spoke. Noah had a vision. **He acted it out.** It was a thing of faith. Because of his faith you are sitting here today in a chair. If it was not for him you would not be sitting here. And they have discovered this Ark now. It is laying very clearly on a plateau on Mt Ararat in Turkey.

Abraham had a vision. He was the richest man on earth. He sold his house. He sold everything he had, and started moving. His vision was to go somewhere. “Where are you going Abraham?” “Do not know yet.” He would be a good Ukrainian would he not? Just go somewhere, I do not know where to. But he went and he kept going. After a while he got tired and stopped. Then he realized, “This is not God’s place for me.” He went further, from Haran where he stopped, he went further to Palestine. After he came to Palestine he went further, he went to Egypt. Then he realized, “This is too far. This is not what God wants. I have gone too far.”



## II. WHAT IS THE COST?

### A. Unguaranteed Fulfillment

The Book of Hebrews tells us, “Did these people complete their vision?” “Did they totally receive the promise of God completely?” And the answer is “no!” Abraham was a stranger on the earth his whole life. He never saw all his descendants, but he nevertheless fulfilled the vision that he had personally.

Moses had a vision. His vision was, “Let my people go!” “Let my people go!” And the people went. Moses never led the people into the holy land. But that was not his calling. His calling was to lead the people out of Egypt. Out of the land of sin. Out of the world, what we would call the world. It was Moses who introduced them to God, on Mt Sinai. Moses’ God became their God. Moses gave them ten rules to live by. And those rules are still applicable today.

### B. Laying Down Your Own Desires

David had a vision to build a country for God. When he completed building the country for God, he had a desire. He had a desire for holiness. He wanted something with which he could honor God. He wanted something that the whole world could recognize as, “This is the holy place of God.” So he wanted to build a temple, but God said, “No. The vision for you was to build the country. In order to do that you had to destroy many enemies. You have done a good job, but by doing that, you yourself have become contaminated.

Because of that contamination, you cannot build me a holy place.” David fulfilled God’s desire, but it cost him something. David wished to be the holy man for God that could build a holy place for God, and God said, “That you cannot do.”

Simon Peter desired to become a fisher of men. And he became one of the best preachers that we know in the Bible. He became a leading apostle. He fulfilled his vision.

But he had to give up his secular job.



### C. Enduring For Holy Things

Jesus had a vision. First He received the dove when He was baptized and initiated into His ministry, and his life was changed from being a carpenter to becoming a spiritual preacher and miracle worker. Later He faced the most difficult thing anybody ever had to do. He was on top of a mountain and two people came to meet Him, so that He would have a new holy vision of what was set before Him. He was willing to endure the cross for **the holy things in the future.**

In Hebrews we read, most of these people the world was not worthy of. They had faith. They saw something very concretely and they acted it out. My question is, “Do you have *faith*?” “Do you have something?” “**Are you acting something out?**”

## III. CALLED TO BE A WATCHMAN

Let us turn to Ezekiel 33:1-9:

*The Word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, speak to your countryman and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword against the land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head.*

*Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. But if the watchmen sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.’*

*“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to*



*dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself."*

Most of you are acquainted with this passage. Son of man I have made you a watchman of the house of Ukraine . I believe it is repeated three times here in the Book of Ezekiel. *"I have made you a watchman, I have made you a watchman, I have made you a watchman."* In other places in scripture we see that the believers are God's people to be **watchmen**. *"If my people which are called by my name, will repent and humble themselves, I will heal their land."* We are all set on a hill, as a city on a hill to shine around.

## A. Prayer

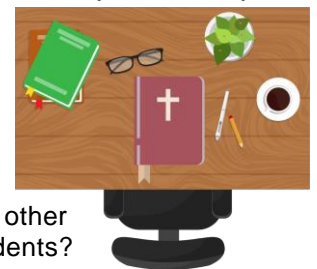
Let me ask you some questions. God has called you to be a watchman. Are you praying for the mayor of your city by name? Are you praying for the leader of your province by name? When was the last time you prayed for the police in your province? When have you prayed for the highway police? There are other government functions, government leaders, the army. We have very specific instructions to do that. God has called you and it is your obligation to develop a vision. New Life for Churches has a vision for you. A vision for Ukraine . A vision for your country. A vision that only you people can bring into reality. Have you been **praying** about a vision? Maybe you need to spend a day in prayer. When was the last time you spent a whole day in prayer?

## B. Change Your Lifestyle

You know yesterday I was blessed. We had a meeting with the New Life for Churches council leaders, and I think all of them are still following the method of the *Basic Christian Life* course — having devotions in the morning, making markings in their Bibles, and making notes in their notebook. Most of them are not making notes every single day, but three or four times a week they were making notes in their notebook. Praise God they have developed a vision. They are acting this vision out. Years ago they learned these things in the *Basic Christian Life* course and they said, "God this is for real, this is for me. ***I will change my lifestyle.***"

A few years ago we taught you how to make a calendar. Do you have a calendar? I was asking the New Life leaders about having a day with their family. Do you have a special time for your family? I was so pleased to hear that almost all of them have a regular day for their family. And I think almost everyone could give me concrete ideas or details as to how they are taking care of their family in a special way during that special day. It is working. They received this idea. They prayed about it. ***They desired it.*** They went after it. And it is now a reality that they are acting out. That is what we want you to have about your ministry. We want you to have ideas and joy about your students, your Leaders Training , having a group of unbelievers, the new church that you are beginning, or being involved in evangelism outside your province.

Is it there? Do you identify? You know what I am talking about. Are you willing to be that watchman that God has called you to be? Are you willing to accept that **responsibility**? Are you just teaching a group or are you there **making individual students successful**? God's will for us is to make *other people successful*. Are other people becoming *successful* because of you? Husbands? Wives? Children? Students? Church leaders?



# IV. DEVELOPING A VISION IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

## A. You must have a vision



What is it that keeps you going? Maybe you say, "Well there was not much to keep me going. As a matter of fact I had stopped, and then I decided I would take one more step, I will go to a workshop and listen one more time to Abraham Bible." Oh my brother, my sister, you need to develop it yourself. You cannot live forever on my motivation. You cannot go on, on the faith of our New Life chairman. ***You must have a vision yourself.*** A vision that helps you to get up extra early, the very morning you want to sleep in. A vision that helps you to smile on the telephone late at night, when you are very tired. A vision that says, "Let us do it!" rather than, "Oh no."

Your obligation is to develop such a relationship with God that nothing can stop you from accomplishing His purpose for your life. God gives a calling. God gives the opportunity and it is for you to say, “***This is what I want.***”

## B. Your gift

What is your gift? Do you know who you are? Could you right now on a piece of paper write down in one little paragraph what your spiritual gift is?

According to Ephesians 4 there are five gifts that God has given to the church.

### ***Missionary/Apostle***

To be working in another culture or another language.

### ***Prophet/Preacher***

To be God's spokesman. The Priest in the Old Testament was not God's spokesman, but God called special people to be God's spokesmen.

### ***Pastor***

To be nurturing the church

### ***Teacher***

To be preparing believers for service

### ***Evangelist***

To be winning lost souls for Jesus Christ

Who are you? There is no way that I can tell you that, unless I have a long term intimate relationship with you. But you must know! It is required of you. “***I have made you a watchman.***”

If you are not sure about a vision, if you do not know exactly what I am talking about, if you do not feel totally comfortable, you need to go home and sort it out. That ought to become assignment number one. Only then can you be really used by Jesus the way He wants to use you.

## C. Do not quit

Almost all the men in the Bible, the people that really accomplished something, the people that we really know about, they had a **vision**. They had to adjust their vision. They had to change some of their things.

Gideon developed this vision that he could defeat the whole Midianite army. Being a human being, he got his calculator and said, “Well it takes so many soldiers, so many guns, so many tanks, we will need to do it this way, we will need to do it that way.” And God said, “Not necessarily. Maybe there is **another** way.” And when his whole army left, except three hundred people, what did Gideon say? “Well I guess it was not the right vision. Might as well quit.” He did not! But I know a guy who did.

When King Saul was going to defeat the Philistines and Samuel was late and his soldiers were running away, and his army was shrinking he said, “This is not going to work, we have got to do something else.” But Samuel said, “Rebellion is worse than witchcraft.” Rebellion is worse than occultism. When he talks about rebellion, he is talking about **us**. The enemy cannot rebel because he does not belong to us. He is talking about us, who are here, and then turning back and leaving. That is rebelling, turning away from God.

## CONCLUSION

I want to encourage some of you New Life brothers to look back over the last decade and note what God has done. You need about a month to analyze the whole decade accurately. For many of you, this last year of workshops signaled a new beginning in your life. It was a new spiritual highlight you experienced. Am I right?

That is the heritage you have. That is what you are building upon as a foundation. God is saying to you, “I want you to be my watchman.” The foundation has been laid. You can see what can really happen. Just look at the last decade in your life plans, and now develop a vision. The new decade in your life will just be so much better, and the last decade will stand in the shadow.

Are you ready to sell yourself out to God, to make this 21<sup>st</sup> century a spiritual success? With this question I want to leave you: It is something for you to pray about and settle between you and Jesus. Later we will share with you our vision and it is our prayer that our vision will become your vision, your vision. I thank Jesus for each one of you. Thank you Lord. Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by New Life for Churches. You have the privilege upon completion of your practical assignment to use this lecture with others.

## *Practical assignment*

Completed

- Using one page for each of these areas write down your vision for: your spiritual life, your family life, your ministry. Combine the three elements into a single paragraph life vision statement. Place this statement on your desk or bulletin board. Bring a copy to share with your conference leader.

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