



the power of

Vision

Years ago I met with a pastor and asked him this question, “What is the vision for this church?” He looked at me, rubbed his chin, and stammered trying to find words and come up with a vision in ten seconds or less. Bottom line, there was no vision. The Bible tells us where there is no vision or revelation the people cast off restraint, they perish, and run wild. Vision is crucial to the life and quality of your church or organization.

Two weekends ago our church celebrated its 7th anniversary. I used those three weekend services to recast vision as to where we are going as a church and what we hope to accomplish in our city. It created such a buzz and excitement within our people you would have thought I passed out \$100 bills in service. It seems the bigger the vision the more people are excited about it. People want their lives to have significance. One of the ways they can live that or feel that is to be a part of an organization that is making a difference.

Vision is *the ability to see God’s presence, perceive God’s power, and focus on God’s plan in spite of obstacles*. Show me your vision and I’ll show you your future. If you can’t tell me about your vision, what you’re saying is that you have no future; and if you can’t describe your future, you’re unclear about your vision. Many people and churches wander aimlessly in the **desert** as the children of Israel did because they had no vision to possess the Promised Land. What is God’s purpose, mission, and focus for your church? Why does your church exist? What is the impact He desires to make in your community through your church or ministry? Too many churches only have a vision to help those “IN” the church and are blinded to the needs “OUTSIDE” their walls.

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| 20 30 | E D F C Z P | 3 FT 0.91 M | 6 |
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How Do You Get a Vision?

Vision is birthed in your heart when you discover God's picture of what your life and church could or should be. God is the ultimate visionary. The earth was null and void and without form. He had a vision to transform it into a mind exploding universe of beauty and wonder. When someone tells me they just don't have any vision it tells me they aren't spending quality time with God. When you hang out with Him you can't help but be filled with the potential of "what could be."

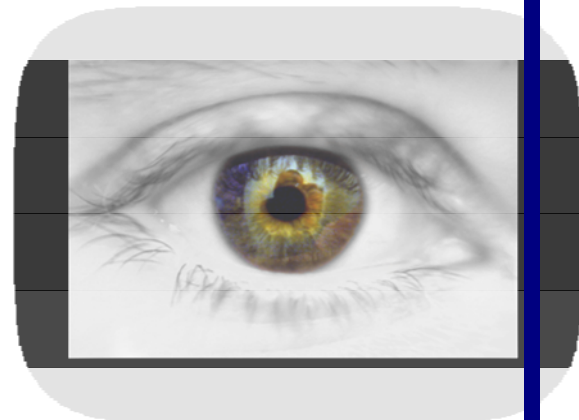
Secondly, vision is always found beyond yourself. It is something bigger and beyond you or the needs of your church. You weren't created for your sole benefit. This is where people miss it they think it is about them. When you stop asking, "What are you going to do for me?" and start asking "What can I do for others?" you will always find fresh vision!

A God ordained vision will many times begin as a concern. Something will bother you and keep being stirred within you. It will stick with you and you can't seem to shake it. **Mother Theresa** was asked, "When did you receive this calling to help the poor?" She replied, "I don't know that I ever did. I saw a need and thought I could help." Years ago I kept getting this stirring about domestic violence. I had never experienced it in my family and I didn't know anyone personally who had. (Sheltered life I know!) But it kept coming back up in my heart. So I began to investigate what services were available in our community to help this need. There was a well functioning organization helping women. I thought I had missed it! But as I began to dig deeper I found the gap, the missing link. Although women had a temporary shelter, there was not any avenue or assistance for those women who said, "I'm not going back. I'm starting new on my own." But most of them had nothing more than the clothes and items they fled with. So our church jumped in and provided funds and household items to get into an apartment. Vision was birthed by finding a need and filling it.

Visions are many times born in the soul of a man or woman who is consumed with the tension between what is and what could be. It forms in the heart of those who are dissatisfied with the status quo. It begins with the inability to accept things the way they are. Over time that dissatisfaction matures into a clear picture of what could be done fueled by the conviction that it should be done. It must happen! MADD was birthed out of the grief and loss of the founder losing her child by the hands of a drunk driver. She decided to make a difference in the world. But just as importantly vision requires an individual who has the courage to act on an idea. Many people see things that could and should be done, yet lack the faith and boldness to step out and do it.

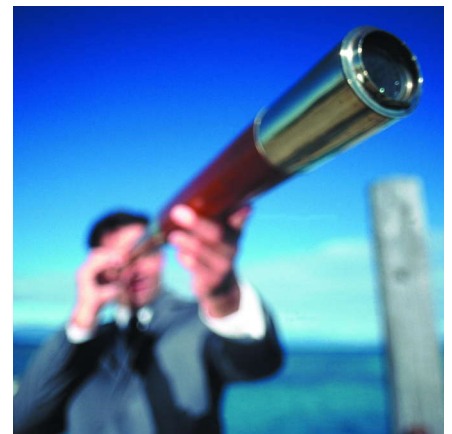
What Will Vision Do?

Vision will ignite people. It is the spark to get a fire going. It is that touch of inspiration which gives purpose and significance. Fresh vision will give you a reason to get up in the morning and show up! It is that that thing that makes what we are doing have purpose and meaning beyond the mediocrity we are enduring. Let me give you two examples.



- **Working in the Nursery: NO VISION** - “This job stinks! All I do in here is wipe baby’s butts and noses and the parents complain when they pick up their kids.” **VISION:** You are giving babies one of their first experiences with God’s love. You have the opportunity to cover them with prayer and play a vital role in their future and destiny. You are caring for a child so their parents can grow and feed on God’s Word knowing their baby is safe and well taken care of. You are a part of leading people to Christ and helping the grow spiritually. You have one of the most important jobs in this church! God is so proud of you for investing in these little ones.
- **Serving as an Usher: NO VISION** – “I tell people where to sit and pass a bucket to collect money.” **VISION:** You are here to be on the front lines of warmly greeting and embracing people who come to church. You are one of their first impressions. You are here to assist families and create a great experience for people to experience GOD! You are the pipeline for God’s resources and finances to fund this church and vision for this community. Without you the church would go belly up financially. You have one of the most important jobs in the church!!!

See what else vision can do? It provides motivation. The mundane begins to matter. The details, chores, and routines of life take on meaning and purpose! The college student who is failing classes has lost vision. Reality is, “I’m not trying to pass biology. This is a step to reaching my dreams of graduating from college with my degree so I can become a pharmacist!” Show me a person who lacks motivation and I’ll show you someone with little or no vision



The other thing vision does is evoke passion and emotion! There is no such thing as an emotionless vision. The thing that makes daydreaming so enjoyable is we allow ourselves to wander outside the walls of reality and our feelings quickly follow. Here is what I told my church on Palm Sunday about Easter Sunday. “More people will make decisions for Jesus Christ next Sunday than any other day of the year. You have the opportunity to literally reach into hell and pull a human being out of death, damnation, and destruction, and set their feet on the solid ground of Jesus Christ. You can bring them back to life. Better than saving a drowning victim with CPR you will breathe life into them that will last for all of eternity! How many of you will bring someone to church with you and you are willing to lead someone to Christ next Sunday?” The energy and emotion in the room was bubbling over with excitement!

Last, vision sets direction for our life and ministries! Where are we going and how are we going to get there? At Rock Family Church building healthy family relationships is central to our vision as a church. Everything we do is revolving around family. So guess what we don’t do and don’t even try to do well? Singles ministry no, single parents yes. “Twenty somethings” looking for a mate are very disappointed when they visit our church. Find your specialty and serve it up first class. It is time churches tried to stop being a “Denny’s” and became an “Outback Steakhouse.” So many churches serve a ton of things mediocre and bland versus being known for excellence. Excellence will come when you focus your direction and energies to the area God has called you to specialize!

If you were to sit back and dream as big of dream you could dream . . . what could you imagine God could do through you? What could He do through your church? God's vision for you is bigger than you can see or dream. Go for it. God is on your side. He waits patiently for bold men and women to be willing to dream and reach for the stars. Better to reach for the stars and land on the moon than to have never gotten in the rocket!

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