

A Vision from God

By Bill Scheidler

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:8-11

Other translations of the verse:

Then the LORD told me: “I will give you my message in the form of a vision. Write it clearly enough to be read at a glance. At the time I have decided, my words will come true. You can trust what I say about the future. It may take a long time, but keep on waiting-- it will happen!” –CEV

Then the LORD said to me, “Write my answer in large, clear letters on a tablet, so that a runner can read it and tell everyone else. But these things I plan won’t happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.” –NLT

And then GOD answered: “Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what’s coming. It aches for the coming--it can hardly wait! And it doesn’t lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It’s on its way. It will come right on time.” –Msg

How do you know that your vision is from God?

If your vision is from God it will have certain characteristics.

1. A vision from God is prophetic in nature.

As such a vision from God does not reflect the way things are at the present time, but the way things could be and (hopefully) will be. Any vision implies a movement from the present to the future, from where things are to where we want them to be.

2. A vision from God requires focus.

In order to accomplish any vision it will require making discriminating choices. This means that activities will have to be filtered through the vision and choices will have to be made. We all live in a world of limited resources. We will have to choose between the good, the better and the best. Activities that are good within themselves but are not consistent with our vision will have to be cut away.

3. A vision from God requires faith and risk.

The word “faith” carries with it the idea of risk. The word “faith” is a much more spiritual word than that of “risk.” However, people who achieve vision are people who know how to step out in faith and know when it is time to take a risk.

In one sense everything that we do requires some risk. Often, however, the word “risk” is seen as the opposite of “safe.” But how safe is it just to sit and do nothing for fear of failure or loss.

Jesus encouraged a certain amount of risk taking when it came to the parable of the talents. He gave the original talents to three men who he expected would take measured risks with them to bring about an increase.

While risk is often thought of in negative terms, it also has a positive side. In some spheres an intelligent risk can reap a huge payoff or reward. You notice I said “intelligent risk.” There are such things as stupid risks that no one should ever take.

4. A vision from God requires boldness.

Boldness is an outcome of faith. Bold acts will be required to step out of our comfort zone. Fulfilling our vision will require bold steps, bold encounters, bold asking, bold confrontations, bold presentations and bold solicitation.

It is difficult to follow someone who is not bold about their own aspirations or vision. Other synonyms for “bold” are “brave, undaunted, valiant, courageous, fearless, daring, spirited and intrepid.” Antonyms for “bold” include “cowardly, timid, flinching, shrinking, recoiling and chickenhearted.”

Boldness is not a natural tendency, but without it we cannot possibly fulfill the vision that God has placed in our hearts. It takes boldness to step out in new areas of endeavor. It takes boldness to go against the flow. It takes boldness to go where no one has gone before.

5. A vision from God always has a big price tag.

- a. There is always a cost for a vision.

Your vision may be to build a tower. If so, Jesus’ advice was that you had better count the cost (Luke 14:28-30).

For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it--lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.”

- b. The cost for vision always involves some sort of sacrifice.

Sacrifice includes within it the idea of self-denial. To fulfill vision you will have to deny yourself legitimate pleasures. This will affect many things. It will affect the home you choose to live in, the car you choose to drive and the clothes you choose to wear. All of these things can support or pull against vision fulfillment.

- c. The sacrifice always involves a giving of resources to the cause.

This includes the resources of time and money. This means that we have to be willing to channel our limited resources toward a specified goal.

6. A vision from God always requires a significant investment of time.

Achieving vision is not a casual pursuit. It is not achieved in the “open spaces” of our lives. It must be something around which our other activities revolve. It requires daily attention.

7. A vision from God utilizes every talent and positive attribute that you possess.

If we believe that God made us with purpose in mind (and we do), then it stands to reason that everything about us was constructed by God with that purpose in mind. This means that as I walk out God’s vision and purpose it will require all of me, not just some of me.

Many people live their lives unfulfilled because their gifts and abilities are not being challenged. It is likely that they are in the wrong place unless they are simply at a formative stage of the vision.

8. A vision from God requires planning and strategy.

A vision from God will not be achieved by accident. It has been said, “The person who fails to plan, plans to fail.” The thoughts that we have received from the Lord have to be translated to strategy.

9. A vision from God is always bigger than you first think.

God’s vision is always very challenging. In fact, when first confronted with God’s vision for our lives the first response will be “Who am I?” The first response will be to count ourselves out of God’s vision or to excuse ourselves. We excuse ourselves because we are all too familiar with our natural weaknesses and deficiencies.

But the truth is God knows what He is doing. God always calls us to something that is bigger than ourselves. He does this because He knows that it can be a reality if,

- a. We see God as our partner (Eph. 3:20-21).

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

With God all things are possible (Luke 1:37; 18:27).

For with God nothing will be impossible. Luke 1:37

But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Luke 18:27

- b. We continue to grow along the way.

We cannot look at ourselves the way we are now and determine what we can do and what we cannot do. We will grow into our vision as we continue to allow God to work in our lives. If we stop our progress in God, our vision may be impossible. However, if we continue to walk humbly before the Lord He will increase our capacity.

- c. We include others in our vision.

10. A vision from God necessitates the involvement of others.

The vision that God gives is rarely for you and you alone. In fact, God expects that we will enlist the help of others. Involving others in our vision is not selfish on our part, it is wise. The involvement of others in our vision is good for us and it is good for them. It is good for them if we see ourselves as mentors to others who are growing in the vision that God has for them. In addition, there are those who find their vision wrapped up in the vision of another.

Timothy was wrapped up in Paul's vision. Elisha was wrapped up in Elijah's vision. Joshua was wrapped up in Moses' vision. There did come a time for each of these support ministries to launch out on their own, but they never felt "used" or "abused" by those who mentored them.

11. A vision from God requires persistence.

Any vision that is worth living and dying for will be challenged and opposed by certain natural and spiritual forces. There will be natural circumstances that will present formidable obstacles to vision fulfillment. In addition, there will be people and spiritual forces that will seek to thwart your purpose. These obstacles must be overcome and these forces must be resisted.

Opposition to the vision is not a single event in the development of vision. It is something that has to be faced every step of the way. It is he who endures to the end that reaches the goal and wins the prize.

12. A vision from God always brings transformation.

God's vision always works for improvement and brings positive change. It brings positive transformation to individuals, cities, nations, economies and politics. Vision fosters change from the way things are to the way things can and should be.

13. A vision from God takes a lifetime to complete.

“Retirement” is not in God's vocabulary. Paul was not able to say that He finished his course until just prior to his martyrdom (II Tim. 4:6-8).

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The Psalmist said, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord” (Ps. 150:6). As long as we are alive we will be living for vision and glorifying God with our life.