

Does My Life Have a Motivating Vision?

Proverbs 29:18: (NASB) *Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained...*



We all know people who are visionaries, the kind of people who change the world around them. They see things that others do not, they imagine possibilities others cannot, and this often results in them taking risks in ways that others will not. While we appreciate these trendsetters, most of us are not that kind of visionary. However, we can and should be visionaries for our own lives. Where do we find the inspiration and guidance for our life's vision? As Christians, the obvious answer is to look to the Bible. The only problem with this is that we often see the Scriptures through the eyes of our own limitations.

Let's look more closely to see if we can find a biblically-motivated and spiritually-driven vision for our lives in which we can really invest.

Proverbs 29:18: (NASB) *Where there is no **vision <2377>, the people are **unrestrained** <6544>...***

This first reminds us of a recent current event that took place in the United States. There was a giant change of vision and perspective in the National Football League (NFL). A player's heart stopped after a hit and medical staff were there immediately to revive him.

The game was no longer important. This player's life was.

We watched the players from both teams praying together on the field. An announcer prayed on air on his behalf. Within minutes, the player was resuscitated and taken to the hospital. The NFL cancelled the game, which never happens. For that moment, there was something bigger there than a game. This was a huge vision change and a stark example of seeing things from a very different perspective.

What exactly is Solomon saying in **Proverbs 29:18?**

Vision: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2377 *chazon*; a sight (mentally), i.e. a dream, revelation, or oracle

Unrestrained or Perish: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #6544 *para'*; to loosen; by implication to expose, dismiss; figuratively absolve, begin

This verse is translated with many differing shades of meaning. Here is a small sampling:

King James Version: *Where there is no vision, the people perish*

Young's Literal Translation: *Without a vision is a people made naked*

Rotherham: *Where there is no vision, a people is let loose*

New Jerusalem Bible: *Where there is no vision the people get out of hand*

American Standard Version 1901: *Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint*



Rick's interpretation of this verse: Where there is no firm and compelling life vision and direction, people become unrestrained, directionless, and exposed. They will be drawn to the next tempting idea and not to their highest purpose.

Let's contrast this with a New Year's resolution. Those are typically more a wish, a passing thought with a fuzzy and often emotional vision.

(Source: Psychologytoday.com - *Why New Year's Resolutions Fail*)
80 percent of New Year's Resolutions fail by February. Why?

1. Our goals aren't clear.
2. We feel overwhelmed.
3. We feel discouraged.
4. We are not ready to change.

What DOES my Christian vision need in order for my zeal and commitment to be powerful enough for me to succeed? This is what we will discover in our discussion.

Jesus gave us compelling specifics about motivation to follow him.
Let's look at three examples:

EXAMPLE

Matthew 4:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Jesus pointed out the dedication and attentiveness to their trade and challenged them to refocus their attention on something higher and far more worthy. Jesus saw them fishing, identified what they were good at, and said: "Let me raise you up to a higher vision - you will 'fish' for men by spreading the gospel." He did not say, "Let me make you high priests." He met them where they were in life.

Jesus essentially said: "I see you. I see who you are and what you know. I understand you. Bring who you are and what you know and raise that up higher by following me."

EXAMPLE

Mark 10:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰And he said to him, Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up. ²¹Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.

Jesus identified what was most influential in this rich young ruler's life and challenged him to replace it with a higher cause and purpose. In other words: "I can show you treasure in heaven bigger than anything you can comprehend. Let's talk REAL treasure!" Jesus saw what the young man was committed to and wanted to raise him up to a higher vision. Again, he met people exactly where they were in life and then elevated their vision into something more motivating and meaningful.

Jesus essentially said: "I see you; I understand you. I know what is important to you. Let me raise you up to a higher vision because I understand who you are and what drives you."

EXAMPLE

Jesus always brought forth a compelling sense of stepping further:

Luke 9:23-24: (NASB) ²³And he was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it.

Jesus' motivating vision was to replace our human ambitions simply and dramatically with the higher cause of following him in fulfilling God's will.

Jesus again says to the masses of people following him: "I see you. I understand you. Lay down all of the things your life brings to you or challenges you with and bring them to me. Through me we can seek a higher reason for your life."

Jesus always sees us and invites us from where we are. He understands our background. This is a key basis for understanding what we want our motivating vision to look like. It has to be based on who we are and where we are coming from.



Things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least.
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Humans create different kinds of "visions." For example, a **FUTILE VISION** is based on fictitious conclusions that are contrary to the most important thing.



FUTILE VISIONS are common and make us think of social media and the unattainable and often meaningless goals it tempts us with. With knowledge and technology come choices - lots and lots of choices. They are embedded in various shades of grey, all designed to capture our hearts and imaginations, and all futile.

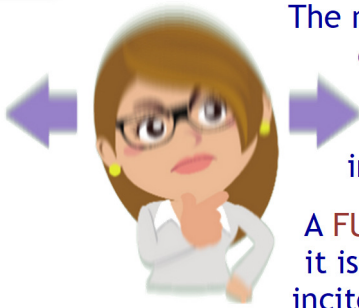
This is a vision that is not only small and unchallenging, but also destructive. It actually discourages us. It is based in self-centered thinking and talk (remember, we are Christians - we are not supposed to be self-centered, but Christ-centered). It actually subverts the most important thing - *Christ in you the hope of glory...*
Colossians 1:27 - walking in his footsteps.

If it is all about me, then it is not all about Christ. As Christians, our motivating vision must have Christ at its center. This is true no matter where we come from. Jesus meets us where we are and brings us up higher from that level, but all Christians must keep him at the center of their lives. How we see that and how we find that may be different, but Christ must be in the center of our vision.

2 Timothy 2:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. ¹⁶But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, ¹⁷and their talk will spread like gangrene...

Worldly and empty chatter really does describe our day with social media. Humans have never been more connected and yet more alone. Those connections are typically shallow and essentially meaningless, and in many cases even harmful.

In the Apostle Paul's day, he spoke of *worldly and empty chatter*. It is safe to say that he had no idea how far *worldly and empty chatter* could go! If we want to have a motivating vision, we need to center our focus on Jesus.



The next vision is a **FUZZY VISION**. It is based on feelings and circumstances that fall short of the most important thing of walking in Jesus' footsteps. This vision is clouded by how we feel. It is a vision filled with mediocrity, rationalization and indecisiveness.

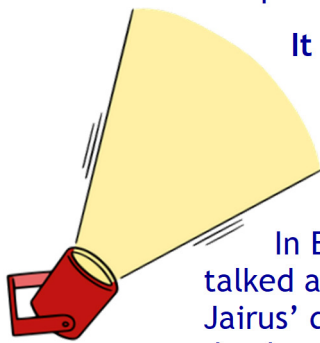
A **FUZZY VISION** has the power only to maintain the status quo, as it is fed by emotion and not clear direction. It does not excite or incite; yet, it is the kind of vision most of us hold onto because it is a comfortable position. We most certainly want to be uncomfortable when we find that fuzzy vision comfortable.

James 1:22-24: (NASB) ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

A **FUZZY VISION** is based on feelings and generally does not lead us anywhere - like a New Year's resolution. We might want to be thinner, more educated and eat healthier, but eh...it takes a lot of work. Maybe next year.

Being a follower of Jesus takes a lot of work, too. We have to be a doer, not just a hearer. The right vision should transform us. This should be our goal.

A **FIERY VISION** is based on godly focus and direction that brings true fulfillment of the most important thing - walking in our Lord's footsteps! A **FIERY VISION** has passion. This vision is bigger and more powerful than we are.



It is a vision in which we can only - with our greatest effort - play a small, yet perhaps significant role:

Hebrews 12:2: (NASB) *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

In Episode 910, we talked about Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead and said, "We ought to see the tragedies of life as Jesus sees them."



**Episode 910:
How Did Raising Others to Life
Prepare Jesus for Death?**

Lessons from the three people raised up to life by Jesus

When we can envision a larger perspective, such as why God temporarily permits evil, which we will discuss shortly, we can stay better focused on our vision. The idea is to see through eyes that are not our own. Jesus, *for the joy set before him, endured the cross*. He had that vision and clarity - we need to see our lives through his eyes and understand what he sees in us. This helps us to be motivated, to truly grow in these areas.

So far, the bottom line seems to NOT be like everyone else when it comes to focusing in on our life's vision.

We certainly want a vision that is clear and godly! How do we go about finding such a vision?

Having a clear and compelling vision for life brings well-being. We will discuss five basic elements of well-being, a key to having a productive and happy life. We do not normally think of well-being as a scriptural concept, but the account of the prophet Habakkuk teaches us that we can realize this well-being through focusing on a big, godly and powerful vision. Habakkuk gives us a lot of answers on developing that vision.

What if someone does not have even the beginning of a motivating spiritual vision? Life is difficult, and some people have a hard enough time just getting through the day, let alone concentrating on something more comprehensive. Where should someone start?



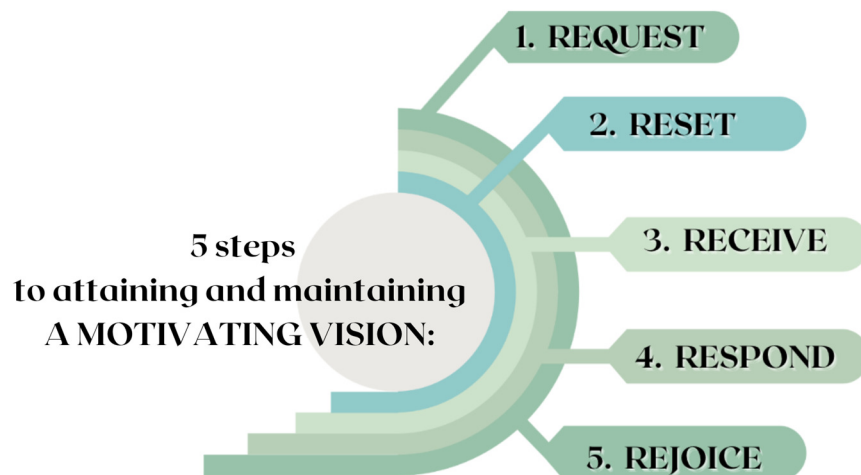
God is love and will not leave anyone behind. Personally, “God’s plan for ALL” is what motivates me. Christ died once for ALL to be testified in due time - 1 Timothy 2:6. There is good news of great joy for ALL people - Luke 2:10. ALL the families of the earth will be blessed - Genesis 3:8. God's vision of justice and love and mercy for everyone is what keeps me going every day. I love the ALL-ness of God's plan!

For Jonathan, this vision has crystallized in his heart and mind and gets him up and moving - it gives him focus. But for many of us this seems too big, too hard, too much to understand. If that is how you feel - that was Habakkuk! That is exactly where he was. Listen to the process of what happened to him and learn how to turn the wondering and wandering into moving forward.

The prophet Habakkuk did not have a wholesome vision for the future:
Habakkuk 1:1: (KJV) *The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did **see** <2372>*.

See: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2372 *chazah*; to gaze at; mentally, to perceive, contemplate (with pleasure); specifically, to have a vision of

God’s prophets had a difficult job! They had a dynamic relationship with Him, but were often told to do or say things that did not make sense to them or were unpopular with those who heard the message. Finding a godly and motivating vision begins when we confront our circumstances and put them before the LORD.





We will walk through these steps as we go through the development of Habakkuk, learning how to put these steps in place.

1. REQUEST: We request when there is something we cannot see, do or grasp

When puzzled, asking the hard and detailed questions positions us to see and grasp the vision:

Habakkuk 1:2-4: (NASB) ²How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear? I cry out to You, Violence! Yet You do not save. ³Why do You make me see iniquity, and cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; strife exists and contention arises. ⁴Therefore the law is ignored and justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore justice comes out perverted.

Habakkuk was really venting, wasn't he? He was frustrated and felt hopeless.

Doesn't this sound like the headlines of today? Habakkuk looks around and cannot believe all the injustice, violence and wickedness around him. Why is the LORD not doing something about it? Does He not see how bad it is? "How long do I have to call on you, LORD, and You don't answer!" Habakkuk is unusual because most prophets did not directly confront God. But don't we all feel like this sometimes?

Therefore, using Habakkuk as our example for developing motivating vision is important. He was legitimately frustrated and asked God in prayer why this wickedness was allowed to continue.

To ask in sincerity and faith is to take a burden off ourselves and put it upon God. This unburdening is a powerful first step, as it provokes positive emotions that bring relief from the turmoil in our minds. Positive emotions help us see more clearly.

We will periodically refer to the following thesis paper as we discuss developing well-being in the context of learning how to attain and maintain a godly and motivating vision:

Larissa Rainey, University of Pennsylvania. *The Search for Purpose in Life: An Exploration of Purpose, the Search Process, and Purpose Anxiety*

The author suggests five elements of well-being.



"Positive emotions are the first element of well-being. They are essential not only because they enhance an individual's subjective experience, but also because they act to broaden one's mind and build one's resources for the future (Fredrickson, 2009). This...allows for heightened creativity and flexibility, better problem solving and greater opportunity for connection with others."

Positive emotions like optimism and the result of strong social relationships help build up long-term reserves to use during future challenges and setbacks.



For me, the times of relative peace and quiet that are “stress-reduced” are when I rejuvenate and store up resiliency for the inevitable stress and obstacles coming up.

Having a solid foundation of stability and a sense of purpose is key to not being thrown off course when trials come upon us.

The Apostle Peter learned how to be centered:

1 Peter 4:12-13: (NASB) *¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing...*

The Apostle Paul was centered, and his contentment was not dependent on his circumstances:

Philippians 4:12: (NASB) *I know how to get along with little, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.*

Positive emotions can be difficult when some of us are barely hanging on. Just living day-to-day for some is extremely difficult, which is why this is not a “think positive, get pumped up” episode. This is about the positive emotion of being able to hand over all our issues to God Almighty. The relief, even if it does not solve our problems, helps us to see things more clearly.



Habakkuk had to go through a growing process. It is obvious from their words that Peter and Paul were both centered at that time, but here Habakkuk is not. He is frustrated and does not understand.

God’s answer to Habakkuk’s first question (“God, how long do I have to wait for help?”), did not initially make sense until the very last line. Note all the detail in these verses:

Habakkuk 1:5-6,9-11: (NASB) *⁵Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days— You would not believe if you were told. ⁶For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous people who march throughout the earth to seize dwelling places which are not theirs... ⁹All of them come for violence. Their horde of faces moves forward. They collect captives like sand. ¹⁰They mock at kings and rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress and heap up rubble to capture it. ¹¹Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. **But they will be held guilty, they whose strength is their god.***

Picture Habakkuk watching a parade. He could only see what was directly in front of him, but God sits above the entire parade route and knows exactly what is around the next block and 10 blocks down. A lot more trouble was coming. Things were bad and about to get worse!

Habakkuk sees the breadth, depth and height of the trouble from his standpoint and says: “God, this is enormous!” God’s answer was that Habakkuk had no idea of how bad it really was! Then He adds the last line - *But they will be held guilty, they whose strength is their god.* There is a hint of retribution and justice coming that might be difficult at first to see.



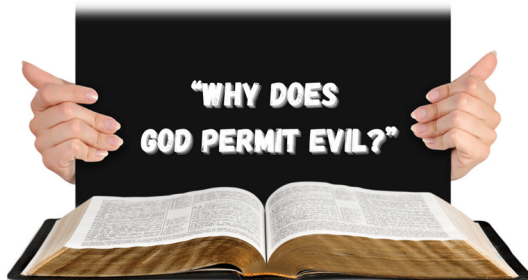
The Chaldeans were an ancient people in modern-day southern Iraq. Abraham was born in the city-state of Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:28,31 and others). Chaldeans raided Job and killed his servants and livestock (Job 1:17). At times, Chaldeans ruled Babylon including King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's day, making Chaldeans and Babylonians synonymous and used interchangeably in various scriptures (Isaiah 13:19; 47:1,5 and 48:14,20).

The city of Babel, which would eventually become Babylon, was built after Noah's flood by Nimrod. Both names (Babel and Babylon) are derived from the same Hebrew word <894> that means "confusion."

(Source: Bible Commentary by C.T. Russell) *The Chaldeans* – Babylon was the capital of Chaldea, so symbolic Babylon reigns over the civilized world, and the masses are fitly termed the Chaldeans.

These events Habakkuk saw happening in his own time would prophetically also happen later in time. We know now this is called the *time of trouble* - Daniel 12:1. We look around as our world is in this time of trouble and say like Habakkuk, "God, where are you? What is happening? We do not know what to do and we are stressed out!"

The answer to Habakkuk's first question ("God, where are you? Do you not see what is happening?") is a recounting of the permission of evil - a truth that is very difficult for many to understand. Humans have been asking, "Why does God permit evil?" for as long as there has been evil! Why doesn't He end it?



God's wisdom and justice knew mankind would need the experience of evil to appreciate what is good. This is what a loving Father does - He allows children to make mistakes and then learn from them through their logical consequences. In God's kingdom, humanity will learn the opposite of evil - goodness and righteousness. Because of their experiences with evil now, most will choose righteousness for eternity.

Even though there was a hint of justice in the last line of God's answer, *But they will be held guilty, they whose strength is their god*, Habakkuk was challenged by the scope of the answer.

However, his faith in God focused him to continue requesting an answer with a second question as he sought a godly vision to follow.

Habakkuk was not giving up on God, even though he was still confused:

Habakkuk 1:12-13: (NASB) ¹²Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; and You, O Rock, have established them to correct. ¹³Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they?

Habakkuk was brave enough to put it all before the LORD.


In other words: “Are You not the Creator of all? Are You not bigger than all of this evil? How can You sit back and allow this?” As Christians, our vision cannot be distracted by the circumstances of the world. We need to realize that God’s plan needs to unfold in its own time, and our politics or social activities will not change the eventual outcome.

We see Habakkuk was in the same place a lot of us are today, looking around and getting overwhelmed by our circumstances.

There is nothing rhetorical about the way Habakkuk is asking these questions - he is seeking an answer. Why? Faith, hope and trust. He KNEW God was and is bigger than any and all strife. He knew this and was insisting on finding an understanding.



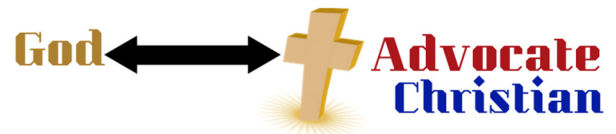
How can we relate to this prophet of old here and now?

 We need to ask the same questions. But God is not going to talk to us in visions - He will speak to us through His word. We need to ask our questions, then go to His word and study to find the answers. We, too, can be troubled by things beyond our understanding.

At times like these, we also need to put our requests and troubles before God because we are firmly promised He DOES listen to faithful followers:

Hebrews 4:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We have Jesus to sit between us and God as our advocate to help translate for us. He hears us and through him, our prayers go before God. We can be heard in our difficulty. This is a big part of finding our vision - we have to ask!



FINDING OUR VISION:

Sometimes as we look to grasp our motivating vision, we fall into only seeing the immediate vision that our circumstances reveal. This vision is inevitably **FUTILE** or at best **FUZZY** and will not sustain us. Finding the grander, godly vision for our life begins by asking for God’s providence and power to be recognizable. The act of asking in true faith will stir up our positive emotions, which in turn help us to respond through faith and not sight.



Asking in true faith gives us strength. Not faith that just says, “I believe in God...” **No, faith that lives by believing in God.** Here is where we must start if we are to develop this motivating vision - by asking in true faith.

Thinking positive thoughts is one thing, but thinking positively towards God’s ability to handle all that is wrong in the world is a life-changer.

Habakkuk’s request for God to show Himself reflected his deep need to know. What would the prophet do next?

The first chapter of Habakkuk ends with him detailing the ungodly attitudes and actions of the Chaldeans. This shows us how profoundly troubled he was. It is at moments like these that God can be more easily understood. God often allows our lives to become challenging. In so doing, He stimulates us to pay closer attention. We become better listeners when what we see does not make sense. God gets our attention when we need to think through what is being said.



If I have to choose one word, it is reconciliation. My motivating long-term vision is to be useful to the LORD in the reconciliation of the world back to Him. I want to help people learn about God’s plan and help the healing process when everyone comes back in the resurrection. So many have made such messes in their lives now that I want to try to help with this. I try to put myself in a position where I can be used by God even now.

Participating in reconciliation is powerful. When we are in situations where people we love are at odds, we think if only there could be a way to pull them together. We want this to happen with people we know and love, but also with the billions we do not know! To be a part of that is awesome. The “all-ness” of that resonates with the “all-ness” of all!

Once we faithfully request, we need to take the next step:

2. RESET: Reposition yourself to alertly receive - change your posture

Habakkuk 2:1: (NASB) *I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reproved.*



Walking the ramparts in the Old City of Jerusalem

A rampart is a defensive wall of a castle or walled city, having a broad top with a walkway and typically a stone parapet. A parapet is a low protective wall along the edge of a roof, bridge or balcony.



Here Habakkuk is at his figurative guard post, awaiting instructions. He mentally changed his position.

He was frustrated, complaining and bewildered. Habakkuk was now repositioned to stand, to watch and to receive. He was intentionally looking and listening for God's instruction. Habakkuk was a prophet of God and was waiting for instruction so he could do what he was called to do and serve the people. He was positioning himself for engagement in the process of carrying out the will of God. He went from bewildered and unsure to, "What can I do now, God?"

Larissa Rainey, University of Pennsylvania. *The Search for Purpose in Life: An Exploration of Purpose, the Search Process, and Purpose Anxiety*



Engagement, the second element of well-being, is principally about the experience of flow. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) Flow is an optimal state of being where one is completely involved in the task at hand: self-consciousness fades, sense of time disappears, and thought and emotion cease to occupy the mind. (Seligman, 2011)

This kind of focus is said to result in motivation, self-esteem and enjoyment. We hear of athletes being "in the zone," meaning they are fully immersed in the strategies of the game, focused on what they are doing. This is "flow."



It is like being in "work mode," which means to me being focused on the task at hand and doing the best I can in that moment. Put away distractions and have tunnel vision. Posture is important also. When I am on the podcast, I sit at the edge of my seat, straight and ready to honor the LORD. Having respectful attire when serving the Lord is also important. Be ready to do your best for God.

Change your posture; change your mindset. Think about it like having your mind "sit up." We often go through life in an emotionally-slouched position. Sit up and look at what the LORD is bringing like Habakkuk did!

This change of posture is not necessarily easy and, in most cases is certainly not comfortable.

FUTILE VISION makes requests with no thought of resetting. **FUZZY VISION** makes requests and resets only as far as it feels comfortable. Habakkuk stationed himself as a watcher so he could hear, see and report. He stationed himself to thoroughly engage and then changed his posture; he put himself in a position where God could now use him.

The Bible gives us several of these "resetting" examples.

One example is Peter after being given the vision of being commanded to eat the unclean animals:

Acts 10:19-20: (NASB) ¹⁹While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them myself.

Peter was told, *Get up* - change your thinking - accompany them without misgivings. Peter's experience was to convert the first Gentile to Christ.

EXAMPLE



EXAMPLE

That was a big reset for him. The Jews were not to have anything to do with Gentiles, but that was now changing. From this point forward, the Gentiles would also be accepted into the body of Christ.

Another dramatic example of resetting is Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus:

Acts 9:4-6: (NASB) ⁴and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?* ⁵And he said, *who are you, Lord?* And he said, *I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,* ⁶but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.



Check out our CQ Kids videos:

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS?

christianquestions.com/youtube



Saul went from literally hunting down Christians to becoming the Apostle Paul, one of the greatest leaders of the Christian church. He needed to change and reset in order to be used of God.

Philippians 3:13,14: (NASB) ¹³Brethren, *I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,* ¹⁴*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Paul was definitely in the flow!

If we are trying hard but falling down in finding our motivating vision, we can think of Habakkuk, and how he was bewildered, and challenged: “God, I just do not get it!” Then think of his response to God’s answer: “This sounds serious, so I had better be ready.” Then he went to actively look for what he was supposed to do by standing on watch on the ramparts.

This is the key piece for us. We must put ourselves in position to reset - to change our posture like Habakkuk, so that we can actually hear with the ears of Jesus. It is not hearing through our own emotional perspective what we think is good, or comfortable, or common. It is hearing spiritually what God would want us to do. This is what Habakkuk did by putting himself in position on the ramparts.



FINDING OUR VISION:

As Christians, we all know to ask God for help. Where we begin to falter is in the resetting of our hearts and minds in faith. Without this resetting, true engagement in God’s will is hard to attain. A truly motivating vision can only take root in someone who is willing to change their posture, change their perspective to one that stands ready to receive. Doing this needs the fire of determination.



We must set ourselves on fire for the Lord, but not in an emotional way. We need the motivating fire burning from within to say, “I am here to serve God.” It is hard and sometimes confusing, so we need to set ourselves in a place where we can **receive**.

3. RECEIVE: Watch, listen and wait as action and change will likely be required

God instructed, encouraged and judged as he prepared Habakkuk to see the vision:

Habakkuk 2:2-4: (NASB) ²*Then the LORD answered me and said, Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run.* ³*For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.* ⁴*Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.*

God was giving specific instructions to Habakkuk - God’s vision must become Habakkuk’s vision. God tells him that though it seems to tarry - wait for it. It will not delay; it will arrive precisely on time. He gave Habakkuk an important, practical, six-step process to recognize a goal and accomplish it.

<i>Record the vision</i>	1. Have the vision clearly defined
<i>Inscribe it on tablets</i>	2. Make it understandable
<i>That the one who reads it may run</i>	3. Make it accessible so it is regularly reviewable
<i>For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal</i>	4. Take action, do and encourage what is necessary to make progress
<i>It will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay</i>	5. Realize that delays will seem like failures, but they are in fact, stepping-stones
<i>The righteous will live by his faith</i>	6. We should never, never, never give up

We will see how Habakkuk changes and becomes a purveyor of God’s vision.

God assured Habakkuk that all would be well in spite of what Habakkuk was seeing. Our vision for our lives needs the same kind of trusting relationship with God that Habakkuk had.

Sometimes Christians pray to God but do not have a relationship with Him through Christ. The relationship through Christ is a relationship of trust, reverence and honor. It has a sense of security because we know He guides us through His holy spirit. It is a give and take. God does most of the giving but we give our hearts, emotions, doubts, mistakes - our everything - and He in turn builds us up.

Larissa Rainey, University of Pennsylvania. *The Search for Purpose in Life: An Exploration of Purpose, the Search Process, and Purpose Anxiety*



Relationships: Christopher Peterson, one of the positive psychology's founding fathers, famously summarized the findings of his field in three words - "other people matter."

First and foremost, God through Christ matters to us. That should be our highest concern and then all other relationships fall under that in their proper perspective.

If we have **REQUESTED** in humility and **RESET** in faith, then we can **RECEIVE** in confidence:

Proverbs 3:26: (NRSV) *for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.*

Am I ready to **receive**? Have I changed my posture? Have I **reset**? Have I asked in all faith and honesty? Am I sitting up, paying attention, standing there on the ramparts, waiting for God's will so that I can carry it forth?

Where was Habakkuk when he received assurance of the vision? He was standing, watching, stationed upon his guard post. This posture enabled him to receive the vision - the correct vision in its clarity. He does not get distracted by anything other than a godly vision because he is properly positioned.



FINDING OUR VISION:

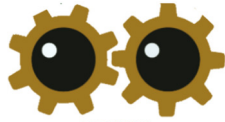
As Christians, we will not be able to receive God's vision as our own if we are engaged in **FUTILE** and unscriptural speculations or **FUZZY**, uncommitted or emotional thinking. The fiery motivation of God's vision will only truly come to us if we have a relationship with Him and we trust His will and His way above all else.

This is a choice! Am I standing in a place where I am actually going to receive and be ready for the next step?

If we pay attention to what Habakkuk is doing, we will begin to see how faith and trust bring us personally close to God.

**We have requested, reset and received.
Even though this sounds complete, it is not. What is next?**

Up to this point, we have only seen Habakkuk engaging with and responding to God in a conversational way. The true proof of the prophet fully adopting God's vision as his own will be in what he does from here. Habakkuk's next challenge is to act in such a way that it reflects the power of God's vision as his guiding light.



RICK'S MOTIVATING VISION

I worked very hard many years ago to make it simple. My motivating vision is to HONOR GOD. This sounds oversimplified, but in my mind it is a very complex equation. It encompasses my thoughts, words, deeds, where I go, the people I associate with, how I carry myself, the gestures I use - everything must be to honor God. It drives me because God is the Creator of all. "All-ness" has something to do with my vision like Jonathan's vision. God is the Author of reconciliation like Julie's vision - so that is included here as well. To honor Him is to honor the plan of the ages; it is to honor the eternity of the unity of His creation that He is driving towards. I have no choice but to try to do the best I can to honor Him every day in every way.

Once we faithfully request, reset and receive we need to take the next step:

4. RESPOND: Dedicate yourself to absolute obedience to the vision - respond with zeal!

God's response to Habakkuk shows how much God sees, knows and is ultimately in control. His response ends with these words:

Habakkuk 2:18-20: (NASB) ¹⁸What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork when he fashions speechless idols. ¹⁹Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, awake! To a mute stone, Arise! And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all inside it. ²⁰But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.

In other words, only the One True God knows the plan from beginning to end. The LORD has not abandoned us.

This idolatry comparison reminds us of:

Joshua 24:15: (KJV/NASB) *...choose this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. When we look at it closer, though, it says ...choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

We see the comparison between the true God and idols - God's answer to Habakkuk ends with these words, *But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.* God is planting the seed: "I am here, I hear, I see, I am ready - all the world will be silent before Me when I say so."

Compare this with the poor response of Judas. When things were not going the way he thought they should, he was not able to stay focused on the vision and was easily lured away.



Check out our CQ Kids videos:
WHY DID JUDAS BETRAY JESUS?
christianquestions.com/youtube



That is not what happened here with this prophet. We can see how Habakkuk grew into his responsibility. We can see where he started and where he is at this point.



Habakkuk can now respond as he has been powerfully and thoroughly answered. Again, he prays:

Habakkuk 3:2: (NASB) *LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.*

His honesty, his very real fears and requests are plainly stated. This is a big lesson for us. He truly has accepted the word of the Lord as his sole guiding light. He knows there is no changing what God said was going to happen. Even though he is afraid, he has latched onto the higher meaning of God's word.

His prayer shows his understanding of the trouble that God permits:

Habakkuk 3:16: (NASB) *I heard and my inward parts trembled, at the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, for the people to arise who will invade us.*

Habakkuk needed to see the bigger picture and not just react to the circumstances of his current events. He stopped trying to correct God about all the evil he saw from his perspective and started seeing it from God's ULTIMATE VANTAGE POINT. This applies to us as well.

Habakkuk is willing to wait - though waiting is hard. *I must wait quietly for the day of distress...* He is accepting because he sees God's plan is bigger than that distress. He understands that God has a purpose to this whole thing - that there is meaning to the whole picture. He is now embracing it even though it is very difficult.

Larissa Rainey, University of Pennsylvania. *The Search for Purpose in Life: An Exploration of Purpose, the Search Process, and Purpose Anxiety*



Meaning, the fourth element of well-being, refers to the sensation of belonging to and serving something that is larger than the self (Seligman, 2011). Meaning helps individuals make sense of the world and come to understand their place in it. People without meaning in life are more likely to experience psychological distress.

When we understand meaning in terms of God's vision and the plan for our lives, we can be at peace, trusting in His overruling. Whatever happens to God's children, around us, and in every other way that affects us, we know God's got this.

Like the three friends of Daniel who said in effect: "God's got this whether or not God delivers us from the flames (remember they were thrown into the fiery furnace for not worshipping the king.) We accept whatever He allows and sees fit for us."

God's children should never fear whatever is thrown at them. **Daniel 3:17-18.**

Isn't it beautiful to come to this point? This is where Habakkuk was as well: "I know trouble and distress is coming and I will wait quietly for it." This is the point we need to reach - maybe we cannot change the difficulty in our lives, but we can change the *perspective* with which we view the difficulty. AND we can change the *strategy* with which we handle the difficulty.



That is exactly what Habakkuk did. As hard as the truth was for Habakkuk to hear, his response was to embrace it as his own fiery vision for his life.

Here is the first part of the conclusion of his prayer.

Remember, he was complaining and unsure in the beginning:

Habakkuk 3:17-18: (NASB) *¹⁷Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸yet I will exult in the LORD...*

Habakkuk is saying even if everything falls apart, *Yet, I will exult in the LORD.* What a powerful lesson for us. This is not only powerful, but a practical, real-life application of how to have a motivating vision when your world feels like it is falling apart. The steps Habakkuk went through show us how to hold onto concepts that are bigger than our distress when circumstances seem out of control. God ultimately has control in hand.



As Christians, we need to **REQUEST** in humility, **RESET** in faith, and **RECEIVE** in confidence. Habakkuk did all this and was now able to **RESPOND** in zeal. Though God's vision in some ways was overwhelming, it was clearly Habakkuk's vision now. His response would be to courageously speak and live this vision, in spite of his fears. We also are tasked with the same challenge as we respond to whatever the Lord's guidance is for the vision of our lives.

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear. - Mark Twain

5. REJOICE: The greatest act of faith is to rejoice in assurance, even though the present is difficult

Maybe the present is out of control or not understandable - but we are still supposed to rejoice.

The third chapter of Habakkuk is filled with the fearsome events of his own time and prophetically of the fearsome events of our time of trouble.

As BAD as all of this seems, here is how Habakkuk continues the ending of his prayer:

Habakkuk 3:18-19: (NASB) *¹⁸Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹The Lord GOD is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places. For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.*



Not only is he all-in with the vision, but he is also putting it to music! This reminds us of Psalm 33:3: (NASB) *Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.* Think about it: he is making God's vision public by putting it to music. When we set thoughts and words to music it makes it easier to remember.



Hinds' feet in high places. This thought also appears in 2 Samuel 22:34 and Psalm 18:33. A hind is a female deer who can place her back feet exactly where her front feet stepped. She can run securely without stumbling off track. It is said this deer can scale unusually difficult terrain where others cannot go and can elude predators.



Habakkuk adopts the vision by saying: "God gave me the ability to navigate this really treacherous time. I've been changed and given an ability to walk through things I was afraid of before." We are better equipped to overcome obstacles if we have this kind of elegant, stable and confident feet.

With God's vision, the impossible is now possible. That which was unable to be navigated suddenly has a path, and we have been given the feet to negotiate the steepest parts of it.

This is how we develop that fiery, godly vision. After he had gone through the steps, Habakkuk's circumstances had not changed. The steps did not change the trouble, the turmoil or all of the difficulties he was about to face. Instead, it changed his perspective, and that perspective gave him strength, and his strength gave the people strength! His words were sung to the people so they could understand God had this circumstance under control.

Habakkuk not only accepted God's vision, he made it his own. He was given "hinds' feet on high places." He would walk wherever and however God's vision instructed him to go. Habakkuk had accomplished what God required of him as God's vision was now his vision. This would become a song with which all could praise God!

Larissa Rainey, University of Pennsylvania. *The Search for Purpose in Life: An Exploration of Purpose, the Search Process, and Purpose Anxiety*



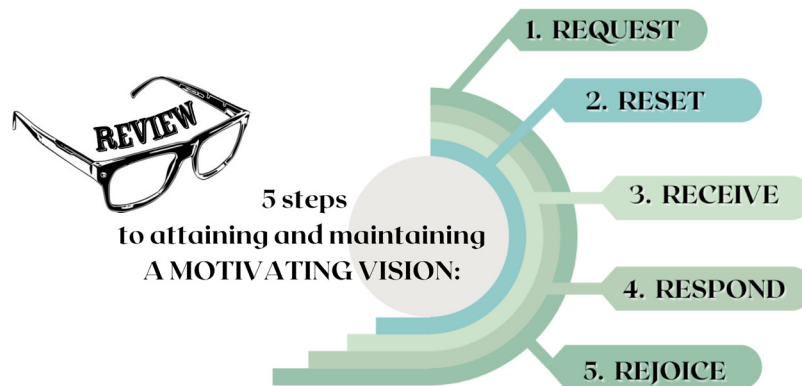
Accomplishment, the final element of well-being, encompasses the winning, sense of mastery, success, and achievement that people pursue...

This is about winning the battle that God puts before us. It is about being victorious in His name, in His way. This is exactly what Habakkuk did.



FINDING OUR VISION:

As Christians, we must learn to defy defeat, derail discouragement, and defuse distraction. We must grow into having **GOD'S VISION** as our own and learn to rejoice in all of it. Let us not have a **FUTILE VISION** based on our opinions or a **FUZZY VISION** centered in our emotions. Instead, let us claim the motivating fire of **GOD'S VISION** as our own!



1. **REQUEST** - We ask for help when there is something we cannot see, do or grasp
2. **RESET** - Reposition yourself to alertly receive - change your posture
3. **RECEIVE** - Watch, listen and wait - action and change will likely be required
4. **RESPOND** - Dedicate yourself to absolute obedience to the vision - respond with zeal!
5. **REJOICE** - The greatest act of faith is to rejoice in assurance, even though the present is difficult

Please see the video sermon called “Redeeming the Time” on the Christian Questions app under the Bonus Videos section. When talking about vision, it was said, “The path to the Thrilling Mountaintop passes directly through the Tedious Valley of Experience.”

All of this is so invigorating! We want to praise and worship God and Jesus! We appreciate the immeasurable gift of life for all! But then life slogs on and we get distracted, discouraged and disinterested. Once we reach this rejoicing stage, **WE CANNOT GET DISCOURAGED** if we slip back. This cycle continues many times throughout our Christian walk:

1. REQUEST, 2. RESET, 3. RECEIVE, 4. RESPOND, 5. REJOICE...6. REPEAT!



Remember our interpretation of **Proverbs 29:18**: Where there is no firm and compelling life vision and direction, people become unrestrained, directionless and exposed. They will be drawn to the next tempting idea and not to their highest purpose.

Isaiah 40:30-31: (NASB) *³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*

Why? Because we are looking to God for guidance and help.

Requesting, resetting, receiving and responding, and finally rejoicing!

That is what Habakkuk did, and this is what we need to do. Find your godly vision!

*So, does my life have a motivating vision?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie, and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on January 16, 2023

Ep. 1264: What Does God's Grace Do For Us?

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.

Study Questions follow

Christian Questions Weekly Newsletter

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1263: Does My Life Have a Motivating Vision?

See:  CQRewind
SHOW NOTES

<https://christianquestions.com/inspiration/1263-vision/>

1. Why do New Year resolutions frequently fail? Why do we need a life vision? What happens if we don't have one? (See Proverbs 29:18)
2. How did Jesus motivate individuals? What does he offer to the two fishermen, the rich young ruler and to us? What does Jesus put in place of our human ambitions? (See Matthew 4:18-19, Mark 10:20-21, Luke 9:23-24)
3. What constitutes a "futile vision"? What is the danger in this kind of vision? Who should be at the center of our motivational vision? Describe a "fuzzy vision". What feeds it? Why do so many hold on to this kind of motivating vision? (See 2 Timothy 2:15-17, Colossians 1:27, James 1:22-24)
4. What is necessary to be a follower of Jesus? What is a "fiery vision"? How does a fiery vision enable us to see, and through whose eyes? (See Hebrews 12:2)
5. Describe the first step to developing a motivating vision. How do we know Habakkuk did not have a "wholesome vision" of the future? Do you relate to Habakkuk's request? What is accomplished by sincerely asking the Lord for help? How do *positive emotions* aid our thinking? (See Habakkuk 1:1-4, 1 Peter 4:12-13, Philippians 4:12)
6. How did God's answer to Habakkuk reflect our own time? Why DOES God permit evil? How does Habakkuk 1:12-13 resonate in your life? What should our *response* be to the troubles that surround us? (See Habakkuk 1:5-6, 9-13, Hebrews 4:14-16)
7. What is the second step to developing a motivation vision? How does Habakkuk's activity reflect this step? How does *engagement* help our focus? Describe how futile and fuzzy visions react to *resetting*. How should we approach a reset? (See Habakkuk 2:1, Acts 9:4-6, 10:19-20, Philippians 3:13-14)
8. How did God prepare Habakkuk to *receive* God's vision? What was the practical six-step process God gave him to recognize a goal and accomplish it? We need to establish a *relationship* with whom in order to have a relationship with God? (See Habakkuk 2:2-4, Proverbs 3:26)
9. What does *responding* to the vision entail? How do we know that the One True God has not abandoned us? How did Habakkuk's vision change? Once we understand the *meaning* behind troubles and difficulties, what can we change to cope with them? (See Habakkuk 2:18-20, 3:2, 16, Joshua 24:15, Daniel 3:17-18)
10. How can you *rejoice* like the prophet Habakkuk in chapter 3:17-19? Did the prophet's circumstances change for the better once he developed his vision and finally was able to adopt God's vision? What changed? How did he share this *accomplishment* with the people of Israel? (See Psalms 33:3, 18:33)
11. Are we lost forever if we backslide even a little bit? What should we do? How do you feel the invigoration of the vision given in Isaiah 40:30-31?