

Your Proverbs 29:18 Vision for the Year Ahead

It happens every year.

The countdown begins. The clock strikes midnight and there's celebration. And when the sun rises on January 1, so do the questions of what's possible, what will be accomplished, and what could be achieved during this New Year.

Like a flock of birds, goals take flight, fueled by imaginations and a much-needed cup of caffeine. Optimal health, weight loss, career advancement, education achievements, new hobbies, better relationships, new adventures—the sky really does seem to be the limit.

Hopes are high.

At the beginning of every year many people think of what they'd like to accomplish in the upcoming months.

But more than just an annual issue, how we live in the day to day is directly connected to how we see our future and how we envision our life will be—the big picture of how your life will turn out, not just this year, but in the years and decades to come.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18a, MEV).

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint” (Proverbs 29:18a, NKJV).

The ability to live a focused life is a vital topic for every believer. Without a clear vision for the future, we are more likely to live without discipline, thinking we are headed

toward a goal, but not quite achieving all that is possible, or all that God made available for us to accomplish. A pastor once said that if you see a person who isn't achieving much, more than likely they have a vision problem, not a laziness problem. It's important to have a vision for life that goes beyond this current year. There's power in our present-day choices, but this is best understood when we have a clear vision before us. Contrary to popular belief, it's actually the vision we have that brings focus to our lives, not some gift of supernatural self-discipline.

When a person cannot develop a clear vision for their life, they perish. In Proverbs 29:18, the word "perish" indicates living a wasted life, squandering a potential destiny, going nowhere with the Lord—or missing out on your life destiny.

The New King James Version uses the words to "cast off restraint," which is seen when we misuse life resources by refusing God's leadership, instead of using them to help us walk out the call or will of God for our life.

The lack of a clear vision is what causes us to live aimlessly, to drift throughout life without any anchors, actually resulting in a wasted life. And when there's a lack of clarity in the heart about where life is headed, we end up living unaware of God's purpose for our life and what we're meant to do and be.

World-renowned psychiatrist Viktor Frankl suffered greatly in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. After the war, he interviewed fellow Holocaust survivors, finding that those who led the most successful lives were those who had a clear vision about where they were going. What determined who survived and their quality of life was what they believed about their future even more than how they had suffered in the past.

As Mike Bickle puts it, "What forms a person more is what they

believe about their future—more so than what happened to them in their past. Having a clear picture of where you're going in your life is one of the most formative factors in how you live."

If we want to walk in the fullness of our calling in the Lord, it is very important to have a clear vision established in our hearts. A person's actual vision may change over the years, but we always want to have a clearly defined vision. We want to picture the future in a certain way.

As believers we often have a picture of heaven as our ultimate future, which is good, but we also need a vision for the next 10, 20, 30 years of life.

"Many people desire happiness," Mike said. "And I can say with confidence, that if happiness is your goal it will always elude you. You'll live frustrated and disappointed all your days. Happiness is the fruit of having a vision that is in the will of God."

Instead of making happiness our goal, we can develop a clear picture of how we see ourselves and our life a decade or two from today. That vision will capture the heart and cause us to live in "restraint," or have discipline. Without that picture of the future before us, it's much easier to become idle or lazy.

That vision we have for the decades to come—who we're meant to be—will aid us when we stand before the Lord and give an account for how we used all that He blessed us with for His glory.

Once a vision is established, then an occupation can be determined. For those already in the workplace, it's possible to determine how to live out your vision in your current place of employment. Even when your occupation changes, it's important to know how you can live out your specific vision of who you're called to be where you are.

A vision is separate from an occupation. Over time your occupation can change, but the vision is often consistent, because it is the overall theme of your life. One strong indicator of who a person is called to be is found in the two great commandments—to love God and to love people.

It's OK to take time to develop a spiritual vision, because it is key.

God's focus is more on who you're going to be and what you're going to do than where you do it.

Consider These Questions:

(For your vision)

- Whom do you believe God wants you to be, spiritually, before Him?
- What is the primary thing you want to hear when you stand before the Lord on that last day?

(For your occupation)

- What is it you really want to accomplish?
- When the Lord looks at our time, money, energy and affection, what would you like Jesus to say and understand about how you used your time, resources and talents? {eoa}

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