



It All Starts with Vision



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Author – Steve Dulin

Summary

We believe every Christian organization needs a clear vision that comes from God. This vision should ultimately be written and made plain so that everyone who reads it can “run” with it.

Outcomes

Get a clear vision from God for your company. Over the next several weeks, create a compelling vision statement for your organization.

Scriptural Basis

Habakkuk 2:2: *"Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."*

All Scriptures are from the New King James Version of the Bible unless noted otherwise.

Additional Resources

The 1 Hour Plan for Growth, Joe Calhoon
(Includes how to write a vision statement)
Available where books are sold.

How to Go on a Sabbatical, Steve Dulin
(Found in additional resources)

In 1990, Steve Dulin started Milestone Construction, Inc., an interior finish-out company, where he served as owner and president for 20 years. In 2009, he sold Milestone Construction to devote his time to business leaders in the church and throughout the world. In 2013, Steve joined the Gateway Church staff as the Executive Director of Kingdom Business Leaders, a ministry to equip Christian business leaders to run their businesses according to Biblical principles and fulfill their God-given purposes in every area of life.

Steve has been happily married to his wife Melody for 40 years, and they have been blessed with two daughters, Kristin and Kassie. Kristin and her husband Gabe have three children: Ella, Jack, and Carlie.



It All Starts with Vision

Most of us are probably familiar with the Verizon Wireless commercials from 2002, “Can You Hear Me Now?” The “Can you Hear Me Now?” actor personified Verizon crews who travel all over the nation to test the reliability of Verizon’s network. What you may not realize was that these ubiquitous commercials were a result of Verizon’s vision to provide the highest-rated mobile phone network in the nation. They also were giving their customers and potential customers a vision for reliable mobile phone service, when most of the other mobile companies were selling “plans and pricing”.



When we are seeking God, we tend to say, “Can we hear Him now?” While God wants to talk to us, I think many times that God is saying, “Can you See Me Now?” God wants us to see what He has for us, to give us a vision of our future. “Can you see what I want for you, your life, your marriage, your family, your business?”

Seeing things can be just as important as hearing, and God shows us things, instructs us, and gives us direction through what we see. This is because we are programmed to think in pictures. As a leader, we try to communicate information in a way that creates pictures in peoples’ minds. The things that typically make the most impact on us and we remember the longest are pictures, or visions, in our mind.

One of the ways God communicated to His people in the Bible was through visions. Visions are mentioned from Genesis to Revelation, and the word “vision” is in the Bible 77 times. As a matter of fact, most of the people who did anything significant in the Bible had a vision from God. For example, Paul was shown in a vision that he was to become a minister of the gospel (Acts 26:15-18). Peter had a vision in the book of Acts (Acts 10:9-16) that was a determining factor in Gentiles being able to become Christians. Even Jesus said in John 5:19 “*Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do.*” We are told in Acts 2:17 that God continues to communicate to us through dreams and visions today. Clearly, God giving us a vision can be a key to our success in business and in life.

Vision is a Key to Success

Proverbs 29:18 tells us, “*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*” God does not want His people to perish. He wants us to prosper. It has been my experience that organizations that



have no vision also perish. Therefore, He gives us vision. Vision is seeing what God wants to do. It gives us a clear picture of success.

Another translation of Proverbs 29:18 tells us, *“Where there is no revelation (vision), the people cast off restraint.”* Without vision, you can’t keep people together, going in the same direction. Organizations pull apart because everyone is going a different way. Instead of vision, many organizations have division, or more than one vision (some even have tri-vision or even octa-vision). Vision pulls people together. It is a key to success.

“Vision is seeing what God wants us to do.”

Our original vision at our construction company was to have a good name. Our founding Scripture was Proverbs 22:1 – *“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.”* This Scripture drove everything we did as a company as we constantly asked ourselves, “Of these choices, which one will result in the best name, or reputation, for our company?” It is a great way to make decisions. But one day, I prayed and asked God to give me a greater vision for our company.

In my mind, I saw a vision of a machine that had many gears interacting with each other. Each gear represented a person at our company. It was amazing to see how well synchronized each gear was and how each one had its part to play in the overall machine (company). It was clear that this was a world class machine, which birthed in me the desire to have a world class company. When I shared the vision with our team, everyone got excited about accomplishing this vision with our company. The vision pulled everyone together where we were all headed in the same direction.

There is another part of vision you need to know. Vision unfolds! Very rarely do we get all the vision at one time. Psalm 119:105 says, *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”* The Bible does not say God lights up the entire path, all the way to the end. He gives us enough light so that we can walk or run down the path He has for us. In a similar way, many times, God gives us enough vision to get us far enough down the path to where He can give us more vision.



We still had our founding Scripture and now we had a greater vision with more clarity. We reinforced to our employees over and over, “When you make decisions, keep two things in mind, always choose a good name over money and what decision would a world class company make.” What did it produce? The foremost consultant in the United States in helping small to medium-sized companies win the cherished Malcomb Baldrige Award personally told me, “With all our



tools, systems, processes and resources, we cannot reproduce your results.”

Vision is a Key to Double Blessing

Vision and seeing things do not just move you toward success, they are the key to double blessing. In the book of Job, Job had gone through incredibly difficult times and suffered much loss. But in the last chapter of the book, he says to God in Job 42:5-6 *"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."* After “seeing God”, Job ended up with twice as much as he had before.

Even Elisha said to Elijah in 2 Kings 2:9-10, *"Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."* So he (Elijah) said, *"You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."* Of course, Elisha saw Elijah being taken up to heaven in the chariot of fire, and the Bible documents that Elisha did twice as many miracles in his ministry as Elijah. Vision is a key to double blessing.

Vision Comes Before Strategy

Vision and strategy are both important. But there is a priority to them. Vision should always come first. Always. And the most important thing about vision is clarity. I had a friend tell me one time, “The three most important things about vision are 1. Clarity 2. Clarity 3. Clarity.” Without clear vision, we tend to wander or go the wrong way. How can you build something if you do not know what it looks like?

**“Vision should
always come first.”**

In Lewis Carroll’s classic children’s book *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice asked the Cheshire Cat, “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat. “I don’t much care where—” said Alice. “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat. As business people, we must know where we are going. How we are going to get there comes after the vision. If you have a clear vision, you can eventually come up with the right strategy. If you don’t have a clear vision, no strategy will take you where God wants you to go.

Strategy comes after the vision, but first, you must write a clear vision down. Habakkuk 2:2 says, *"Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."* When we have a written vision, other people can read it and run with it. Many people are familiar with the verse in Habakkuk 2:2, but they probably aren’t as



familiar with the verse that it is referring to. The first verse of Habakkuk chapter 1 says, “*The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.*” What many people don’t realize is that a burden, many times, precedes or is revealed by vision.

Many companies have been started because someone had a burden. It might be a burden to solve a problem or meet a need. It might be a burden to make a difference in their city or to employ people that otherwise wouldn’t be employed. For example, Walt Disney’s burden was to “Make People Happy.” He believed that “happy people make the world a better place.” While Walt is known as a great visionary, his vision was driven by his burden, and the rest is history.

God will often give a burden that precedes or reveals a vision for something He wants us to address. Our job is to get the vision from God and write it down so that others may run with it and build it. Once we built our company to the vision God gave me, I could work half the time and make the same or more money and spend the rest of the time ministering. That is an example of the double blessing that comes from vision.

Vision is From God

True vision is always from God. The word “vision” in Proverbs 29:18 is the Hebrew word *chazown* (khaw-zone') which means a revelation, or oracle from God. God wants us to get vision from Him, to get His mind for what He has for us. The size of your vision is not the issue, but it does have to be compelling. If it is God’s vision, it will be bigger or better than you can do in your own strength. Ultimately it will be about serving others, “*just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve*” (Matthew 20:28).

How to Get Vision

There are three main ways for God to give us vision: 1. The Bible 2. The Holy Spirit 3. Godly examples and role models. In each case, to get a vision takes time: Time to spend with God, the Bible, and thinking about how God has given vision to other people. If you want to get a vision from God, we recommend getting away and spending time with Him! It might be for a day or two, or even longer but there is nothing like spending uninterrupted time with God to get a vision from Him.

I personally have gone on over 70 sabbaticals (and counting) that lasted from three to seven days. We recommend you remove all distractions and pray, ask, seek, and knock for God to give you His vision in the area or areas you are praying about. Once you get a vision, share it



with someone you trust. Telling the vision to other people will often bring clarity or additional details to the vision. When you think it is clear, share it with your team. Then, keep it in front of your team so they can run with it.

A vision is not daydreaming, not hoping, not projecting what you want. It is seeing what God wants to show you. You may realize that you have never actually had a vision from the Lord for your company. Or you may need to seek the Lord for renewed vision, for God to bring back the vision that He revealed to you years ago that perhaps has died out in your heart. We encourage you to press in to God and ask for His vision.

**“A vision is...seeing
what God wants to
show you.”**

Writing a Vision Statement

While there are several possible ways of defining vision for your organization, we believe that vision is what your organization will become. What is in God’s heart that He wants you to build? What do you see? Even the secular world defines vision with statements such as, “a clear mental image of what you want your business to be at some point in the future.” We believe that the “clear mental image” should come from God. What have you seen so far? You may not have all of the vision right now. That is ok, but what is God showing you that gets you down the path until He gives you more vision?

We want to encourage you to write a vision statement. Writing it down will help you gain greater clarity on what God is showing you. Remember, vision unfolds. The vision statement can change over the years as the vision unfolds. First, write down the burden of your heart and what you believe is the vision for your organization that is in God’s heart. Keep clarifying as you get greater revelation. Work on the vision statement until you have one that others can run with.

There is a lot of information on the internet about how to write a vision statement. We are not going to delve deeply into the mechanics of writing a vision statement, but Joe Calhoun, in his book, *The 1 Hour Plan for Growth*, encourages people to ask four questions about their organization that help determine their vision:

1. How good do you want your organization to be?
2. What are you providing, in terms of specific products and services?
3. Which customers and markets do you serve?
4. What is the geographic scope of your business?



These questions are another way to help bring clarity to what God is showing you. Let's ask God to see what He sees: for His vision for our business, our family, our ministry, and our lives!