

Dying for Vision in the Daily Grind

Prov 29:18, Heb 11:1-16, 12:1-3 | Dave Geldart | Oct 4, 2020

1. Has this ever happened to you?

- a. Your driving in your car, thinking about whatever, and your brain goes into autopilot?
- b. You get where you're going, but can't remember much of the drive?
- c. Your eyes were working, but there was a disconnect between what you saw and your conscious experience
- d. When that happens it's a pretty unsettling realization!

2. In some very important ways, OUR LIVES are just like that

- a. Going through our days simply surviving.
 - i. Driving along, but not really seeing
 - ii. Eat, work, sleep, repeat
 - iii. Getting to the next thing
- b. And for the brief moments when you stop enough to realize the disconnect, it's unsettling!
 - i. We can go through whole dinnertimes with our family, and be somewhere else
 - ii. Weeks and months can go by without ever having a significant, deep conversation with your spouse.... Or your kids Or your friends.
 - iii. Months can turn into years
 1. Of working. Managing. Maintaining. Attending. Repeating
 2. And before you know it, entire seasons of your life have gone by.

3. Last week, Ben led us through Matt 6 – where Jesus looks at an anxious crowd and ask them to consider the sparrow.... Consider the lilies. God provides food and beautiful covering for them.

- a. So DON'T BE ANXIOUS – Your heavenly father knows your needs and will provide for you.

4. That's a teaching we all need to hear again and again these days. Go back and engage with that teaching and the exercise questions if you missed it!

5. But as that passage says..... we are so much more than sparrows or plants

- a. Animals and plants simply need basic provisions
- b. BUT NOT SO WITH HUMANS
 - i. It's not enough for us to survive.... We're made to thrive
 - ii. It's not enough for us to just not be anxious about food and clothing We need purpose and meaning for our lives
- c. SOMETHING MORE to consider here

6. We don't just need provision..... WE NEED VISION

7. There's a problem: Vision leaks like a sieve

- a. Just a little time and a batch of vision leaks out all over the ground
- b. By nature, I'm shortsighted
 - i. NEARSIGHTED
 - ii. I can see OK things right in front of my nose.....
 1. But things look fuzzier and fuzzier the farther away they are.
- c. That's the same with us and humans
 - i. The default human setting, since the fall, has been to lower our gaze, and live for small dreams, shortsighted human-sized visions.
 1. Things right in front of our nose

- d. Because vision leaks like a sieve
 - i. BUT WE WERE MADE FOR MORE
 - ii. We NEED vision to thrive
- e. And then, we have a real problem

8. King Solomon wisely observed 3000 years ago:

- a. **Where there is no vision, the people perish:** but he that keepeth the law, happy is he (Proverbs 29:18, KJV).
- b. When there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but the one who keeps the law, blessed is he (ESV).
- c. Bad things happen when the people lack Godly vision

9. What happens to a car on a mountain side road

- a. If the driver loses his glasses?
 - i. THE SAME THING as if he casts off restraints of the road guides
- b. Terrible crash
- c. Death
- d. Not only do you not get where you wanted (the top of the mountain)
 - i. But you crash and burn long beforehand

10. The people die for lack of vision

11. As I look out at your faces.... There are a few things I'm fairly confident I can know about you:

12. Two things I'm confident of is

a. You're Living in a world you weren't made for

- i. You were made for a Garden with God
- ii. But you're living in a World bent and broken by the Fall
- iii. Genesis 3

1. ¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife [HUSBANDS, don't take that one out of context!] and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'
2. "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
3. ...²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

- b. You're living in a world you weren't made for. A world that doesn't work right. Where you have to struggle and toil just to survive.

13. The other thing I know, is that because of this: I know you're tired..... working and working.

- a. Doing your best to make it.

- b. To put food on the table
- c. To keep your family together
- d. To make sure you kids learn
- e. To keep the baby alive
- f. And the endless loads of laundry
- g. The next work project
- h. That next big purchase that will finally make you happy and help you rest and enjoy life
- i. All during a pandemic season, unprecedented in our lifetime
 - i. Where all our anxieties are higher
 - ii. The uncertainties are higher

14. And we're now in a new normal

15. Our eyes are just a few inches in front of our feet

- a. And with your neck at that angle it's a lot easier to miss where you're going, if you can't look up
 - i. Can't see the horizon.
 - ii. The landscape
- b. If you're piloting a ship, or an airplane, it's easy to get off by just a few degrees.
 - i. And it's not easy to notice for a little bit. Doesn't seem to make much difference in the short run.
- c. But over time, that error could mean you end up in the wrong country!

16. Apollo 13 – 50 years ago

- a. An unexpected explosion set the capsule spinning
- b. Reference was nearly impossible
- c. Course corrections in the dark, through a tiny window into space
 - i. All the debris made it impossible to use their typical reference stars for navigation
- d. They needed a reference point!
- e. And the only thing big enough to cut through and give them a firm reference point was the Sun!
- f. It told them where they were AND where they were going
- g. Allowed them to keep making tiny course corrections so they didn't get really off
 - i. And spin in space forever

17. Life in this fallen world – a world we weren't made for – has made our window of vision naturally small

- a. And now pandemic has set us spinning
- b. Or maybe it's a lost job
- c. Or a divorce
- d. Or distance learning
- e. Or chaotic political state
- f. Or civil unrest
- g. Or a teenage daughter
- h. Or perhaps it's lying in your bed in the morning hung over with exhaustion, and trying to get up the nerve to face down another day of more of the same

18. And with your world spinning, deep inside, with an unwelcome voice that's become too strong to silence, comes the cry

a. THERES GOT TO BE MORE THAN THIS

19. What if you're exactly right.

20. What if God has far more for you than you're experiencing these days?

21. God is calling men and women to look up and catch a Bigger Vision

- a. To trade their small reference stars one in for a BIGGER ONE. Sure and true as the Sun.
- b. And follow him WITH VISION IN the daily grind

In fact, that's been his invitation to countless generations of men and women before us: To live with real, gritty Faith.... VISION in action Vision that sees even beyond the circumstances of this life, into the Bigger picture He's writing in eternity:

22. HEB 11

23. **11** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

24. ⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. ⁷ By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

25. ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

26. ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is,

they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

27. **12** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

28. ³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

29. What is your vision filled with these days?

- a. Is it nearsighted?
- b. Or farsighted?

30. Even small things can fill our vision if we're nearsighted.

- a. Hold a quarter at arms length, and it looks as big as the sun
- b. Placed in front of your nose it will seem to fill your vision!
- c. Small things can play tricks on you when you're holding them close.

31. Again, I ask, WHAT is your vision filled with these days?

32. **Is your vision big enough to hold your life?** Strong enough to hold the weight of your hopes and dreams through the daily grind?

- a. Finishing school won't be big enough
- b. Getting through pandemic isn't big enough
- c. Getting a job or getting married won't be enough
- d. Keeping the house clean or the money flowing won't be enough
- e. Achieving enough comfort isn't strong enough
- f. Getting that dollar amount in the bank account won't ever be enough
- g. Filling your senses with pleasure isn't firm enough

33. ONLY a vision filled with Jesus Himself will do

- a. Only the firm hope of the Kingdom of God will be big enough to fill your sight
- b. Only the settled vision of a life on mission with Christ is SURE enough to navigate by
- c. Only the crucified and risen Savior is firm enough, sure enough, strong enough to build your life on and hold you fast through the daily grind

34. The people DIE for lack of vision

- a. Consider him who endured the cross for the JOY set before him

35. He beckons to you to follow him

- a. He's calling you back to himself....
- b. Inviting you to fix again your eyes on HIM, adjust your course. And follow him in your moments and days.... With a clear vision of the JOY set before you!
- c. Joy rooted far deeper than the circumstances of our daily grind.
- d. Joy rooted in him lifting the burden of your sin and shame
- e. Joy rooted in a personal reconnection and relationship with your creator.
- f. JOY rooted in the vision of a life secured for all eternity, anchored in the coming Kingdom

- i. Joy that gives you grit and steel and courage to orient your whole life around Jesus and his mission
- ii. And gives you compassion move toward others so that they can experience it too
- g. The ancient Biblical author Nehemiah saw it clearly when he said: The joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh 8:10)

36. How to Lift our Eyes and fix them on Christ HOW TO REESTABLISH VISION

37. **One possible scenario: You're overwhelmed.** Exhausted. Run ragged. And running high RPMs just to survive.

a. You're not going to like this one.

b. Some of you are overwhelmed because you're actually underengaged

- i. Anyone's defenses going up internally?
- ii. Some of you are overwhelmed because you're actually underengaged
- iii. Not in the grind!
- iv. You're grinding away like a champ
 - 1. You're busy from dawn to dusk
- v. But underengaged in the things God's given to make us thrive – to refresh our vision
 - 1. Underengaged in your relationships with God
 - 2. Underengaged in your connection to Christian community
- vi. What if what seems at first like an uncompassionate ADDITIONAL BURDEN – another thing to do....
 - 1. Is actually the invitation to the energy you so desperately need
 - 2. The vision your soul is dying for
- vii. What if the spiritual habits and disciplines of reading God's Word, prayer, silence, solitude, and fasting would actually give you MORE energy, not less.
 - 1. What if those are actually NET POSITIVE ?

c. It's like the child too tired to eat

- i. That dinner would actually revive him, give him MORE energy to play and laugh and run.... But it seems like too much work

d. Or the 39 year old associate pastor

- i. Who just can't find time or energy to exercise
- ii. EVEN THOUGH I know it would give me MORE energy in the long run
- iii. 1 Tim 4: 7-8: train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

e. **What if God is desperately trying to care for you** by inviting you into more engagement with Him and his people.... so that you can lift your eyes..... and thrive.

f. The people die from exhaustion..... for lack of vision

38. Others of you have lowered your vision because of pain

- a. Something specific – the death of a loved one
 - i. A stinging personal failure.
 - ii. A painful physical ailment or diagnosis
 - iii. Betrayal by a close friend
 - iv. Rejection by a wayward child

- v. Or loneliness that grows deep in your soul because everyone else has kids, and you don't
- vi. Or everyone else HAS kids, and you do too.... And so connection is few and far between
- vii. Maybe I'm just not the kind of person who will have close friends
 - 1. Maybe it'll always be like this
- b. And your hurt and disappointment subtly, naturally, causes you to pull in, pull back protect yourself**
 - i. And your world closes in
 - ii. And becomes small, confining.
- c. God seems distant. Detached. A frosted glass ceiling between you keeps things the way they are**
 - i. And your vision falls.
- d. Friend, if that's you, look up at me for a moment**
 - i. You're not alone. And you're not crazy.
- e. Consider HIM who endured great suffering – physical AND relational**
 - i. Consider him who saw above the cross.... And for the JOY set before him For the VISION of joy set before him, endured the cross. Who did not stay separate from the problem of human suffering and pain but moved toward us
 - 1. Became part of it
 - ii. Because He loves you.
 - iii. And has a wonderful plan for your life.
- f. Lift your gaze to Him and see again, perhaps for the first time, your God who beckons you with arms wide open. Hands ready to wipe every tear from your eyes. And give you a hope and a future.**
- g. Not just for the lost. BUT FOR THE FOUND. For the believer.**
 - i. Day after day after day
- h. Who invites you to wake and find his mercies really are new every morning. (Lam. 3:22-23)**
 - i. For you

39. Take a step of engagement

- a. In your relationship with God**
 - i. Begin again to read and meditate on His Word daily.
 - ii. Begin again to spend scheduled, intentional time with Him daily in prayer.
 - iii. Or fasting.
- b. Or In your relationship with his people.**
 - i. Recommit to his body. His family.
 - ii. Prioritize spending time with churchfolks.
 - 1. Individually – spiritual friendships, discipling relationships
 - a. New DSHIP INITIATIVE coming soon!
 - b. Each of you will have an opportunity to take a step.
 - 2. Corporately
 - a. Seeking out and committing to attending and engaging TG Gatherings
 - i. CG

- ii. Small groups – guys/girls, LIFE Group
- c. **Or in your relationship with the lost -- look for opportunities to speak of Jesus with your neighbors**
 - i. 2 Cor 5: 20 – 20We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us.
 - ii. Ministering to your neighbors on behalf of Christ will fill your cup and satisfy your soul far more than you anticipate
- d. For all three of these, It will be both harder and better than you realize

40. TALLGRASS' VISION

- a. **We want to help messy people (like you and me!) connect deeply with God and one another.**
- b. We want to GROW in both depth AND Breadth
- c. So that more people can meet and experience the life and healing of Christ.
- d. So that we can help train and release MORE Christians as ministers of the Gospel
 - i. To help more and more people find their place in the Kingdom
- e. So that we can mobilize MORE resources to reach and bless more people
- f. In our neighborhoods. In Our city. And beyond
- g. We're excited for the opportunities in this next season meeting at B&GC.
 - i. Opportunities to take some next steps forward in the quality and experience of our CGs
 - ii. So that we can better build up and train up one another
 - iii. AND reach and retain more visitors who are curious about Christ or looking for a church connection.
- h. **Tallgrass' vision is GROWING during this season too**
 - i. And we invite you to walk with us as we step out into what's next.

41. Because VISION leaks like a sieve, any next steps won't be a one and done, but will need to be new habits, daily refreshing your vision so that your soul doesn't run dry.

- a. So we're going to keep talking about vision, and you'll need to develop practices that keep vision renewed in your hearts.
- b. To Cultivate a heart that sees Christ in the daily grind. Through the dishes. Through the bills. Through the business meetings and the family meetings.
- c. With Eyes trained to look up, and see the Big vision of your life in light of the Kingdom of God.

42. What's a next step of Vision God's calling you to take in your life?

- a. *Land on at least 1 specific right now.*

PRAY