

“A BELIEVER’S LIFE WITH VISION”

By Rom A. Pegram (5/22/16)

The flying Wallendas are perhaps the world’s greatest family of aerialists and tightrope walkers. A gentleman by the name of Warren Bennis saw them perform and says that he was quite struck by Karl Wallenda’s capacity for concentration on the intention, the task, and the decision. Because of this, he says that he was even more intrigued when, several months later, Wallenda fell to his death while walking a tightrope without a safety net between two high-rise buildings in San Juan, Puerto Rico...

Why is it that some people have success in this life, while others fail? Why is it that many seem to have lives that know where they’re going, while others wander aimlessly—still wondering at life’s end what it was supposed to be all about? Why is it that when this life is over and we see Jesus face-to-face, he’ll say to some “Well done, good and faithful servant,” while to others he’ll say, “Go away. I don’t know you?”

I’d like to suggest, today, that the difference can be found in this little thing we’ve been talking about called ... VISION. Are we living the life of vision that God has for us ... or not? Have we been faithful to what God has wanted for our lives, or have we not? Has God’s vision for our life grown, as we have been faithful to all he’s called us to thus far? That’s how it happens, you know. The more faithful we are with what God has already given us, the more God *will* entrust to us in this life ... and that includes *vision*! Listen to today’s scripture from the Gospel of Luke (16:10, 12, NLT), as we continue with VISION:

“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. ... ¹² And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”

So, how faithful have we been with the vision God has for our lives? Or, is it still *our* vision that drives our life? We wonder sometimes why God hasn’t given us a big, shiny, elaborate, and prestigious vision to guide our lives; but, have we been faithful with the little things God has asked us to do?

I ask all of these questions this morning, because they have everything to do with ‘a believer’s life with vision’—one who is led by God’s vision. We’ve already established in the past few weeks that...

- ...without vision, our lives would be dead.
- And, after we discover that it’s truly God’s vision we’re following for our lives, we need to be obedient to that vision no matter what!
- Today, we learn that when we’re obedient to all God’s given us to do, God will continue to expand his vision for our lives ... *for the sake of his Kingdom!*

So, what does the life of a visionary believer look like? What would our model be, if we're one who's intent on following God's vision for our lives—on keeping our eye on the goal God's set before us? I'm glad you asked...

I've been blessed in my life to have lived with & to have had contact with several people I would consider 'visionary Christians.' Let me share with you, this morning, a few things I've learned about *visionaries*—things you and I need to know if we're to enter into this life of vision—this life of following God's purpose for our lives. I've discovered there are at least *four* ways visionary believers are different than your average run-of-the-mill Christian. First...

BELIEVERS WITH VISION BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY. *Visionary Christians learn that the Bible is serious when it teaches that time is precious! We have no clue when the end will come & Jesus will return for those who've put their faith in him ... but we know it will happen! One thing we do know, however, is that until Jesus comes we've been entrusted with The Great Commission—to be Jesus' hands & feet ... to a world that desperately needs his love in their lives! So, visionary Christians are ones who use their time wisely—specifically, they use their lifetime wisely...*

Here's a question for you: What on earth would make someone who is an executive for a successful worldwide company, leave that job to go and be the custodian of an office building in a state located 4 states away? That happened to a friend of mine...

Harry was an executive for Kimberly Clark for years! He loved his job. He had always loved what he did with Kimberly Clark. Harry looked forward to going to his job everyday and enjoyed the prestige & status that went along with it. But, God had other plans for Harry—plans that he could not have imagined just a few years ago...

God had Harry involved in some ministries throughout the years that had deeply affected his life. Harry had been instrumental in leading *spiritual growth retreats* through his local church, later moving that ministry to a regional level and then a national level. As God had given Harry little parts of his vision for his life, he'd been obedient throughout the years ... and God had 'expanded his territory' (as Jabez would say)...

Some time ago, there was a national renewal ministry, within the United Methodist Church, that needed a couple of folks with just the gifts & experience that Harry and his wife had. But, it would mean that Harry would have to quit his job at Kimberly Clark. He felt so strongly that this was God's vision for his life that he let his wife know right away that he wasn't afraid to 'make the move.' He'd quit his job at Kimberly Clark and follow God's vision! He gave both God and his wife an *Isaiah* kind of response; "*Here am I, send me!*" And, that's exactly what God did with Harry...

Harry & his wife sold their house in Menasha, moved away from their family & friends of many years to live in Nashville, Tennessee, where they've worked for several years for *Aldersgate Renewal Ministries*. I spoke with Harry a while back, and as he told me his story he said, "Rom, I can still see my co-workers faces today, as I told them that I was

leaving my prestigious executive position at Kimberly Clark ... to go and clean toilets in Nashville.” You see, a part of what Harry does is to maintain the ministry’s office building ... so his comment wasn’t too far from the truth...

Folks, what would drive someone to make a move like that? What would drive someone to make a major change in their life, when things—by the world’s standards—were going well and they were comfortable and they were secure in so many ways? *God’s vision for their lives is the answer.* You see, *Harry has an understanding of just how precious time is ... and that our lifetime is to be used wisely, for God and for his Kingdom. Believers, with vision, behave differently.* They’re a driven people—driven by an eternal vision that God has given them for their lives...

BELEIVERS WITH VISION INTERACT WITH OTHERS DIFFERENTLY. If you are a vision-driven follower of Christ, you demonstrate your vision in your conversation! ***Visionaries talk about the heart of the vision that they’re living by!***

Have you ever been around people like that? You know—those people who *you don’t have to wonder what makes them tick.* In interacting with a visionary believer, you’ll soon know their heart ... and what God’s asked them to do with *their* life. They’re *excited* beyond belief about what God has entrusted to them, as a part of the work of his Kingdom! Have you ever met anyone like that?

I run into it all the time, probably because I’m the pastor. But, I get excited when people come to me and want to tell me what God’s doing in their lives and they want to tell me about *their ‘burning bush’—God’s vision that is driving them in their lives.* They love to tell me about the exciting things God is doing, as they follow God’s vision ... or maybe some concerns that they have, because of what God has called them to do. Either way, I don’t have to wonder what makes them tick! I don’t have to wonder what’s driving them! *God’s vision for their lives becomes very apparent in the way that they interact ... with others...* So, *believers with vision interact with others differently.* Then...

BELIEVERS WITH VISION PRODUCE RESULTS DIFFERENTLY. There are exceptions to every rule, I know, but more often than not I find that when believers with vision make considerable progress toward their vision-related goals, ***they give the glory for their successes to God!*** Now, *this shouldn’t be unusual* because every believer is called on to give constant thanks & praise to God for all he provides us. But, *does that attitude always come with success?* It usually does for the one who is truly following *God’s vision* for their life... They know who’s ultimately responsible...

I’ll never forget hearing about a plaque that set on President Reagan’s desk in the oval office, at the time of his presidency. I was especially moved that someone in this position would have such a plaque setting in their midst ... to constantly help keep their priorities straight—to know what was *most* important. The plaque read this way...

***There is no end to what you can accomplish in this life,
As long as you don’t mind who gets the credit.***

*That's the attitude of a believer who has vision—one who's living by God's vision for their life! But, in the case of the visionary Christian, it's God who rightfully gets the credit for all that's accomplished! So, *believers with vision produce results differently* in this way—in who gets the glory, in who the successful outcome points toward. With the visionary Christian—one who is truly following God's vision for their lives, it's never 'glory to ME!' It's always 'glory to GOD!' Finally...*

BELIEVERS WITH VISION RELATE TO GOD DIFFERENTLY. I've seen many people actually replace God in their lives with other gods of *this* age; and I've seen relationships with God abused in many ways. So, I know the reality does exist—that something as personal as vision could also be abused. But, for *vision-led Christians, the vision God has given them is always acknowledged as a gift from God, BUT NEVER REPLACES GOD. It remains God's instrument of direction for life, after we voluntarily submit all we are & all we have to him! Even a vision can become an idol, if we're not careful.* For the visionary Christian, God always remains God; nothing gets in the way of *that* reality!

Folks, there's what the life of a visionary Christian—one who's following God's vision for their lives—looks like!

- *Their lives are different*, because they've made the conscious choice ... to follow God's vision for their lives that will have eternal consequences & eternal rewards.
- *The way they behave*, the way they interact with others, the ways they react when things are accomplished for God's Kingdom, and the way they relate to God himself, are all different than normally found in this world...

Don't forget Proverbs 29:18 that says that *those who don't have a vision from God in their lives—those who don't know God's purpose for their lives and/or are not following God's purpose, will perish!* Life's DEAD ... without God's vision to follow! So, we need to keep our eye on *God's* goal...

Later on, after the accident, Wallenda's wife said that before her husband had fallen—for the first time in her life since she had known him—he had personally supervised the attachment of the guide wires, which he had never done before. What was Wallenda doing? He'd been concentrating on falling, instead of on walking the tightrope. *All too often, that's the case with followers of Jesus Christ, too.* We tend to concentrate on those things that take life from us, instead of on the vision God has for us—that gives us life. Often *the difference between success and failure ... or life and death ... is simply the direction we're looking...*

Are you being faithful with what God has given you today? Are you ready for God to enlarge the vision he has for your life? Can God trust you with it? Folks, let God have all of YOU today ... that *his* dream for your life ... might be yours!