



Empowering People to Change the World

## **Contending for the Focused Life: Vision**

Steve Holt

## Contending for the Focused Life: Vision

In 1963, MIT meteorologist Edward Lorenz presented an hypothesis to the New York Academy of Science:

- Lorenz theorized that a minor event like the flapping of a butterfly's wing in Brazil could conceivably alter wind currents that could cause a tornado in Texas.
- His theory grew wings in the academic community and became known to the general public as the "butterfly effect."
- The genesis of the theory was a prototype computer program that Lorenz designed to stimulate and forecast weather systems. On the day of his accidental discovery, Lorenz had to hurry up out of his office for a meeting. Instead of entering .506127, the number he had used in earlier trials, he rounded to the nearest thousandth—506.
- Lorenz figured that such a slight change of one-thousandth or 1% would be inconsequential. He figured wrong.
- When he returned to the lab later that day, he found a radical difference in simulated weather conditions. According to Lorenz, the numerical between the original number and the rounded number was the equivalent between of a puff of wind, but the net difference was the equivalent of a catastrophic weather event.
- Lorenz came to a simple yet profound conclusion: ***minuscule changes in input can make a macroscopic difference in output.***
- It's true in science and guess what? It's true in life too.
  - o One decision
  - o One change
  - o One risk
  - o One idea

- o You don't have to make 100 changes. All that does is divide your energy by one hundred and results in 1% chance of success.
- o Rather, you must be 100% committed to one change. It will take a wholehearted effort. But that one change has the potential to make a 100% difference in your life.
- It will take courage to make that change. Current situations are never in your favor.
  - o Courage doesn't wait until the plan is perfectly formed.
  - o Courage doesn't wait until everyone is on board with the plan.
  - o Courage waits for one thing—the green light from God.
  - o The first two letters in God are GO.
  - o The book of Acts is called The Acts of the Apostles, because they acted.
- This year, are you dissatisfied enough to get a little crazy? To take a risk?
- God doesn't call the qualified but qualifies the called. Will you look for a green light from God and go?

### **God has a Vision for your Life, but have you discovered it?**

- **Everyone has been put on this earth with a mission from God! Everyone. But most never discover God's mission for their life.**

### **Prov 29:18**

***“where there is no vision, the people perish.”***

- Most people perish because they have no vision for their life! To perish is to live a wasted life; to squander your life; to go nowhere. To miss out on your destiny.

- John Piper speaks of a “wasted life,” a life given only to trivial pursuits. A life lived only for oneself.
- Mike Bickle speaks of “squandering your destiny.” I would call it “Self-centered trivial pursuit.”
- John Ortberg would give it another title. He writes: “Everybody—every human being on earth—has a mission. We were all put here for a purpose. And everybody has a shadow mission. Our lives, and the lives of the groups we’re a part of, can drift into the pursuit of something unworthy and dark. To give in to our shadow mission is—or should be our greatest fear.”
  - o All of us were put on this earth to do something and to be something.
  - o But if we choose not to pursue God’s vision, God’s mission, we will find a substitute: a shadow mission.
- Ex. Victor Frankl, former concentration camp survivor, and world-renowned psychologist said, “What forms a person more is what one believes about the future even more than how much they’ve suffered in the past.”
  - o He did a study of the survivors of concentration camps and the biggest determining factor was whether that person had a vision for their life.
  - o They all suffered in a similar way but the ones who became successful were those who had a positive view of the future. They didn’t focus on the past.

**Prov 29:18**

**“where there is no vision, the people perish”**

- To get nowhere is to perish.
- Perish—to squander our destiny
- Aimless living is a wasted life.
- “Without a vision, any road will get you there.” Howard Hendricks

**Ex. There was a survey done of people over 80 years old. They were asked, “If you had your life to live over again, what would you do different?” Three things they said: 1) Risk more; 2) Reflect more; 3) Do more that counts for eternity.**

**Develop a clear vision for your life: Your time, your energy, your resources.**

- When a person has a clear vision, you don't have to call them to “discipline.”
- Ex. In the Holt family, we have tried to give our kids a vision for their lives through exposure to Christ, church, mission trips, leadership opportunities, sports, music, and the outdoors. Then, we've let God speak to them.
  - o Some have gravitated to music, some to sports, but we've never talked about discipline because that comes with the vision.
  - o Give kids a vision for their life.
  - o People aren't lazy most of the time, they have a vision problem.
  - o Get a picture of what you want to be. Without a picture, people are lazy and idle.
  - o We must be gripped by something.
  - o This is the best way to disciple people. Help people get a vision. Grapple for that vision.
  - o Contend for a vision for their lives. As a parent you can't give it to them, but you can help them find their own vision.
- Ex. I grasped my first vision for my life at 14 with gymnastics and I disciplined my life around that vision to be a state champion.
- Ex. I got saved and came into a personal relationship with Christ at UGA and got a vision for my character and, later, my vocation.

**New American Standard Bible: “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained”**

- The opposite of “unrestrained” is to be restrained. A man with a vision will have restraint (opposite way to say it). Be aggressive!

**Two Great Obstacles to Vision: Boredom and Fear**

- All addictions come from boredom, a lack of vision, a lack of purpose for your life.
  - Ex. The reason men get involved in affairs is not primarily because of lust but boredom. They have no vision that grips their heart.
  - God’s mission, God’s vision will restrain you, discipline you.

**Soren Kirkegaard said, “Boredom is the root of all evil - the despairing refusal to be oneself.”**

- The greatest obstacle to your vision will also be fear! Fear of failure, fear of being compared, fear of what others will think of you.
  - Fear paralyzes faith.
  - Fear destroys incentive.
  - Fear causes doubt.
  - Fear erodes a resolute heart.
- The only cure for boredom and fear is a two-part vision for your life:
  1. “Be Vision:” You need a vision for your heart, for your character.
  2. “Do Mission:” You must have a vision for your vocation, for what you do.

**Listen, you have to be Resolute with your Vision and Mission:**

- St. Teresa said that “Satan is terribly afraid of resolute souls.”

- Everything depends on two convictions: “I will” or “I will not.” You must put all your energy into what God is telling you.
- “My will be done” or “Thy will be done.”
- What is a wholehearted disciple of Christ? A resolute soul.
- Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- St. Thomas said, “Sanctity consists in nothing else than a firm resolution, the heroic act of abandoning oneself to God.”

**Vision is the big picture, the overall, picture of what you want to be and do with your life. Mission flows from vision. Mission is how you live out your vision.**

- From your vision comes your mission — how you’re going to get there. Then you need life goals (concrete). What are you supposed to be? What are you supposed to do?
- Goals serve your vision, then you need a daily strategy of reaching the goals.

**Your most important life resource is how you manage your time: this is the most important thing in our life: How we spend our time. The relational aspects. You are to grow in love, humility, and faithfulness, not necessarily fame or wealth.**

- Money is power, but time is life! It is life itself.
  - o If you squander your time, you squander your destiny.
  - o Lazy people get nowhere! You must manage your time.
  - o God wants you to grow in love and humility. God wants you to grow relationally.
  - o What is the primary thing we want to accomplish?
  - o What do you want the Lord to say to you at the end of your life on earth?

- The key to discovering your destiny is to learn to manage your time and manage your resources.
  - o It is very common for people to never figure this out and totally miss their destiny.
  - o Ex. I have had an aggressive management of my time — I have a passion to fulfill my destiny.
  - o Time management and destiny are the same thing! They must have the same energy.

**What do you want to be? That's your vision. What do you want to do? That's your mission**

1. **“Be Vision.”** What is the heart and character you want to develop? What is the primary thing you want to be? I've always been gripped by the vision of passionately loving God with ALL of my heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. **“Do Mission.”** Secondly, what's the occupational side that fits your character? I wanted to go to the uttermost parts of the earth. I knew I was called to be a missionary in Japan.
  - My primary character vision didn't change but my occupation changed.
  - What is good is to be who God wants you to be.
  - Love God and love people.

**Contending for a Focused Life: Four Components**

- You must understand the rhythms and cycles of life. It is not a frenzied hurried life.



### **1. Life vision: Be Vision**

- What you're going to be. It's about your character, your heart for God and people.
- More on this coming up this week.
- Write it out. What do you want to be said about you before God at the judgment seat of Christ?

### **2. Life Mission: Do Mission**

- This could change over time.
- What do you want to do with your life?

### **3. Action Plan**

- Measurable goals. What are the specific activities to reach your goals?
- Ex. Vibrant prayer life is a vision. Learning to love people.
- Ex. Maybe it's time to go back to school and get that degree.
- Ex. What about prayer?
- Ex. Study the Word. Most people don't have an action plan for prayer and how to study the Bible in a systematic way.

### **4. Set up a schedule of living it (this is how we get focused. A schedule is a roadmap)**

- Time management. Write out your schedule for the week.
- Give someone permission to keep your life accountable.
- Relationship time, rest time, study time.

- o If you keep it 70% of the time, you are hitting a home run!
  - o You will have a new level of excellence in your life if you have a focused life—good is the greatest enemy of the best.
  - o The tyranny of the urgent will kill you—if you don't take care of your schedule, someone else will. You will run around with emergencies.
  - o Don't fear giving yourself wholeheartedly to God! You were created by God to produce, to be fruitful, to do, to generate things that are relevant and useful—not getting your identity from it, but you can still be achieving things with relevance to it.
- If you want to succeed you must be aggressive in your schedule. It takes time to develop your prayer life, relationships, etc.
  - One step at a time—watch this scene from the movie Creed. Rocky's been training this Apollo Creed's son and they go to the same place where Rocky had trained before...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv6-p4kphmc&list=PLZbXA4lyCtqryZ\\_-Mt7TI56ZWfsQfomV8&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv6-p4kphmc&list=PLZbXA4lyCtqryZ_-Mt7TI56ZWfsQfomV8&index=11)