

5

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Vision for  
Your Life

Daniel B. Gilbert, Ph.D.

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*5 Steps to Receive Fresh Vision for Your Life!*

by Daniel B. Gilbert, Ph.D.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to all the people who long to know God and have an impact in this world for good and God's glory! May this work help you receive fresh vision from the Lord for your life!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Gilbert, Ph.D. (University of Aberdeen) is passionate about the transformative power of God to help people enter into a deeper relationship with God. He has a zeal for teaching theology and sound doctrine in a way that makes it real and practical. As a professor, pastor, theologian, humanitarian, international speaker, author, ministry consultant, and coach, Dr. Gilbert is dedicated to teaching biblically based principles to empower people to go deeper in God, grow stronger in life, and go higher in their destiny.



Dr. Gilbert and his wife, Mary Beth are the co-founders of EmPowered Living International Ministries, a ministry to help educate, equip, and EmPower leaders to transform communities through sound theology and humanitarian action. Through EmPowered Living, Dr. Gilbert has founded ELIM Theological Institute in Siaya, Kenya educating pastors to transform their communities for Christ. In addition, they are helping with several humanitarian projects in Africa, including helping with special projects for Ebenezer Children's Home and Word Academy.

He is the author of *The Big 5! Discovering the Five Foundations Every Christians Should Know!* with the Foreword by Dr. Pat Robertson (Founder of CBN & Regent University). You can purchase his book at [www.DrDanielBGilbert.com](http://www.DrDanielBGilbert.com)

He has been in ministry for over 34 years and has pastored in Aberdeen, Scotland, Hampton Roads, Virginia and Los Angeles, California. He has served as Professor of Theology and Church History and the Dean of Students at The King's University in Los Angeles, and also is currently serving as the Director of the Masters' Program and Assistant Professor in the School of Divinity of Regent University.

Daniel has been married to his college sweetheart, Mary Beth, since September 28, 1985, who also is an international women's speaker and they are blessed to have their precious daughter, Maria. They currently reside in Chesapeake, Virginia.

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## **Introduction: The Importance of Seeking God for Fresh Vision**

People long to find purpose in life and want to do more than just get by. Whether you are 10 years old or 90 years old, God has a plan, purpose, and vision for your life.

Do we realize that God is truly waiting for us to seek Him for guidance every day? Do we know that God has fresh words and visions for us for each day, month, and year? Throughout the Bible, we discover the importance of seeking God for His vision for our lives. When we are serious about this, He is pleased and begins to impart fresh vision to us.

If you are in College and still don't know what major to focus on, these steps in this little book, will help you. If you are in your 30s or 40s and feeling like you lost your vision and passion, then these steps will help you become refocused and hopefully help you get your passion back.

If you are in your 50s or 60s and feel like you haven't made the impact you have desired, then read this e-book and become more focused on making an eternal impact. And if you are retired and feel you are no longer needed or are bored now you don't have a "job," God is not finished with you yet and He desires to give you fresh vision to impact this world for Him until your last breath (think of Abraham as he was given his first vision at the age of 75, Sarah was 80 when she got pregnant, Moses was called at 80, Caleb was over 80, and Zechariah and Elizabeth were at least 65 or older).

*The question is, do you desire to really receive fresh vision and make a difference in this world?*

The steps I am writing about have helped me on a regular basis get refocused and to receive a fresh vision from the Lord. Sometimes "life happens" and we get off track. Maybe our workload is increased at work and we are so tired when we get home, that we don't really have any energy to bless our family or exercise or even spend time with the Lord. Maybe we have had a tragedy and it's totally changed our situation, but we've lost our vision. Maybe we've lost our job and don't know what to do.

As you read and mediate on the steps and Scriptures in this work, I believe God, the Holy Spirit, will begin to download fresh vision and hope for you. I believe the Lord will begin to speak to your heart and give you the grace and strength to move forward and live with purpose.

As you begin this journey, I want to encourage you to pray before you begin reading each day and ask the Lord to speak clearly to you and to help you stay focused. Something



happens when we stop before we read anything and ask the Holy Spirit to clear our minds, give us focus, and to speak to us.

So, let's get started receiving fresh vision for your life.

Will you pray this simple pray with me?

*Our Gracious and Good Father, we come before you in the Name of Your Son, Jesus, and ask that you quiet our souls, clear our minds, help us focus, and open our ears and hearts to hear You and receive fresh vision from You today. Thank You Lord for blessing me now. In Jesus' Mighty Name, AMEN.*

*Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint [perish, wander aimlessly],  
but blessed is he who keeps the law [the teachings, instructions of the Word of God].*  
(Proverbs 29:11)

# 1

## Step 1: Believe God is Good and Desires to Give You a Vision

*“Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!”*

(1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalms 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1)<sup>1</sup>

God’s very nature is good!

As we read through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, we see the goodness of God revealed. In Genesis 1 we read that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. However, we read beginning in Genesis 1:10 and throughout the rest of the creation story, that what God was creating “was good.” Finally, in the climax of His creation, the creation of human beings in His image, the Scripture states, “it was very good!” (Gen. 1:31)

Why do I begin in Genesis to emphasize this truth that “God is good”?

It is important to grasp at in the beginning of creation, God created out of His nature, His goodness. God did not and does not create evil or bad things. I realize we can get off on a tangent here about “then why is there evil and why do bad things happen to good people?” but I want us to look at the very beginning before Adam and Eve rebelled and sinned against God and His holiness and goodness.

Before the fall of Adam and Eve due to their rebellion, everything God created was good, including Adam and Eve. Again, God created out of His love and goodness. Yet after the fall, God’s goodness does not change or go away, because His very nature is good.

Let’s look at just a few passages about God’s goodness and His desire to reveal Himself and His plans and vision for you:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”

Psalm 34:8

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Bible, God is described as good. This is His nature. See other passages describing the nature of God and His goodness: Exodus 34:6-7; Psalms 34:1, 8; 100:5; 135:3; 145:9; Jeremiah 33:11; Lamentations 3:25; Nahum 1:7; 1 Peter 2:3 just to list a few passages.



“I will thank you forever, because you have done it. I will wait for your name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly.” Psalm 52:9

“Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.” Psalm 73:1

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.” Psalm 84:11

“For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” Psalm 100:5

“The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.” Psalm 145:9

“They bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD: “Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD.” Jeremiah 33:11

“The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.”  
Lamentations 3:25

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.” 1 Peter 2:3

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.: Jeremiah 29:11

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The LORD is on my side as my helper....” Psalm 118:6-7

“I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?” Psalm 56:3-4, 11

“fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

“Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” Matthew 7:9-11

Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they [you and me] may have life and have it abundantly.” John 10:10.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:31-32

Just reading these few passages about God's goodness and His desires and plans for us should build our faith. For us to receive fresh vision and move forward in that vision, we must believe that God is good and truly desires to bless us with a vision. I love what Jesus said in Matthew 7:9-11 about a child asking his earthly father for something, and the father, even though he is sinful, of course gives what is good to his child. Then Jesus said, "how much more with your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him."

Jesus is saying that God the Father is so good, infinitely more, good than a human father, that He will give even better gifts to His children who ask Him. If we have faith in God and His goodness and believe He has a plan for us, He will show us that plan when we seek Him.

In addition, Romans 8:31-32 Paul teaches that God is for us and not against us. He shows us that He is for us because He sent His Son, Jesus, to die in our place; to die for our sins, so that He may "graciously give us all" that we need to live for Him and to be successful in this life. Think about this truth!

God truly desires His children to be successful in this life, for His glory. He even tells Joshua, "This Book of the Law [the Bible today] shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Joshua 1:8). It's about staying in faith, following the principles He gives us in the Word of God, and doing them for the glory of God. And when we do, God, the Holy Spirit begins to download fresh vision for your life.

Finally, Moses is reminding the Israelites before they go into the Promised Land, "And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house..." Deuteronomy 26:11

Before we move on to the second step, just pause and think about all the times God has been good to you! Begin to thank God for His goodness to you.

**Action:**

- Take some time to read through the above verses and others.
- Praise Him for His goodness.
  - Watch these worship songs and worship God and His goodness:<sup>2</sup>

[Good, Good Father - Chris Tomlin - Passion 2016](#)

[VaShawn Mitchell - "Good God!"](#)

["God is Good All The Time" by Don Moen](#)

- Believe God is Good!

Because God is good, and He is a good Father, He desires to give to you a fresh vision when you seek Him and ask Him. This leads us to the next step.

*For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.*

(1 Timothy 4:4-5)

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<sup>2</sup> All Worship videos were accessed through [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com).

## 2

### Step 2: Fast and Pray to Our Good God

*“...we told the king, ‘The hand of our God is for good on all who seek Him, and the power of His wrath is against all who forsake Him.’ So we fasted and implored our God for this, and He listened to our entreaty”*

(Ezra 8:22b-23)<sup>3</sup>

Fasting and prayer go hand-in-hand. Therefore, when we need clarity in our lives or even more so, when we need a breakthrough, God desires us to fast and pray.

As Christians, we pray daily and in our prayer times, God speaks to us and reveals many things to us. However, there are times when we should press into the Lord and His wisdom by fasting.

Fasting is basically denying oneself of foods, drinks (except water), or other items, such as time, electronics, television, steaming, social media, et cetera to seek the Lord during a specific time period.<sup>4</sup> Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible defines fasting as:

**Fast, Fasting.** Eating sparingly or abstaining from food altogether, either from necessity or desire. In medical terms, fasting is the detoxification of the body through the restriction of food.

Spiritual fasting entails setting aside activities as well as reducing the intake of food and replacing these activities with the exercise of prayer and preoccupation with spiritual concerns. The NT word which is translated “fasting” literally means one who has not eaten, one who is empty.

Three types of fast are generally recognized: *normal*, in which there is no intake of food for a prescribed period of time, though there may be an intake of liquids; *partial*, in which the diet is limited, though some food is allowed; and *absolute*, in which there is a total abstinence from food and liquids in all forms.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to set aside some time each day to seek the Lord for fresh vision in your life. When you do this, God begins to pour out His plans for you.

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<sup>3</sup> C. B. Bass, "[Fast, Fasting](#)," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 780.

<sup>4</sup> If you have a medical condition that prohibits you from abstaining from food, then you can fast something else that is mentioned.

Dr. Andrew Murray, one of my spiritual heroes, states, “Jesus teaches us that a life of faith requires both prayer and fasting. Prayer grasps the power of heaven, fasting loosens the hold on earthly pleasure.”<sup>6</sup>

For example, when I am led to fast, whatever type of fast, I will take the time I would be eating a meal, to go read the Bible and to pray. If you need to fast Facebook or a meal or certain foods, you still should take the time you would be on Facebook or the meal time to seek the Lord in prayer. It’s that simple, just drink a lot of water.

In both the Old Testament and New Testament, we have examples of fasting to seek God’s counsel. Many times in the Old Testament fasting was done for one of five reasons:

1. To seek the Lord for guidance, direction, and help (for vision); (2 Chronicles 20:3).
2. To seek the Lord in repentance for sins, as well as for help; (Ezra 8 and 9; Nehemiah 1; 9; Daniel 9; Joel 1:14; 2:12-15; Jonah 3:5).
3. To seek the Lord for protection and help; (Esther 4 and 9).
4. To seek the Lord in mourning for someone who is ill, the loss of someone, or a loss in battle, and (2 Samuel 1:12; 12:16-21; Psalms 35:13; 69:10; 109:24).
5. To seek the Lord to change the hearts of the king, the people, or turn the people back to the Lord and His ways. (Nehemiah 1 & 2; Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 36; Zechariah 8).

In the New Testament, we see many of the same reasons, but it seems like it is mainly for:

1. Seeking the Lord for the beginning of ministry; (Matthew 4; Luke 4; Acts 13).
2. For empowerment for ministry, especially for deliverance from demons and healings; (Mark 9:14-29).
3. Guidance and direction (for vision); (Acts 13:1-4; 14:19-23).

Let’s look at a few that deal specifically for guidance and direction or vision:

“Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.” 2 Chronicles 20:3

Here, King Jehoshaphat of Judah did not know what to do when three different kingdom’s armies came together to destroy the people of God. Therefore, Jehoshaphat

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<sup>6</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Best of Andrew Murray on Prayer: A Daily Devotional Journal*, ed. By Edward A. Elliott (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 1997), January 21.



called all the people to fast and seek the Lord. And when they fasted, God gave a word and a plan (a vision) for what to do to win the battle.

Read 2 Chronicles 20 to see the fresh vision and plan God gave the king and leaders. It was a unique plan, not like more military strategies for war. I am not going to share that plan, because I want to encourage you to read the chapter to see the vision and plan God gave King Jehoshaphat to win the battle. (Spoiler Alert: They didn't even have to fight!)

“As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” Nehemiah 1:4

### NEHEMIAH PRAYS



Nehemiah heard about the situation in Jerusalem and fasted and prayed to the Lord. As we read the rest of Nehemiah chapter 1, we see that Nehemiah was repenting for himself and on behalf of the Jewish people, as well as for guidance and favor from the Lord. In Nehemiah 2, we read that God did give Nehemiah favor with the king and gave him a clear vision to lead the Jewish people back to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Again, I want to encourage you to read [Nehemiah 1 to 7:4](#) to see how God continued to give Nehemiah clear vision for each situation he was in and

how He did miracles for Nehemiah because, I believe he fasted and prayed for God's vision and help.

Jesus, the Son of God, when it was time to begin His earthly ministry, went to the Jordan to be baptized in water by John the Baptist (not because Jesus had sinned, for He was sinless, but to represent humanity and to prepare for His ministry). We can read this in Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:32-34, and Luke 3: 21-21.

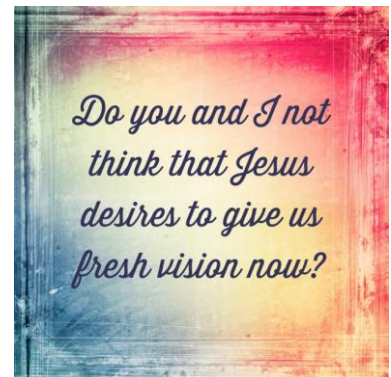
After Jesus was baptized by John, we read that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to fast and pray and during this time, He was tempted by the devil. (see [Luke 4:1-19](#)). The point is that Jesus, the Son of God, fasted and prayed at the beginning of His ministry to prepare for His calling! In Luke 4:14-15, we read that after fasting 40 days, “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about Him went out through all the surrounding country. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”

Jesus was given fresh vision of His mission by spending time fasting and praying. In the first recording sermon or message of Jesus in Luke, we discover the vision that Jesus was given. Jesus says,

*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor...And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:18-21 (from the prophecy of [Isaiah 61:1-2](#))*

Jesus had a clear mission to fulfill for you and me, that in His humanity, He received through prayer and fasting. And now that He has accomplished His vision and purpose by living a sinless life, by fulfilling Isaiah 61:1-2, by suffering, shedding His blood, and dying on the cross for our sins, shame, guilt, and pain, and then by being physically raised from the dead to seal His work for you and me so that we might come to salvation in Him, and by ascending to be seated at the Right Hand of the Father in heaven; Jesus is now interceding for you and me to not only know God, but to guide us, direct us, and give us fresh vision for each day and each season of our lives!

Think about this truth! Jesus is interceding for us right now (see [Romans 8:34](#)) and He desires us to seek Him for every area of our lives, including seeking Him for fresh vision. Do you and I not think He desires to give you fresh vision now?



One final example from the Bible for us to see the importance of fasting and praying. In [Acts 13:1-4](#) we discover that in the church in Antioch, all the Christians were worshipping and fasting and “the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and praying they laid hands on them and sent them off. So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia...”

We discover that God, the Holy Spirit, gave the leadership of the church direction, guidance, and vision to set apart Barnabas and Paul to the calling (and the vision) He had given them. Then we read that they developed a plan (vision) from God in where to go and how to minister.

Let me share just one personal example with you. When I was in seminary, I began to seek the Lord specifically about my calling and for vision for what He wanted me to do after seminary and where He wanted my wife and me to minister (and this was in our first year of seminary knowing we would have 3 more years of study and preparation).

Well, I was led to fast and pray about it during the Spring Quarter in 1989, and during a chapel, the Holy Spirit gave me a vision about the next step, and it was completely outside of what I was thinking! So, I did not share it with anyone right away, but continued to pray about it and ask the Lord for clarity. Over a four to six-month period that vision became clearer and stronger. It was not a vision for my entire life, it was for the next season after seminary, but God knew that we needed those three years to prepare for the next step.

So, you may be asking, “So, what was the vision God gave you?” Well, it was a vision to be ordained and move to Scotland to pastor in the Church of Scotland and to study for a Ph.D. in Theology at the University of Aberdeen. Now, you have to understand, for all this to take place, God had to do miracles for us, but He gave me that vision and direction and He fulfilled that vision!

Oh, I could share examples after examples of God giving me fresh vision, because He is a good, good God and desires to give all His children fresh vision!

If you are truly serious about receiving a fresh vision for your life, even for a new year, or a new season, then I want to encourage you to set aside some time to fast and pray. When you do, God will begin to download His plans for you.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### **How much should I fast and pray? And how long should I fast?**

The answer to these questions really depends on what the Lord wants you to do. For me, I fast on a regular basis, so normally I fast five (5) or six (6) times a year, but only as the Holy Spirit leads me. And each fast is usually different in type and length. I only do a full fast (drink only water) for no more than three (3) days, unless I am to extend that time and I don't have to work fulltime. Sometimes I fast 1 or 2 meals for a week or for 14 days or 21 days or up to 40 days. Other times, I may fast ice cream or a favorite food or the television or the internet for a number of days. During those fasts, I seek the Lord for the amount of time I would be taking in the other areas.

Therefore, there is no established rules in the answers to these questions. We are not to be legalistic about it either or share with many people that we are fasting. However, fasting is truly about our heart and seeking the Lord to be more like Him and to be obedient to His vision and counsel for us.

#### **When we do fast and pray, what should we do? Or how do we do that?**

First, we need to humble ourselves before the Lord asking for forgiveness for not seeking Him daily for His guidance, counsel, and direction.

We need to ask for forgiveness for our pride, thinking that we can live our lives without Him. We need to repent of anything that may hinder the Holy Spirit coming and guiding us.

This is a time to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us areas of our lives that limit Him. So, our thinking may be unbiblical, our habits or behaviors may be limiting us, or there may be sin in our lives that God wants to forgive us and set us free from before He can show us His vision. Another limitation may be holding unforgiveness in our hearts toward anyone. Unforgiveness which turns into bitterness may be one of the biggest hinderances in many areas of our lives, especially in receiving breakthroughs.<sup>7</sup> Therefore we need to forgive the person(s) or institution(s) in faith.

Second, we need to pray in faith, asking specifically for the Lord to give us His vision, His direction, and His counsel.

Third, we need to wait in silence for the Lord to speak.

Fourth, we need to read the Word of God daily, and specifically during these special times of fasting and praying. This leads us to the third step in discovering fresh vision for our lives.

### **Action:**

- Take some time to pray about fasting and what type of fast and how long God would want you to fast for vision in your life.
- Look at your calendar and schedule your time of fasting each day, when you will pray during the day or evening, and how many days you are led to fast.
- Share your plans with only one or two trusted and godly friends (or your spouse, so that they can be praying for you during this time of fasting).
- However, share a prayer request to as many friends you want to be praying for you to hear God's voice and to receive fresh vision for your life (just do not share with them that you will be fasting).
- If you are fasting meals, make sure you set up a place of prayer to go to during that meal time. (For me, if I am fasting and I'm at work, I normally will fast lunch, so I leave my office and go into the chapel). The point is find a room in your home where it is quiet and you will not be disturbed.
- Start your fast and seek God for fresh vision, with your Bible!

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<sup>7</sup> I am developing a course on *The Theology of Forgiveness: Understanding God's Forgiveness and Learning to Live in Freedom from Bitterness* (The working title). Please be praying for me as I develop this new course.

*But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you! (Jesus, Matthew 6:6)*

# 3

## Step 3: Read the Bible Daily

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God [inspired] and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete for every good work.”*

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

It ought to be obvious that when one is seeking God for direction and vision, he or she should be reading the Bible daily. Reading the Word of God is absolutely imperative, in my opinion, for your daily walk with God, but also when you are fasting and praying for vision.

However, recent studies and surveys reveal that less than 20% of regular church attendees read the Bible daily. (See Diagram 3.1)

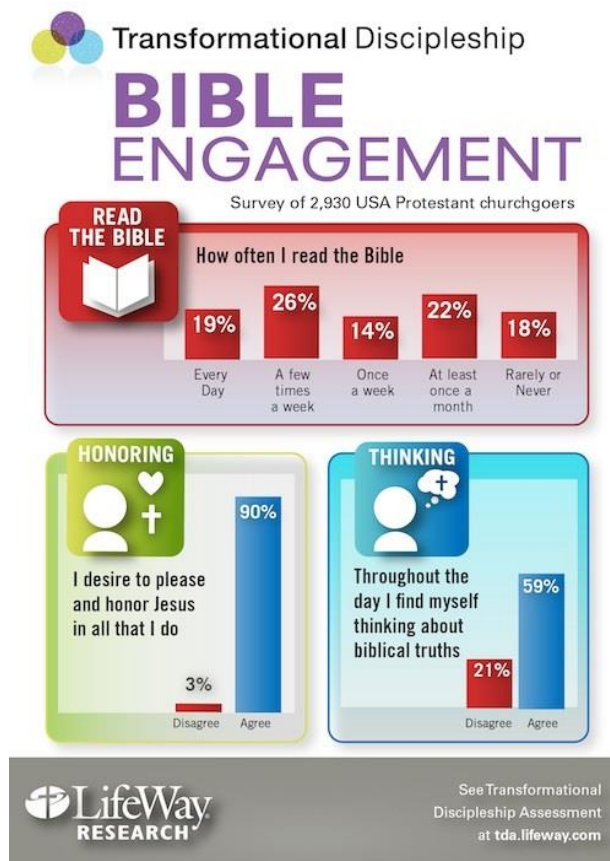


Diagram 3.1<sup>8</sup>

We will not get into the reasons or issues that have caused the decline in reading the Bible daily in this book, however, it reveals how pastors and churches have not emphasized or taught on the importance of the Word of God being inspired and infallible and why it's vital to read the Bible for the purpose of fellowshiping with God, for us to know Him, and to walk in His ways.

In other words, Christian leaders, Bible Colleges and Seminaries, have not done a good job and teaching on why the Bible is the inspired Word of God, how to read and interpret the Word of God, and why it's our spiritual food that we need daily, just like the need for physical food.

These statistics alone reveal why there is so many problems in our society and so much confusion and lack of clear, godly vision in our lives, even as Christians.

As a matter of fact, in my book, *The Big 5!* in chapters two and three, I write about how important the Bible is, that it is the inspired Word of God, and some basic, universal principles to interpretation of the Bible.

So, why is reading the Bible daily so important, especially as we are seeking for fresh vision and counsel from the Lord?

There are several reasons:

1. The Bible is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God and is the sole authority on all that it speaks on and in which we should follow by God's grace.
2. The Bible is God's Word for you and me to come to know Him and His ways, which are good.
3. God desires to speak to us daily in prayer and through His holy Word.
4. God reveals principles, answers to life issues, and insights for living a successful life here on earth.
5. God will give you His vision and show you His plans through His Word.
6. God will give you a verse, verses, or passages to guide you in your vision, and to strengthen you when things become difficult.

There are many other reasons, but I hope these encourage you to read your Bible daily and expect God, the Holy Spirit, to speak to you and give you guidance.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/september/new-research-less-than-20-of-churchgoers-read-bible-daily.html> (assessed January 20, 2019). See also <https://www.barna.com/?s=time+adults+spend+reading+the+Bible>. As these are several years old, it is right to assume that even less people are reading the Bible daily.

Let me give you an example of the Lord speaking to my wife, Mary Beth, through His Word. One of our major life challenges in our marriage was that we were medically infertile. This was so hard on Mary Beth and me, because we longed to have children and believed it was God’s plan and vision for us to have children.<sup>9</sup> Mary Beth and I sought God, fasted and prayed for a miracle, were prayed over by many Christian leaders, but month after month, year after year, there was no pregnancy.

One ironic thing about all this, was when Mary Beth and I were pastoring, we prayed over many couples who were struggling with infertility themselves, and every couple we prayed over to get pregnant became pregnant! We both praised the Lord for the miracles and healings, yet silently grieved together wondering why not us. Mary Beth truly felt like Hannah in [1 Samuel 1 and 2](#).

In our 16<sup>th</sup> year of infertility, Mary Beth was having her daily Bible reading, this time on a flight to visit her mother in Florida. While reading in 1 Kings 4, the passage about the Shunammite woman “leapt off” the pages into Mary Beth’s heart!

One of the verses states, “At this season, about this time next year, you shall embrace a son.” Read the entire passage: [1 Kings 4:8-17](#)

When Mary Beth arrived in Florida, she called me and shared the word and we both claimed it for our situation and desire. Well, we thought this meant Mary Beth would become pregnant and we would have a baby by July of the following year. Well, we had interpreted that message in the wrong way, because by the latest time for her to be pregnant would have been September. But she never became pregnant.

But we knew this was a word from the Lord for us. However, just a month later, God revealed to us separately, while Mary Beth was ministering and speaking at a women’s conference in Argentina, South America, and I was home ministering, that the Holy Spirit quickened both of our hearts to adopt from South Korea!

When Mary Beth returned from Argentina, we shared with each other and started the adoption process. Well, let me just say, God is so good! He fulfilled the words that He gave Mary Beth in July of 2001, because by August 2002, we brought our four (4) month old daughter, Maria Grace, home from South Korea!

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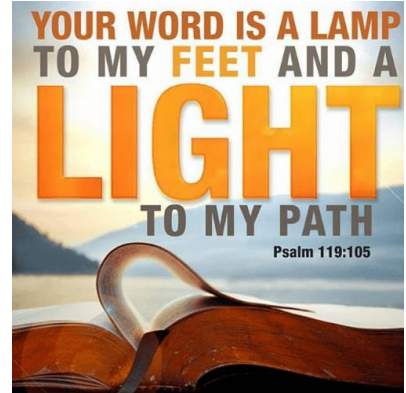
<sup>9</sup> You can read an abbreviated story about this in Chapter 15, “Face-to-Face Time” by Mary Beth Gilbert in *Women Who Rock: Inspirational Stories of Success by Extraordinary Women*, edited by Natasha Duswalt (New York: Hybrid Global Publishing, 2017). [Women Who Rock Book](#). Mary Beth is working on a book about all the details and lessons learned on her journey to motherhood.



Because Mary Beth was in the Word of God daily, and she was seeking the Lord for a vision for motherhood, God spoke to her and gave her a word, from His Word.

The key was holding on to that word, even when it seemed like we missed it.

God is faithful and desires to share His plans with us, but we need to spend time with Him in prayer and in His Holy Word to receive vision, guidance, a plan, and direction.



### **Are you reading the Bible daily? Do you have a reading plan?**

#### **Action:**

- Commit to yourself and to God that you want to start reading the Bible daily.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you. If you miss a day, do not “beat yourself up,” just start the next day.
- Start for 5 minutes or 10 minutes a day.
- Pick a reading plan:
  - One thing you can do is just start reading in the Old Testament Book of Proverbs and Psalms. There are 31 chapters in Proverbs, so you can start on the day of the month and read that Proverb. For example, if it is the 20th of July, read Proverbs 20.
  - The same thing with the Psalms, read Psalm 20.
  - I also would encourage you to read one chapter in the New Testament too, like start with the Gospel of John.
  - Or you can download a reading plan from several Christian websites like: [Several Bible Reading Plans](#)
  - [Different Daily Bible Reading Plans from GatewayBible.com](#)
- Before you begin reading, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to clear your mind and all your worries, and to speak to you through His Word.

You can do this!

*“For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

Hebrews 4:12

## 4

### Step 4: Write Down Everything the Holy Spirit Reveals

*“And the LORD answered me: **Write the vision: make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.**”*

(Habakkuk 2:2)

As we believe that God is good and desires to guide us and give us His wisdom and a fresh vision; as we press into Him through self-denial by fasting and praying; as we pray and read the Bible daily, God will begin to download fresh vision to you. It may come in a series of pictures in your mind. It may come from a Scripture verse or verses and/or a story in Scripture. It may come as thoughts. Or it may come as you share with others your dreams and passion and they begin to speak ideas that resonate with you.

All I know is as we begin to seek God for fresh vision in our lives, He begins to reveal ideas, thoughts, pictures, and plans to you.

Therefore, according to Habakkuk 2:2, write all those thoughts down!

It is important to write down ideas, visions, thoughts. (I'll go into more details in Step 5 and the Conclusion). I do two things at this stage:

The first thing I do is write everything down I sense the Holy Spirit is revealing to me. The second thing that I do is either get a piece of paper or better yet, a white board and I begin to mind-map.

Mind mapping is a simple tool where you put your central or main idea in the middle of the paper/white board, and then you draw lines and balloons with the supporting ideas. And with each supporting idea, you do the same thing. What mind mapping does is helps you get all your thoughts out and in categories or steps to the main idea.

Mind mapping is a great tool. The reason I like mind mapping is that it helps me see all the areas of the vision or idea that need to be developed and it's a visual aid.

Following are some resources for you to learn how to mind map.

[Book - Mind Map Mastery by Tony Buzan](#)

Websites:

[11 of the Best Mind Mapping Software to Brainstorm Better Ideas - blog by Clifford Chi](#) – Some of these are free and others are to purchase.

[5 Mind Mapping Sites and Apps - Blog by Mihir Patkar](#) – These are free.<sup>10</sup>

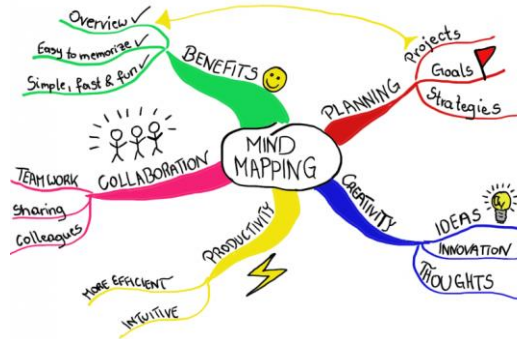


Diagram 4.1 – Example of Mind Mapping

Therefore, for Step 4, just write or type out the Scriptures and all the vision and ideas that have come to you as you have been reading the Bible, fasting, and praying, each day or whenever the vision begins to flow.

### Action:

- Write down everything that comes to your mind and heart. Include the Scriptures, ideas and the heart of the vision.
- Use a tool to help you clear your head of all the ideas like mind mapping that helps visualize and categorize your vision and ideas.
- Continue to pray over these ideas and prepare for Step 5.



*“Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust also in Him, and He will act.”*

Psalm 37:4-5

<sup>10</sup> Note: I have not used these mind mapping programs and do not receive any affiliate compensation if you choose to purchase one. Also, the book by Tony Buzan is a new book I have not read but have read others by him. If you do purchase this book from the link, a small portion of the sale will go to support our non-profit ministry, EmPowered Living International Ministries ([www.empowered-living.org](http://www.empowered-living.org)).

## 5

### Step 5: Refine Your Vision

*“And the LORD answered me: ‘Write the vision: **make it plain on tablets**, so he may run who reads it.’”*

(Habakkuk 2:2)

We are to simplify those thoughts to make the vision clear and concise. In verse 2 we read “*make it plain on tablets*”. This just means to clarify it and don’t make it too complicated or too detailed, because that can become overwhelming. This takes some time, but with discipline and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to clarify your vision.

So, after you have written down the vision, scriptures, and ideas and then mind mapped them (if you choose to use that tool), you start to make the vision plain and clear.

It is very important to emphasize the need to simplify the vision, and then to refine it. When the Lord gives you a fresh vision, sometimes it is clear, but not clearly refined in our mind.

So how do we refine the vision? Well, mind mapping, for me, begins the refining step. As mentioned in Step 4 about mind mapping, it begins to help you put your vision, ideas, and scriptures God has given you into categories or similar ideas.

For example, when the Lord gave me the vision for EmPowered Living International Ministries in 2008, I began to write everything down in a notebook. As I wrote, the bigger the vision became, and I had several pages of notes with scriptures and ideas. It was great and exhilarating, because I had been fasting and praying for fresh vision. And when the Holy Spirit began to download the vision, it just continued to flow.

But after I wrote it all down, I started to get overwhelmed, even a little confused. I remember sharing my notes with my wife, Mary Beth, and she too began to feel overwhelmed and saying things like, “This is wonderful Honey, but how are we going to do this? Who will help us? Etc.” She was asking the right questions, but the vision was not as clear and succinct or as Habakkuk states, “plain.”

Then I started to mind map and the pages of notes started to become clearer. When I showed my wife the mind map, even though it was still quite busy, she started

to see how things looked and how they connected, and what areas or categories were developing.

But that was just the start of making the vision plain. I continued to refine the vision, with an attitude of prayer. (By the way, 11 years later, the vision for EmPowered Living continues to expand, yet I continue to refine it).

Another step to help you visualize and clarify your vision is to create a specific vision board of the vision.

What I mean by this is a general vision board is like a “dream board” which has photos, words, picture statements, etc. that you hope to obtain or become some day.

A specific vision board is like the mind map, but you incorporate photos and visuals of what the action plans and outcome looks like to you. It helps you stay focused and remember the vision daily. It’s important to view these steps regularly to keep you on target. As you create a specific vision board, this helps refine and clarify your vision.

Here are a few websites that may help you understand the concept of a vision board:<sup>11</sup>

Websites that may be helpful for you:

[How to Create a Vision Board - a Christian Women Series by Titania Paige](#)  
(YouTube)

[Vision Boards are they biblical? on Got Questions](#)

[8 Great Reasons for a Faith Vision Board - Blog by Julie](#)

These blogs and video will give some good, balanced guidance on developing a vision board.

After you have done these steps to clarify and refine, then try to write out the vision in two or three short sentences. This is can be really difficult, but this is where you begin to make the vision more focused which will help make the vision stronger.

Then take that short paragraph and refine it again into a 1 or 2 vision statement. This major step will help you share it clearly with others so that you can now as the last part of Habakkuk 2 states, “*so he may run who reads it.*”

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<sup>11</sup> Note: When searching for vision board help on the internet, it is important to know that there are many non-Christian and “New Age” sites that are more focused on self and materialism, instead of the vision God has given you. So be very discerning if you search for YouTube or other websites on Vision Boarding. I’ve given you a couple of sites to view I believe are helpful.

Then you will be able to start to develop goals and action plans for each sections of your vision.

**Action:**

- Create a Specific Vision Board
- Refine the vision on the mind map by organizing the vision into categories.
- Write 2 or 3 sentences of the vision statement.
- Then refine that paragraph into 1 or 2 short statements.
- Continue to pray over your vision and continue to refine it.

**WRITE**  
THE VISION; MAKE IT  
PLAIN ON TABLETS,  
SO SHE MAY RUN WHO READS IT.  
**HABAKKUK 2: 2**  
-KRISTAPETTIFORD.COM

*“Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established!”*

Proverbs 16:3

## Conclusion:

### Now What?

*“And the LORD answered me: ‘Write the vision: make it plain on tablets, **so he may run who reads it.** For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. **If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.** Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him; **but the righteous shall live by faith.**”*

(Habakkuk 2:2-4)

So, you believe God is good and wants the best for you as His child. You have fasted and prayed. You have been reading the Bible daily and the Lord is downloading fresh vision for your life. You have written everything down and started to mind map and started a specific vision board. Now what?

Now you are ready to move forward in the Lord and the fresh vision He has given you. I hope you are encouraged by what God desires to do in you, through you, and for you.

Let’s continue to look at Habakkuk 2 to see “what’s next.”

*“And the LORD answered me: ‘Write the vision: make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him; but the righteous shall live by faith.”* (Habakkuk 2:2-4)

In the context of this passage and the entire prophetic book, the LORD downloaded a prophetic word and vision about how He has been working during the exile period of the Israelites. God answers Habakkuk’s complaints and questions, and then tell him to write down the vision for himself and all the people.

As we look at these 3 verses, a few principles and insights are revealed even for us today:

First, to write down the vision. We have discussed this in Steps 4 and 5.

Second, to simplify and refine the vision. It’s important to reiterate the need to not just simplify the vision but refine it. When the Lord gives you a fresh vision, sometimes it is clear, but not clearly refined in our mind, as we learned in Step 5.

Now, as we look at Habakkuk 2:2-4, we see the next part of this process.

Third, take action steps and start implementing the vision, one step at a time. The last part of verse 2 states, “*so he may run who reads it.*” What this means is that when the vision is clear and to the point you or anyone who reads it can run with it or **take action.**

It’s important to break down the vision into small action steps. Maybe you have heard the question, “How do you eat a huge elephant? One bite at a time!” This is true for your fresh vision. Start to develop an **Action Plan.** You can search YouTube or search Google or Amazon for how to develop an action plan for your vision. When you do this, you will receive a plethora of videos, books, blogs, and websites for you to consider.

However, to keep this very simple, just pray about it, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in what area of the vision to start with. Nehemiah did this. When he traveled to Jerusalem, he had the vision to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem but did not know how. So, he examined the wall one day and evening and then received a clear action plan on how to rebuild the wall. And whenever there were obstacles, Nehemiah sought the Lord and He would give him wisdom in how to overcome the obstacles and challenges to continue rebuilding the wall. To read the story and maybe get inspired by his plans, go to:

[Nehemiah 2:9-7:4](#)

Set some goals with deadlines to them and then make daily action steps to reach those goals.

The fourth thing to do now is: be patient as you are taking action.

Many times, visions that the Lord gives us will take time to develop. For example, when a woman becomes pregnant, it’s exciting to receive the news from the Doctor or a pregnancy test, but then comes the rest of the pregnancy, another 8 months for that baby to grow. Then the day comes when the new mother goes into labor and there is pain, but then the baby is born and there is great joy! But now comes the hard part, caring for, helping, and training the child grow up into the man or woman of God he or she was created to be.

You see, once we receive the vision, it is in the conception stage, and we need to be patient, but still begin to take action. Sometimes, it comes quickly, however, most of the time, it takes an extended period of time for the vision to be fleshed out and come into fruition. However, as verse 3 states, “**it will surely come; it will not delay!**”



Finally, we need to walk by faith in God, knowing that God will help you fulfill the vision He has given you. Verse 4 states, *“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him; but the righteous shall live by faith.”*



We discover that sometimes when we receive a vision, we can become prideful or try to make it happen in our own strength and in our own way. When we do this, the vision will not be what God intended for it to be, and we usually get burned out or even see some prosperity come, but we take the glory for it! This is not God’s way.

God’s way for fulfilling the vision is to live by faith and grace. We are to trust the Lord and His guidance throughout the whole process, so as the vision is coming to fruition and completion, God receives all the glory and we are honored and blessed.

Proverbs 3:5-6 states, *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.”*

I speak from experience. God gave me a vision to start a church and I followed all that I am writing you about, but there was a time, when I tried to do things my way and started to strive, instead of abiding in Him, trust Him, live in faith and grace. And because I got a head of the Lord with the vision, I almost burnt out and it hindered the church, my Ministry Team, and my family.

In Hebrews 11:6 we read, *“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.”* And in 2 Corinthians 5:7 we read, *“and we walk by faith, not by sight.”* When we live and believe God gave us the vision (however big or small), we will see it come to completion. However, I’ll repeat this: We must live by faith and grace as we take the action steps to run with the vision. And when we do, God will guide us along the way.



In this short e-book on how to receive fresh vision from God for your life, I hope you have been encouraged. We have looked at five simple, yet powerful steps to receiving fresh vision in your life.

First, we have to believe that God is good and He desires to bless, strengthen, empower, guide, and reveal His plans for us. Yes, plans. There are many visions and plans that God has for us in all of areas of our lives: relationships, vocation, ministries, finances, health, locations to live, etc. Oh, God has so much for you and one reason He sent His Son, Jesus, was to not just redeem and save us from our sins and give us eternal life, but to give us abundant life here and now. (see [John 10:10](#)).

The question is do you believe God is Good and desires to download His visions and plans for you?

Second, we have learned that to receive a clear vision, we need to take time to fast and pray. It is in these special times when we deny ourselves of foods, electronics, television shows, social media, or streaming platforms that sets us apart to be able to clear our heads and really focus on the Lord.

Will you set aside some time even this week following reading this e-book to fast and pray?

Third, we have learned the importance of reading the Bible every day so that we can be more open to hearing the Lord speak to us and confirm a Scripture for our vision.

Will you begin to read the Word of God daily, especially during your time of fasting?

As a matter of fact, I actually have been turning the Scriptures into my prayers.

Fourth, we have learned the importance of writing down the vision and all the ideas, including the Scriptures that we sense the Holy Spirit is giving us.

Will you write down all the ideas, vision, and Scriptures you begin to receive and then start working out the process mentioned in Steps 4 & 5?

Fifth, we have learned the importance of clarifying and refining the vision and ideas. This is where things may feel difficult and “hard work”, but this also is where vision becomes established. We begin to take action steps and see it happening!

Let me pray for you now:

Our Gracious, Good God and Father, I pray a special blessing upon this special person today. Lord, in Jesus' Name, fill this person with purpose, hope, joy, peace, and fresh vision! Fill this person with the Holy Spirit and give him or her the grace to come to You in faith to seek You for fresh vision. Help this person have the grace and faith to believe Your Holy Word that You are good, and to set aside some special time to fast and pray. Then Lord, download fresh vision and a plan for them. Thank You Lord for blessing them now, in Jesus' Mighty Name I pray. AMEN!

Now, if you have any questions about this topic or about the book, *[The Big 5!](#)* or any other topic, please just email me at: [DrGilbert@EmPowered-Living.org](mailto:DrGilbert@EmPowered-Living.org)

If you would like to know more about our non-profit ministry, EmPowered Living International Ministries, visit our website: [www.EmPowered-Living.org](http://www.EmPowered-Living.org)

If you are interested in invited Dr. Gilbert or Mary Beth Gilbert to speak at your church, conference, retreat, or other venue, please contact them at: [DrGilbert@EmPowered-Living.org](mailto:DrGilbert@EmPowered-Living.org)

God BLESS You!

