

What Do You See in Your Future?

(1Corinthians 9:24-27)



How can having a biblical vision of our future help us live for Christ effectively?

- Biblical vision = a mental picture of a preferred future according to God's Kingdom plan
- Purpose – What business are you in?
- Core Values – What are your non-negotiables?
- Vision – What does your future look like? The big picture of your life.

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1. It can help us see what we are living for has eternal value. (1Cor 9:24-26).

1Corinthians 9 is all about Paul living and serving as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He labored for the gospel in order to save lost souls. But, he was misunderstood, criticized, and persecuted throughout his ministry life. What for?! Why would he keep going?

We it was for something of eternal value – serving God's purpose of saving lost souls and building Christ's church, ... and ultimately, receiving his reward from Christ. That was his life vision.

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1Cor 9:24-27. The Apostle Paul lived in pursuit of his eternal life vision.

²⁴ Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. ²⁵ Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. ²⁶ So I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. ²⁷ Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

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Phil 3:13-14

¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, ¹⁴ I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

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2Tim 4:6-8

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.

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1. It can help us see what we are living for has eternal value. (1Cor 9:24-26).

- Isthmian Games, 600-foot race
- All Christians can win the Christian race.
Christian race = (1) building Christ's church by saving souls, (2) defeating the Devil's scheme of destroying people & preventing them from coming to Christ
- We may have other life-visions for our families, careers, etc.
- But, God has a biblical life vision for all of us – Christ's return & our eternal life with Christ in God's heavenly kingdom

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1Cor 15:51-58. Christ's return

⁵¹ Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. ⁵⁴ When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

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1Cor 15:51-58. Christ return

Death has been swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ Where, death, is your victory?

Where, death, is your sting?

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

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1Thess 4:14-18. Christ's return

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For we say this to you by a word from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

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Rev 21:1-2. God's new heaven and new earth

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

² I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

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2. It can help us endure through tough times as Christians. (1Cor 9:25,27)

- "Competes" – translating the Greek word that gives us "agonizes."

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1Cor 9:24-27

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- "Competes" – translating the Greek word that gives us "agonizes"
- Paul endured very tough times for the sake of Christ & the gospel (2Cor 11:21-29). Yet, his biblical life vision helped him endure through them all.

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2Cor 11:22-29

²¹ But in whatever anyone dares to boast—I am talking foolishly—I also dare: ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? I'm talking like a madman—I'm a better one: with far more labors, many more imprisonments, far worse beatings, many times near death.

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2Cor 11:22-29

²⁴ Five times I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. ²⁶ On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, and dangers among false brothers; ²⁷ toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing. ²⁸ Not to mention other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

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- My biblical life vision in vivid images
e.g. Morgan Fremont's experience (a missionary and seminary professor)



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- My biblical life vision in vivid images
e.g. My grandma's response to the gospel on her death bed



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Our Christian lives are being pulled down by the world's gravity of worldliness, temptations, and sins. The biblical vision of God's Kingdom and our rewards from Christ is like the rocket engine that pushes us through the world's "gravitational pull" and send us heavenward to God.

Let us always hold on to our God-given biblical life vision in all circumstances.

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Sharing & Praying Together

- What keeps you going as a Christian when being a faithful Christian seems so difficult -- boring, pointless, irrelevant, troublesome, unpopular, marginalized, disrespected, politically incorrect, unscientific, anti-cultural, ...?
- What keeps you going when all odds are against you including your own discouragement? What is your biblical life vision as a Christian that keeps you going?

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