

Pursuing Your Dreams and Vision

Dear Friend,

As we get older, disappointment after disappointment can pile upon each other until we become so disillusioned we are incapable of dreaming. As a result we start living in a hopeless rut called life. Such an existence has little or no expectations. Such a rut is actually a grave with both ends knocked out.

The reason we often lose our ability to have vision for the future is that somewhere along the line we have allowed our learning to be a result of the retaining of negative experiences or unmet expectations rather than a focusing upon the good and the positive.

Paul in Philippians 4:13 said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This involves allowing the Holy Spirit to help us rediscover the idealism of youth and at the same time learn from our mistakes without being paralyzed by them. Jesus emphasized the need for a childlike faith that dared to believe in spite of the obstacles or disappointments.

How do we go on living in a world intoxicated by its lust for power without becoming disillusioned to the point where we no longer dream or have hope? God's response to this world that is intoxicated by its lust for power, is powerlessness. God chose to enter into human history as hope wrapped in a little baby. In this tiny little powerless baby, who is completely dependent on its parents, we discover hope in the midst of our disappointments and the ability to dream again. That is the mystery of the incarnation. God became human, to break through the walls of power in total weakness and in the most hopeless of situations place a vision within our hearts. How does the story end? On a cross, where the same human person hangs naked with nails thru his hands and feet.

The powerlessness of the manger has become the powerlessness of the cross. People jeer at him, laugh at him, spit in his face and shout: "He saves others, he cannot save himself! If he is the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him" (Mathew 27: 42).

Jesus is the celebration of hope, which He proved through His resurrection from the dead. His coming was prophesied to bring a social revolution where his Kingdom would turn things upside down:" The mighty would be brought low, the rich sent away empty, the poor exalted, the hungry satisfied" (Luke 1: 52-53).

Jesus identified himself with the weak, the outcast, the downtrodden; the ones who have lost their ability to dream. His Kingdom undermines all economic systems that reward the rich and punish the poor. Jesus gives hope to the helpless, hurting and homeless. In (Luke 6: 24-25) Jesus declared, "Woe to you that are rich for you have received your consolation." Woe to you that are full now for you shall hunger. He sets free those whose only dreams consisted of getting more money and things. Luke 12:15 says, "Take heed and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Because of the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ no matter how poor, homeless or sick you may be, you can dare to dream again of life now and for all eternity. You can have hope in spite of your failures because Christ is risen.

As we get older and our bodies get weaker it becomes increasingly critical that we are fully persuaded that God is able to make our impossible dreams a reality. Moses had to learn this as he was called forth at the age of eighty to deliver the children of Israel from captivity. Abraham had to accept the fact that God was able to make him the father of a great nation when he was over ninety years of age. Romans 4:21 says that Abraham was "being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised."

If you are going to accomplish that which God has called you to do you also must be fully persuaded that God is able to make your impossible dreams and visions come true. You must accept the words that Paul declared in Eph. 3:20 when he stated, “now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.”

In order to understand this power at work in us we must know what it means to be in Christ Jesus. II Cor. 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

This power is a result of repenting of your sins and committing your life to Jesus and living daily under His direction. As a result you are not just reformed, rehabilitated or reeducated, but you are recreated (a new creation) living in union with Jesus Christ. “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Col. 2:6, 7).

The time has come for us to dream the impossible dreams and know in the depths of our being that God loves us and will meet every need.

Dreaming the impossible dream and pursuing your vision is the fuel and the energy that creates action. It is the compelling vision that changes the world.

In Proverbs 29:18 we read, “where there is no vision the people perish.” This means they are unable to focus. Without vision we lose the focus that helps us to be more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us.

God has rekindled in my heart a vision to complete a job He gave us years ago. I know we can complete this job as we trust in God daily. It is His power and provision which makes it possible for us to be “more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us” (Romans 8:37).

We have been in the wilderness long enough. After years of victories, defeats, challenges, opportunities and disappointments I believe we need to let the vision God has given move us into the promised land.

For forty seven years we have had a vision burning in our hearts at the New Life Evangelistic Center. This vision goes far beyond the provision of food, shelter and other emergency assistance, as important as that mission is. It involves turning lonely, lost, hurting and homeless people into being leaders in the Kingdom of God. Second Corinthians 5:17 sums this vision up when it says, “If anyone be in Christ they are a new creation. The old has passed away and the new has come.”

One of the greatest privileges God has given me is to witness lives being transformed through the grace of Jesus Christ. What a blessing it has been to work side by side with these individuals in God’s Kingdom Dream Team who are a part of the NLEC training program.

This team by the grace of God, continues to daily achieve the impossible as these new creations in Christ operate radio and TV stations, maintain the NLEC shelters and farms, host renewable energy fairs, plus assist hundreds of hurting and homeless individuals daily through the love of Jesus Christ.

This forty seven year old vision now extends from Mid America to as far away as the country of India. When the Spirit of God moves upon the homeless prodigal sons and daughters awakening them from their “pig pens of life”, the Holy Spirit knows that it can direct these hurting individuals to 806 N. Jefferson in Springfield, MO or the City of Refuge in Kakinada, India.

At these locations, along with the other NLEC shelters and training centers including Joplin, Potosi, Van Buren, Columbia, New Bloomfield, and Overland MO throughout Mid America and Southern India, and Nigeria the hurting and homeless experience the love of Jesus in word and deed. This New Life Community, although it is commonly referred to as the training program, is actually the Kingdom Dream Team that God is raising up at this hour to provide refuge and help to the lost and the lonely.

In April 2017 all of us who are a part of this NLEC Kingdom Dream Team, experienced a major testing of our vision. This happened when the city issued a cease and desist order for the 1411 Locust building. During this time of testing God is trying to teach us deeper truths about Himself, His purposes and His promises.

Not only must we fight to reopen the shelter at 1411 Locust but we must also have a vision for how New Life can assist local churches to open shelters and resist local government's attempts to keep them from directly providing for the poor and homeless according to the mandates of scripture.

Presently all over America too many people are being left alone, depressed and homeless. These hurting individuals need to know that there is hope and that God has a purpose for their lives. According to Scripture the people of God should be doing this.

Now we must challenge local churches to join us in sharing the gospel by seeing that no one should have to sleep outside and that every church member can discover the joy and purpose that comes from helping others.

Believing that the provision of shelter is a function of worship we must now directly resist those principalities and powers that want to stop the gospel of Jesus Christ from being shared in word and deed. We must continue to be a bridge between those in the pews and God's homeless children on the streets.

Please pray for the army of prayer warriors, volunteers and donors that are now needed at New Life Evangelistic Center. Daily NLEC must continue to stand up against the evil forces which desire to seek, kill and destroy the broken lives of the homeless and hurting along with the vision God has given us.

The New Life community is a community in solidarity with the hurting and homeless. We are a community of resistance to the spirit of materialism and commercialism which has paralyzed the revolutionary teachings of Jesus in the lives of so many. The NLEC Staff have learned from over forty seven years of community living that the abundant life means reducing the distance between ourselves and the oppressed. Daily we have the opportunity to meet the resurrected Christ in the life of each homeless, hungry and hurting person we come in contact with. These are the brothers and sisters that the condominium owners consider a nuisance. They are the ones that many are tired of helping, loving, feeding, funding and living near.

The New Life Evangelistic Center is continuing to seek God on how it may be a sanctuary for the disinherited even when it is becoming increasingly difficult to follow the scriptural mandates to shelter the homeless and hurting. Yet, we have no choice. This is what Jesus has told us to do. He has promised that He will "never leave us nor forsake us." Now we must believe Him and be faithful in all that He has called us to do.

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is at hand. This is the time for members of the body of Christ to arise and join the New Life Evangelistic Center as it works to share the hope that is provided by our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us dedicate ourselves to helping those in need discover the joy and fulfillment that comes from being a part of the Kingdom Dream Team. Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring in the lonely and homeless into the NLEC training programs and that we may continue to be a bridge between the man and the woman in the street and those in the pews.

People helping people is what this vision is all about. It involves the lonely church members and the homeless experiencing what it is to become leaders in the work of Christ. Will you join them at this time of not only great need but great opportunity?

In the battles we encounter daily, let us never forget to put on the full armor of God as we take up the sword of the Word and the weapon of Prayer (Eph. 6:10-20). As Walter Wink writes, "When we pray, we are not sending a letter to a celestial White House where it is sorted among piles of others. We are engaging in an act of co-creation, in which one little sector of the universe rises up and becomes translucent, incandescent—a vibratory center of power that radiates the power of the universe."

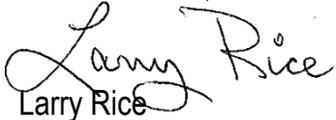
Now let us rise up from the beds of defeat, knowing that "this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he (or she) who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:4,5). Now the time has come for us to stop worrying and pray fully persuaded that God has everything under control and that "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

Let's take another look at Abraham who accepted the impossible dream when God placed it in his heart and, "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.'" (Rom. 4:18-22).

I want to encourage you to dare to believe knowing that Jesus is able to save you and answer your prayers. Remember God is able to deliver you from the fiery trials and strengthen you. Scripture is filled with one promise after another along with example after example of how God is able. Let Him show you now by accepting by faith that, "...He is able to do exceedingly above what you can even ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

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Yours in Christ,


Larry Rice