

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS INDIVIDUALS CONCERNING THE VISION

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I read a word from the book by Oswald Chambers that I just wanted to share with you. He was talking about vision. It stuck with me for a couple of weeks, and I have been meditating upon it. [The scripture he made reference to] is Acts 26:19, where Paul was speaking, and I believe it was to King Agrippa, and he says, "*I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.*"

This is Oswald Chambers—I am reading this from his book. He said, "**If we lose the vision, we alone are responsible, and the way we lose the vision is by spiritual leakage. If we do not run our belief about God into practical issues, IT IS ALL UP WITH THE VISION GOD HAS GIVEN.**" (Finished! He is saying it is finished if we do not apply those things in our practical experience.)

**"The only way to be obedient to the heavenly vision is to give our utmost for God's highest, and this can only be done by continually and resolutely recalling the vision. The test is sixty seconds of every minute, and sixty minutes of every hour, not our times of prayer and devotional meetings."**

Do you know what He is saying? He is saying that in our walk in everyday life, in every minute of every day, that **this** is the place in which we are strengthened with respect to the vision; and you get into a problem if you think you are strengthened in your time of prayer—although you are—or in your meetings. But if you pray for thirty minutes, or an hour, or ten minutes a day, and you have a meeting for one hour twice a week, what happened to all the rest of the hours?

He goes on to say, "**Though it tarry, wait for it. We cannot attain to a vision; we must live in the inspiration of it until it accomplishes itself. We get so practical that we forget the vision. At the beginning we saw it but did not wait for it; we rushed off into practical work, and when the vision was fulfilled, we did not see it. Waiting for the vision that tarries is the test of our loyalty to God. It is at the peril of our soul's welfare that we get caught up in practical work and miss the fulfillment of the vision.**

**Watch God's cyclones. The only way God sows His saints is by His whirlwind. Are you going to prove an empty pod? It will depend on whether or not you are actually living in the light of what you have seen. Let God fling you out, and do not go until He does. If you select your own spot, you will prove an empty pod. If God sows you, you will bring forth fruit.**

**It is essential to practice the walk of the feet in the light of the vision."**

Now, I remember that somebody was talking about practicing the presence of God. Have you tried it? I tried it. It works! The problem is that I can get caught up instead in all the busyness of the day, the pressures of hell—business! Busyness! And do you know, you can say, "Yes, Oh yeah, I know, you are busy. Nobody can get you on the phone. I mean, you are so busy—your busyness is monumental! We hear about it all the time." But, your busyness can be to you as my busyness is to me.

I came into the door here, and the Lord spoke to me, and He said, "*...the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*" Now, why do you suppose that He said that to me? Was it because I have overcome in all those areas and I have been walking in light and righteousness? Absolutely not! It is because I am struggling with them!

"*...the cares of this world....*" Everybody has cares. "What am I going to eat today? What am I going to eat tomorrow? How am I going to pay my bills?" Cares! Cares! Cares!

"*...the deceitfulness of riches....*" Do you know that riches are deceitful? They tell you that you are in a place you are not in. They are liars! Money is a liar! I see guys with big time chips, with money up to here. They can write a check for anything they want. They think they are in a place they are not in, and they think that in the end, somehow,

someway, they are going to maintain their position of wealth and prosperity and dignity. Liar!

"...and the lusts of other things entering in...." The marvelous thing is that, when Jesus said this (Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:19), He did not qualify it as lust for the big things like houses, land, red trucks, and things like that. He does not say any of that. They can be things as minute as position, or sibling rivalry. "Mom always liked you best!" All of those things...lust for other things—they have the power to choke out the thing that God has given to us.

**What Oswald Chambers is saying is that the responsibility to encourage the vision is yours, on the personal level!** Do you know what that does? That wipes out the ability for the pastor, the elder, the teacher, the prophet, and the apostle to be accountable for your lack. If you lack, it has not been because you have not been given! It is because what has been given has not been properly appropriated. Alleluiah! If you are still wallowing in your weaknesses of thirty years ago, or twenty years ago, or ten years ago, it is not because God has been aware and has not sent the Word. Alleluiah! Do you understand? (There are complaints!)

Oh brethren, you should not be whipped. I am telling you, God has a vested interest in our ability to overcome. You know, the funny thing is, if we think we are overcoming and we are not, wouldn't we want somebody to tell us?

How many of us feel that we are on the cutting edge of overcoming? How many of us would **like** to be on the cutting edge of overcoming? Alleluiah! Then we just need to begin to appropriate the Word. **I mean, God has given us the Word, and do you know what He says? He says, "Shake yourself from the dust of the earth." You have your own dust, and I have my own dust. You cannot shake my dust, I cannot shake your dust, but together we can begin to shake, by faith, the dust that has encumbered us, and to begin to encourage the vision!**

Do you have a vision? He said, "Where there is no vision the people perish." I have a vision that one day I am going to walk into this place, and it is going to be busting at the seams! There will be lame, and halt, and broken people, and you are going to begin to walk by and touch them, "In the Name of the Lord Jesus, be made whole!" Alleluiah! Man, can you see yourself being used of God? "Loose him, loose him! Give his eyes sight that he might see, Lord!"

Oh, Alleluiah! I have an expectation. Listen, I have not been there yet, but God gives you a little foretaste. I remember James and Veronica

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in Port Harcourt, and their daughter. She had a 104-degree temperature. She was flaming hot—diagnosed with malaria. Death sentence! They stopped the meeting and said, "Pray for her."

Do you know what is the first thing I think of? "I have nothing. I have nothing." So, I grabbed her legs down at her feet, hoping somebody else that had something would pray.

Well, you know, God is faithful. He knows who has nothing and who has something. The man began to pray, and as he prayed, my nothing turned into something. Alleluiah! "*We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*" (2 Corinthians 4:7). If your vessel is earthen, glory to God! The excellency is of God! The gift that you have is not you; it is God in you, as we begin to move by faith.

Do you know that I preach the Word by faith? I know that men prophesy by faith; they lay hands by faith; they teach by faith; they rebuke by faith. Not by sight, not by experience, but by the unction! You know what? If you go to bed, you ought to start dreaming "by faith." Alleluiah! "Covering, Lord Jesus! Let this mind—if it is going to dream, let it be a spiritual dream! Let the power of the blood overshadow this fellow!"

Glory to God! I go into the prison by faith. Men are saved by faith! Do you know what I know? I am telling you, brethren, shake yourself! Get up and shake yourself. Start practicing the presence of God. When you are in a place where everything seems to be straining and stressing against your ability to communicate and to hear from God, begin to stand up and to say, "God, I need the holy presence of the Living God. I need You to talk to me, and I am not moving from this place."

He comes in! He said (in Jeremiah 29:13), "When you seek Me with **all** of your heart you will find Me." It is almost like, there has to be a certain sense of desperation. **All your heart.** All your mind!

When I grabbed hold of that sick baby and we prayed, I felt the power of God in her legs. It is like when you grab onto a hot water heater. You can tell you have hot water because it starts cold and you let go, because all of a sudden that surge of heat comes and you know you have hot water. Well, it was the reverse. Her legs were so hot, they were hot to the touch, and when they rebuked the fever, I felt like cold water came down her little leg. Oh, my goodness, do you think there was not some sort of war cry! I mean, God moved at the word of a man, and broke the yoke of hell because He wanted to prove to those people there that God rules in the lives of the believers! He rules in the lives of men! The God

Whom we serve, the God Who has selected you out of the peoples of the earth and Who has put within you His Spirit, for the purpose of demonstrating to a dark and dying world the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to regenerate men and change them forever!

I want to be changed! I am tired of Peter. As much as you think I like him, I do not like him! I am sick of him raising his head! "God! Who is going to deliver me from this body of death?"

I am telling you, brethren, the first part of having a vision is being accountable for the vision. I want to reiterate something. God spoke to me about this building. He said that I would know where to put it, and I would know how to build it. He would pay for it, and He would fill it. Now, you could sit there and say, "Well, it ain't filled." Well, let me tell you, it is more filled than it was before you got here. It depends on what you think about "filled," because when I started there might have been nine people. Well, it does not take much to figure out that there are more than nine today, or twenty. But it is not filled to overflowing. Why? It is languishing. Do you understand?

He said that it would be a place of training. It would be a place of worship, and it would be a place of refuge. Noah took a long time to build that ark, but in the end, there were eight people who were very grateful for his diligence.

It said, "By faith, Moses feared God..." Isn't that funny? By faith, he was afraid! Isn't that marvelous?

We may not be in the place where we are finished, but we need to grab hold of the vision on an individual basis. It is not enough for one or two to have a specific vision. So the question is, how much has it done for you? Do you have the vision? If you do not have it, you need to ask God to give it to you. "Lord, I need a vision because the Word says that, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' Lord, If I have no vision, then by virtue of the definition that You have brought, I am perishing, and I do not want to perish any more! Let me hear it. Let me appropriate it. Let me run it over in my mind." Do you know what happens when you see a person with a vision that has been appropriated? They are not a bump on a spiritual log. They are moving!

I started reading a book about this woman named Darlene and her husband's name was Russell. I do not know what their last name is, but I have heard the woman's testimony. I cannot hear it without weeping for my lack. I would be ashamed to stand up on the same platform with her. Do you understand? She was in New Guinea at the time of the beginning of WWII, and she lost her husband. I just read the part in her

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book, where she said that her husband Russell said to her, "God said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" He said this to his wife as they loaded him on a prisoner truck, and she said that she never saw him again.

**Her testimony is about the power of God to sustain her in a very uncomfortable and distasteful situation, and somehow we think that somehow we are going to miss that. We are not going to miss it. God is preparing us for the things that are coming, and it is incumbent that we have a vision that is beyond our personal sphere of influence.**

Oswald Chambers, in this word we have read from his book, brings the thing back to you and I. Do you know, if you are accountable for my situation, then I have very little that I can do about it, but the point he is making is that I am accountable for my own situation. He said that if we lose the vision, we alone are responsible; and the way we lose the vision is by spiritual leakage, where that which you have begins to go out onto the ground. Get hold of that which you have received and plug the leaks.

Do you know how we have leakage? Attitudes! Perceptions! Mind sets! Desires! Those things cause the Word to leak out.

I had a young man that was working for me. He said, "I hate sweeping!" I said, "That's wonderful. God sent you to me to learn how to love to sweep." Alleluiah! "Brother, get yourself a broom and fasten your hands tight to it." He says, "When am I going to stop sweeping?" "When you don't want to stop!" Alleluiah! "When you come to a place where you love to sweep, and if I give it to somebody else, you say, 'Oh, no! Don't let him sweep! Let me sweep!'"

That is an overcomer! You know, life is not about doing what we want to do—it is doing what we are supposed to do—what we are called to do, and what God has equipped us to do. God has equipped you and I in the midst of the Church that we might fulfill, "*the heavenly vision.*"

I have a vision. I can articulate the vision. I can tell you what my vision is. If you have the time, I can tell you. Alleluiah! My question is, "Can you tell me what your vision is?" And if you cannot, "Why not?" And if you cannot, "What are you going to do about it?" Because the Bible says, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish....*"

Do you know, we have a corporate vision for this place—that it is going to be a house of refuge, and that it is going to be a house of worship. Alleluiah! That it is going to be a house of learning. Glory to God! It only begins to move as we as a people begin to appropriate the vision on an individual basis, and we begin to move according to the Word of the Lord. He said, if it does not come, what are you supposed to do? "Well, I knew that wasn't God! These high-minded chumps, taking all our money...." *"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry"* (Habbakuk 2:3). He said, if it does not come, then we are to wait for it! If you believe strong enough that it is God, wait until God manifests Himself in the midst of the vision—so that it does not come to the place that you have to repent openly for your hasty words. The Word says, *"Touch not mine anointed...."*

Did you notice how God watches over His anointed? Do you know that the guy who came up and told David that he killed Saul was a liar? Do you know that Saul killed himself? He fell on his own sword. His armor bearer said, "There is no way that I am going to touch you. No way!" Saul killed himself, and this boy came to David and said, "I snuffed Saul today. Oh yes!" And David said, "How is it that you were not afraid to touch God's anointed? Fall on him—Kill him!" His own word was his death sentence.

**Saul was wicked, he was reprobate, and he was turned away. We heard it in 1 Samuel last night. He said, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king over Israel" (1 Samuel 15:23). However, that did not give any man the authority to put forth his hand and bring judgment to Saul on God's behalf. I am telling you, we need to watch very seriously the things we are saying to one another, and how we are picking apart this or that.**

**Brother, sister, get yourself on your knees. Humble yourself. Go to God, ask Him to give you the vision, and begin to walk by faith in the segment that you possess. And you will begin to see a body that is galvanized by the Spirit of God, and that no devil in hell can come against!**

Alleluiah! We have been segmented! Fragmented! Independent! Autonomous!

You know what those words mean, don't you? It means we go our own way, without any thought or worry about what anybody else is saying, because "I am my own king!" It says in Judges 21:25 that, *"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was*

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*right in his own eyes.*" If everybody is doing what is right in their own eyes, it brings a definition that there is no king.

Jesus is going to be the king. Do you know, He said (in Romans 14:11) that every knee is going to bow, and every tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father? And I believe that some of them are going to confess and bow on the escalator that goes into hell, and the devils in hell are going to be on their knees and they are going to be saying, "He is king!" Do you know why? Because He is.

Independence, and autonomous. Lack of accountability. There are some that have gone on before us who have died and have paid a price, that we might be in the place that we are in. You have not died and you did not pay the same price, but you are in the place by virtue of their dying and paying the price! Alleluiah.

My Bible says I am not my own. That means that you are not your own either. Although, in America we pretty much move as if we are our own. And I believe that God is calling a halt to it, and I believe that is why, in one measure and form, that He is bringing forth His rulership in the Church.

Elders! Not pastor, not mini Pope, not one-man rule—but a group of men. It is in the sixth chapter of the book of Acts, brethren. The apostles called together the brethren and said, "It is improper that we should get involved in these things, so choose out from among yourselves seven men, filled with the Holy Ghost and of good report, that we might appoint...." They did not say to them that they were to "appoint," but that they were to "choose." That was their portion. God brings a governmental exercise in the midst of the Church that He might be Lord over all!

We do what we want, we go where we want, we go when we want. We do with our own money what we want to do, without any thought, without any consequence. Brethren, I am telling you, that there are consequences! Independence brings with itself a consequence. Independent action brings independent judgment.

You know, the Bible says that the older women ought to teach the younger women how to love their husbands, and how to be keepers at home. Do you know what that says to me? It says that the younger women, by course of nature, do not know how to do those things. They may pretend that they do, but they do not, and the fact that you have had babies does not make you a baby expert. God recognized that!

I have raised children from babies, to semi-babies, to two's, and three's, and four's, and five's. I have had teenagers. Adults. I have an experience that you do not have! Some of these women here have an experience that some of you younger ladies do not have. You are not the first person to breast feed a baby; you are not the last. You are not the first one that is going to get hammered; you are not the last. You are not the first one that has to deal with childhood diseases, you are not the last—but there is someone that is in the midst of you that has an experience that you do not have, and you do not have the right to put it off as if it is nothing! It is foolishness!

Humility. I am telling you brethren, those guys in Canaan that came out of Egypt, God said that they should tell them (the younger ones) of their experience. "Aw, he's just an old man. He's living in the past!" Listen, I have an experience that you have not had, but I want to tell you about it—that you might be warned, that you might be encouraged, that you might be strengthened! Alleluiah! Somebody else has an experience that you have not had, that if you listen, you may not have. Glory to God! But we fight, as if it is encroaching on our place of personal preference. Well it is. That is the fact, because God is not interested in your personal preference as much as He is talking about, "*every joint supplieth*." There is the whole body, we all fit together as a part of the Body, but the head is Christ. We have not learned to move in that arena, and part of the reason is because we are resisting and insisting on our own autonomy!

Eighteen seems to be the watchword. "I'm eighteen..." You know why? I said it myself. I thought it in my mind. My dad came down to me and he goes, "You're playing basketball? I think you need a job!" Do you know what I thought in my mind? "Why doesn't he relax?" Guess what? When I got home that night, he pushed my food away from the table. He said, "I told you that you need a job. This will be your last meal that you will eat here without a job!" He said, "And when you sleep in the bed, it will be the last time your head hits this pillow with no job. I am telling you, those are the rules. Get out!"

So, I went out. "I'll show him!" Guess what? He showed me! It came to where I wished I had been back there eating those good meals instead of those greasy hamburgers! I did not prove anything except to myself. Alleluiah!

I am telling you, brethren, we need a critical assessment of the place that we find ourselves in today. It needs to be very objective, and do you know who gives the most objective assessment? The Holy Ghost! Go to God. Ask Him, with respect to yourself as an individual, what is your place in the whole scheme of things. And your vision—do you have one?

Can you articulate it? Can you explain it? You know, Jesus did not have any trouble explaining the Kingdom of God to any man, on their level! He had something. He had something from God.

Alleluiah! I hope, by the grace of God, that we can appropriate the Word, assess our position properly, and begin to move in the arena that God has called us to move in. Because, we sing the song very well and it sounds very good,

*"I was born to be Thy dwelling place,  
A home for the presence of the Lord.  
So, let my life now be,  
Separated unto Thee,  
That I might be  
What I was born to be."*

Amen? God bless you!

