

## **Power of Vision - Relationship Skills** **From our book Free To Be You <sup>1</sup>**

I want to plant a vision in your heart that will give you a powerful craving to strengthen your relationship with God.

A relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit will bring peace, freedom and prosperity of all kinds, and most of all, will bring you into an intimate real-time fellowship with Jesus. He will become more and more real to you; you will feel and hear Him speak to you on a regular basis. However, such a relationship requires some real discipline on your part. All relationships require discipline, but when it's all in place, relationships are the most satisfying things we can enjoy.

**The foundation of our relationship with God is death and resurrection. This includes not only Jesus' resurrection but ours as well. If we see ourselves in the process of trying to improve our lives by our own labors, we will fail. We need to see the truth that we have been crucified with Christ, but nevertheless we live by His resurrection in us. We are not the same old person in the process of change; we are new creations.**

**All that is written in this chapter is a gift from God by giving The Holy Spirit to inhabit us. Nevertheless, it is our responsibility to cooperate and with Him. It does require discipline on our part.**

**Vision brings discipline.**

"Where *there is* no revelation [vision], the people cast off restraint [discipline]; But happy is he who keeps the law" (Proverbs 29:18).

*The human psyche has been created to operate on vision, or in other words, hope.*

The first thing God said to Adam, as a way of blessing them, was to speak vision.

"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Genesis 1:28).

While this book is majoring on becoming free from the bondages that are manifested in ungodly lifestyles, you will see, as you read on, that the true bottom-line issue is improving your relationship with God. That and that alone will make you a free person.

Developing and improving your relationship with God requires discipline on your part. God has done everything, now it is your task to appropriate His wonderful work through an intimate relationship with Him.

**Discipline requires a vision as it is stated in Proverbs 29:18. Most people realize that in order to succeed a vision is needed.**

When a doctor gives you a medicine, you go through the discipline of taking it because you have a vision of being healed.

When you report for work each day, you do the work even if you do not like it, because you have a vision of being paid.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.isob-bible.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=61](http://www.isob-bible.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61) Link to books

When you go to the field and perform the hard task of reaping the harvest, you do it because you have a vision of eating.

I would like to cast a vision in your heart that I pray will cause you (and me) to become more disciplined with our relationship skills with God. Just look at the promises listed below for such discipline.

### **1. The vision for peace and freedom.**

**2 Peter 1:2 (Amplified Bible) says,**

"May grace (God's favor) and peace (which is perfect well-being, all necessary good, all spiritual prosperity, and freedom from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts) be multiplied to you in [the full, personal, precise, and correct] knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

Notice, all of these wonderful benefits come through knowing God personally.

### **2. The vision for godly prosperity.**

"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:2-4).

Notice, prosperity in temporal matters is a result of your soul's prosperity. The prosperity of your soul comes by maintaining an intimate relationship with God.

Prosperity in God's eyes is very different than the world's definition. God sees crucifixion as a success. He pre-ordained the crucifixion of Jesus for the salvation of whoever accepts it. He considers persecution, hardship, and sacrifice as success in His eyes. The important thing is not status, achievements, reputation, or profit. It is godly character and eternal fruit. The word prosperity in the New Testament means to have a good journey.

If the journey includes hardships one might say this is not a good journey. However if the Cross of Jesus converts that hardship into a resurrected blessing for you and the Kingdom of God, then indeed the journey was not only good, it was fantastic.

*"God's promises are like the stars; the darker the night, the brighter they shine.*

DAVID NICHOLAS"

### **3. The vision for intimacy; God becoming real to you.**

**Ephesians 3:17-19 (Amplified Bible) says,**

*"May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; [That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through*

*all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and [d]become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!"*

**Philippians 3:10** says,

*"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."*

Notice that God becoming real to you is mostly about His amazing love for you personally. It may be hard to imagine, but God compares His love for you as a bridegroom longing for His bride! Do you feel unworthy? Drop it. Your Bridegroom is longing for you!

#### **4. The vision to be like Jesus and be clean.**

**2 Peter 1:3-4** says,

*"as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"*

Notice in the above Scripture that “knowing” God will bring us everything we need for life (our temporal needs) and godliness (our character).

#### **5. The vision for fulfillment of your calling, purpose, and eternal rewards.**

**2 Timothy 1:9** says,

*"who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began"*

**Hebrews 11:6** says,

*"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"*

**2 Corinthians 5:10** says,

*"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"*

**1 Corinthians 9:25** says,

*"And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown"*

**Revelation 22:12** says,

*"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work"*

You may feel like purpose in life and eternal rewards are so far fetched compared to what you are experiencing now. You may feel like if you could just be healed from the inner wounds that are causing you pain that would be enough. The good news is that the two go together. Your healing in the present circumstances will bring God's best plan into your life for eternity.

I cannot explain everything about eternal rewards, but the Bible is clear about their existence. I do know that to abandon yourself totally to God in every area of your life is the ingredient God needs to bring you into His purpose, and thus eternal rewards.

T. Austin Sparks, an influential writer in the mid 1900s, covers this subject well in his book, Revelation of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> One small quote from his book makes this clear.

*"He is over all. And that brings, whether world persecution or not, it brings spiritual conflict, it brings tribulation into the life. It touches us everywhere, in our families, in our homes, in our businesses and everywhere this thing is touching us; if only, if only we would let go something, make some compromise, let down our standard, not be so utter for Christ. We'd have an easier time, it is possible, you can, CAN for the time being! But you cast away your crown."*

### **Vision from God brought Gideon from bondage to freedom, to purpose and prosperity.**

Gideon was living a defeated life as an Israelite until God gave him vision. He had a very low self-esteem because Israel's enemies had been prevailing. He had a wrong image of himself. God knew how His own power could and would change Gideon; however, He needed to change Gideon's own self-image. God spoke those things that were not as though they were. The more we fellowship with God, the more He is able to give us His accurate self-image of how He sees us. How He sees us is the truth, not how we feel about ourselves. That is hope, vision!

#### **Judges 6:12 says,**

*"And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, 'The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!'"*

Then in the next few chapters in Judges you will see that Gideon and God slowly but surely developed a deep personal relationship. That resulted in Gideon being clothed with the Holy Spirit and being able to hear God at a very intimate level. Then God used him to overthrow the enemy that had he and his people in bondage.

#### **Your task.**

I suggest that you meditate upon the Scriptures I listed above, speak them out, memorize them, and allow them to go deep into your heart and soul.

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpt From: T. Austin Sparks. "Revelation of Jesus Christ." iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/-HcGF.1>

Then begin to engage in the Relationship Skills as suggested in Appendix A. If you are just starting take small steps. These small steps will build up momentum in your relationship skills.

Momentum makes the next step easier. Think of an automobile, it takes less energy to move the vehicle from 25 miles per hour to 40 miles per hour than it does to move it from 0 to 10 miles per hour. This is called the law of inertia. In even simpler terms, inertia means, "A body in motion tends to remain in motion, a body at rest tends to remain at rest." Also, the body in motion tends to keep on the same course, while change requires great effort.

If you are "at rest" and not moving in your relationship skills with God, then use the energy of your discipline to get on the proper course. If you do not have the passion for this relationship, or the passion for the Word of God, then confess that to the Lord and ask Him to do a new work in you.

### **Relationship Skills**

**1. Make a firm decision to pursue the relationship.** Offer yourself completely to God. This is our task to complete the mighty blood covenant offered to us by an awesome God. When we were born again our "old self" was crucified and it died. We were given a new nature; we are now new creations, returned to "normal" because now the Mighty God dwells in us. It is Him and Him alone that lives in us! The only remnant of the "old self" is in our thinking process. We have to continually renew our minds to these facts.

As we do, we will not be so aware of the demands of the "old self," which are always selfish. That selfishness causes fear, anger, control over circumstances, and many other horrible feelings.

I like to do this. As my "self" rises up, I say to it, "Get back to the grave, you are dead! I am not going to engage in fear and worry. I am not going to have to be noticed and praised."

*Meditate on these Scriptures.*

**Romans 12:1, 2** says,

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

*2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

**Galatians 2:20** says,

*"20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

**Romans 6:6** says,

*"6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."*

**Matthew 6:33** says,

*“33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

**2. Take time to listen: You must take in His Word.** Words are blood covenant containers. The Word of God is Jesus Himself; it is not a book of promises to pick and choose from. The Word of God should be pursued as a regular and daily relationship skill and should be looked at as listening to your Lord, Jesus Himself. Ask Him to speak. The Word is supernatural and it produces faith in the same way natural food produces energy. Jesus said that He is the true manna that gives eternal life. Write down what you feel He is speaking.

***Ways to discern whose voice you are hearing.***

God's voice: Affirms, corrects, direction (truth).

Satan's voice: Keeps us bound in failure with lies and condemnation.

Self's voice, or our flesh: justifies, rationalizes, denies and projects or blames others.

***Testing to see if we are hearing God's voice.***

Is it scriptural?

Does it glorify Jesus?

Is there a witness in my spirit?

Does it edify or tear down?

Does it produce freedom or bondage?

***Ways God speaks to us.***

The Bible. Revelation knowledge through the Holy Spirit.

The Body of Christ: Fellow believers, pastors, counselors. Be careful to not depend solely on this.

Quiet time: Holy Spirit's voice. (Psalm 139:23-24, 1 John 1:9).

Circumstances and situations in everyday life (Jeremiah 32:8).

Accountability Partner: Often it is wise to have a trusted friend who will be bold enough to hold you accountable for issues in your life.

**3. Take time to speak: Your words and prayer.** Two-way journaling and being gut-level honest is an important way to increase your relationship with God. Write down exactly how you feel. Honesty with your blood covenant partner Jesus will cause your sin to go on Him. You cannot and will not overcome any issue in life without this gut-level honesty. We suggest two-way journaling. This is a great way to allow the "flow" of the Holy Spirit to speak to you personal and intimate things. First, get in a quiet place, set your mind on Jesus, and begin to worship Him. You write down what you want to tell or ask Jesus. Then write down what you hear in your spirit. At first, there may be some mistakes, but through faith and practice, He will be real to you.

***Repentance is extremely important. Without repentance you will not be able to hear God speak.***

**Proverbs 1:23-24** Amp. Bible says,

*If you will turn (repent) and give heed to my reproof, behold, I [Wisdom] will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make my words known to you.*

***Repentance is part of a healthy prayer life.***

**Matthew 26:41** says,

*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

The visions I have listed in this chapter must be made personal to you. You can try to know them intellectually, but the Holy Spirit must eventually light them during an intimate time with the Lord.

Even then we are constantly tempted by our flesh nature. Satan sees that and strategizes how to cause us to lose our vision by having the temptation become real sin.

The word “enter” that Jesus used in Matthew 26:41 is inferred in the Strong’s translation as to actually be overtaken by that temptation. It even infers Satan’s activities. Jesus was tempted, but He prayed so as not to have that temptation become sin.

So prayer is absolutely vital. You will not make it without prayer. There are many types of prayer. Sure we must ask, worship, be thankful, but we also must confess our sins. That even includes our temptations so that they do not actually “enter” us and thereby cut off our living relationship with Jesus at least for the time being. I have learned to simply confess all my temptations as if they were sin just to make sure. It has really been powerful!

***Gut level repentance is a key to maintaining the intimacy with God.***

Often we try to please God by our performance in doing good and even godly things. While that has its place and our efforts have good motives, it is usually not enough to maintain the intimacy. Colossians chapter 2 and 3 give us some ideas about this.

**Colossians 2:23** says,

*“23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”*

At look at Colossians 3 gives us a better way. It is to “put off the old man” and “put on the new man,” that is Christ who is in us. We can only do that by confessing our sin, and even our temptations to sin, and our ungodly behavior to Him. That intimacy is the only way to “put on Christ.”

Keeping the honesty with God through your honest repentance is like keeping a marriage relationship strong. We must “take up our cross daily,” and sacrifice ourselves to God. Remember the great sacrifice He made for us just to have the intimacy.

**4. Take time to speak: His Words.** The antagonist, Satan, and his assigned demons constantly are on task to come against your effort to relate to Jesus and to overcome. Only you can resist them. Jesus gave you the authority and responsibility to speak His Word

against them. God told Joshua in Joshua 1:8, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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."

***One idea for doing this is:***

Read Psalms and Proverbs by the day. You should read ALOUD five Psalms every morning. Use the system of the calendar, i.e., on the 3rd of the month read Psalms 3, 33, 63, 93 and 123. Also read Proverb 3. In this system the student will read all Psalms and Proverbs every month. Using this system renews the mind, speaks the Word to Satan, and allows the suffering student to relate his/her emotions to the Psalmist's. Provisions can be made for months with 31 days, and for Psalm 119.

Also be sensitive to the Holy Spirit Who will give you a Word of warfare for a particular situation.

**5. Meditation.** Meditation on the Word is very important and extremely valuable. I quoted Joshua 1:8 above which tells us to meditate day and night. Psalm 1:2-3 says, "But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."

Meditation on the Word displaces and replaces your carnal thinking which is a major feat. It also allows the Word to get down deep into your heart. The word meditate is related to a cow chewing her cud. She chews it, swallows it, regurgitates it, and then starts the process over again, and again, and again. This will allow the Word to go deeply into your heart, and will give the Holy Spirit an opportunity to speak something personal to you from the Word. I believe that meditation on those Scriptures that deal with the Cross and resurrection of Jesus is extremely valuable, especially when we are going through trials and suffering.

**6. Fasting.** Fasting is an important discipline. There are many types of fasts, and I will not cover that subject here. The main advantage of fasting is that it denies the strongest desire of the flesh, to eat. In doing so one is able to hear the Holy Spirit better. Remember, the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, Galatians 5:17. I have read that when a person is hungry, even his/her natural hearing is better.

**7. Obey God.** Ask God to give you something simple, something small every day that you may obey. It may be just encouraging another, it may be not driving down the same street that fed your addiction; it may be confessing your sin to Him. It may be taking a thought captive, or forgiving someone, or perhaps giving a financial gift.

***This is a big thing!*** John 14:21-23 says that when we obey His Word that He will reveal more and more of Himself to us. Once you have "seen" Jesus, relationship with Him will no longer be a discipline, but it will be a passionate pursuit.