

**Teamwork in the Local Church**  
**Lesson Seven: God's Vision for the Church**  
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**Introduction: Every Local Church Should Have "Vision."**

- A. Every church needs "vision" – the faith to imagine and anticipate great things for the future of the church (cf. **Jer. 29:11**).
- B. God's vision for the church should be ours too! (e.g., **Acts 9:31**).
- C. Without vision, a church will become lukewarm or dead! (**Rev. 3:16, 1-2**).
- D. Vision provides for us the purpose and direction we need, instilling within us the zeal and confidence we require as the Lord's church (**Titus 2:13-14**).

**I. Man's Vision vs. God's Vision for the Church.**

- A. Let us avoid man-made visions which result in man-made churches (**Col. 2:8**).
  - 1. Man's vision of what the church should be is very different than God's (political /social agenda, entertainment, recreation, worldly, materialistic)
  - 2. Sadly, in some cases, man's vision for the church is to establish an exclusive social club that shuns "outsiders", the poor, or different races.
  - 3. Whenever people follow man's vision instead of God's, the church becomes something other than what the Lord intended (**Mat. 15:13-14**).
- B. We must commit ourselves to *God's* vision for the church (**Prov. 29:18**).
  - 1. Too often, churches follow opinions or ideas of men (e.g. best selling authors, church seminars) and "cast off the restraint" of God's word.
  - 2. Our church will be blessed *only if* we keep God's "vision" for our church in full view (i.e. God's revelation or Word).
  - 3. Only sowing "the seed" will result in genuine Christianity (**Luke 8:11**).

**II. What is God's Vision for the Church?**

- A. A church that is like His Son, Jesus Christ.
  - 1. The goal of every church should be: "*to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ*" (**Eph. 4:15b; cf. 1 Pet. 2:21**).
  - 2. Envision a membership that does not remain the same, but transforms into the image of Christ more and more as time goes on! (**2 Cor. 3:18**).
  - 3. Members are focused on the vision to be more like Christ! (e.g., **Heb. 4:15; Mat. 9:36; 15:36; 18:21ff; Lk 23:34; Mark 1:35; John 2:13-17**).
  - 4. To love more and more as Jesus loved (**John 13:34-35; 15:12-14**).
  - 5. A Christ-like church is a true light in this world of darkness (**Mat 5:16**).
- B. A church that continues to grow in the knowledge of the truth (**Col. 1:9-10; 2 Pet. 3:8; Acts 17:11**).
  - 1. Envision a church growing in the knowledge of God; what does it look like? (e.g., hungry for truth, eager to learn, studious, able to give an answer).
  - 2. More than any school or college, the church can be a place for "spiritual education" of her members!
- C. A church that is "*the pillar and support of the truth*" (**1 Tim. 3:15**).
  - 1. More than just students of truth, the church is to be *defenders* of the truth – to keep the truth at all costs, protecting it from the attacks of error.
  - 2. Preserving and upholding the truth is vital to transmitting the truth to future generations of Christians (e.g., **2 Tim. 1:5**).

3. Envision a church that does not compromise the truth in order to gain the world, that will not surrender truth at the cost of salvation (**Mt. 16:26**).
  4. Envision a church that will not yield to false teachers even for one hour in order to “get along” with others or “keep the peace” (**Gal. 2:4-5**).
  5. Defending the truth against error is a “burden” that Jesus places on each and every church (e.g., **Rev. 2:20-24**). *Let us fulfill that burden!*
- D. A church that is busy fulfilling her God given duties.
1. God has given every church a *spiritual* mission to complete!
  2. Envision the church fulfilling her God given duty to worship God in spirit and in truth (**John 4:23-24 cf. Mat. 15:8; Col. 2:23; 3:16-17**).
  3. Envision the church fulfilling her God given duty to evangelize and support the preaching of the gospel (**Mat. 28:18-20; Phil. 4:15-18**).
    - a. We devote ourselves to prayer, praying for “open doors of opportunity” to teach the lost (**Col. 4:2-3**).
    - b. Together, we maintain the vision that God will give “the increase” as we labor for Christ (**1 Cor. 3:6**).
  4. Envision the church fulfilling her God given duty to edify or spiritually build up the body of Christ (**1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:12, 16; cf. Acts 20:32**).
    - a. Envision a church in which members *go out of their way* to build one another up (**1 Thes. 5:11; Eph 4:29**).
    - b. True love is demonstrated in the church when *the number one concern* is one another’s *spiritual* welfare and growth!
  5. Envision the church fulfilling her God given duty to provide benevolence for God’s children who are in need (**Acts 2:44-45; 11:27-30; 2 Cor 8:1-5**).

### III. How Do We Maintain God’s Vision in the Church?

- A. Believe in God’s vision
1. Too often, brethren lacking patience give up on God’s vision and turn to man’s vision or ideas to “speed up” the process of “success.”
  2. If we put our faith in God and the power of His gospel and stick with *God’s plan*, we will in due season see it work in us! (**1 Thes. 2:13**).
- B. Continually teach and remind one another what our vision should be.
1. A promising future and strong hope for the church will be maintained by a steadfast commitment to the wisdom of God (**Prov. 24:13-14**).
  2. In a world where many churches have lost their sense of direction, we need to constantly remind one another what God’s vision for the church is.
- C. Do not live in the past, but reach forward to what lies ahead (**Phil. 3:12-14**).
1. A church that dwells on the past will lose sight of God’s vision.
  2. Critical to the success of every church is the ability to trust in God and move forward with God’s plans for the church.
- D. As a team, *every* member needs to offer some form of leadership to support God’s vision (e.g., example, initiate works, teaching, direction, planning, goals).

**Conclusion: Let Us Trust in God’s Vision for the Church: In everything we do as a church, let us follow His direction and trust in Him! (Prov. 3:5-6; 16:3).**