



A Biblical Vision (Part 1): "Imagine" Revisited

Dec 28, 2014

Text: Proverbs 29:15-18

- The ESV Study Bible says on these verses:
"Verses 15 and 17 both insist that parents should teach their children, and verses 16 and 18 both describe a society in upheaval. The chaos of a child out of control is comparable to the chaos of a people who have abandoned integrity and revelation. Verse 18 is notable in that it speaks of both prophetic vision and law. The teachings of wisdom are not opposed to either the prophets or the Torah. As Proverbs endorses the fear of the Lord (v1:7), so also it endorses the divine revelation of Scripture.
- In context, we understand that "prophetic vision," in Old Testament language means a WORD FROM THE LORD coming to a prophet who then speaks that Word and guides the people into the will of God.
- But I agree with the ESV Study here; this verse is applicable, maybe even more so, to those of us who have the completed Bible in our hands and access to the Will of God each and every day.
- And I also agree that much of what we see around us is akin to children out of control: persona and family chaos, the abandonment of biblical hotlines and integrity, and certainly an abandonment of the precepts of Scripture as divine revelation.
- So to be clear, the vision below (*Imagine*) isn't, in my opinion, from man. The proposed reality it casts is pulled from God's Word, and I believe is worth pursuing. May I ask you, "Who and what are you pursuing?"
- From years past, we've learned that embracing the vision God gives us for life and ministry in Scripture is very powerful. By its very nature:
 1. Vision gives us **direction**. Sets our path in life and helps us set goals.
 2. Vision drives our **motivation**. This keeps us from getting distracted by the small stuff.
 3. Vision helps us **prioritize** (focus). Helps us say no to wrong things and yes to right things.
 4. Vision builds our **faith**. If it is God's idea it will require God's power.
 5. Vision forces us to be **disciplined**. No one can walk in obedience without self-control.

Some Personal Thoughts:

1. CRCC, I must admit that when we set out to allow God to change our church according to His Word and build us "according to the pattern," I didn't realize the cost would be so high.
2. Having said that, I'm encouraged because I believe that God will **Reach, Teach, and Release** people from the bondage of sin.
3. However, I now realize that work is much more up to God than I thought years ago. All we can do is be obedient and **love**.
4. I'm at the point where I simply want to give God my "two fish and five loaves" (John 6:4-12), and see what He alone will do with it. What about you? 😊
5. **And I truly believe that Christ is building something precious...in us and across the world...something that reflects the purity of His heart and the blessedness of His plan rather than the drama and devastation we see in society.**
6. A few years ago, we dreamed how this might look, and wrote it down....
 - *Hab 2:2-3 ESV* And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. (3) For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end-it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

7. The language obviously comes from man, but we think the embedded vision flows from God's heart. May you be encouraged and know that if you decide to run, your labor will not in vain. (1 Cor 15:58)

Imagine Revisited

Imagine a person, totally in love with Christ and passionately grateful for His sacrifice at Calvary that redeemed them from sin. Imagine the priority in this person's life to "self-govern" according to Scripture...to line up every part of their life according to the precepts, principles, and patterns of the Bible...to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. Imagine their passionate pursuit of holiness. Imagine their willingness to die for Christ...

1. Any biblical vision begins with **Christ** and His **Gospel!** (Mark 1:15; Mark 16:15-15; 1 Cor 15:1-4)
2. One who is truly saved truly loves the God who alone is true! ☺ (Matt 22:36-38)
3. This part of the vision paints a picture of the gratefulness of one who has been redeemed! (Col 3:15; Heb 12:28-29)
4. This person is so overwhelmed at God's mercy and grace that he or she sees self-government (self-control) as an honor and obedience to Scripture as a loving response to a loving God, even unto death! (Matt 16:24-27)

Imagine a church of passionate worshippers who gather on the Lord's Day not for themselves, but for Christ and His glory and worship alone, with the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Imagine their love for God burning so hot they encourage each other, hold each other accountable, obey the Scriptures, and work to share the Gospel and make disciples both down the street and around the world. Imagine if their love for Christ caused them to fight against ungodliness, to protect marriage, to take care of widows and orphans, to fight for the unborn, and to work to eliminate oppression. Imagine a church that taught the Word systematically, that deepened their faith through biblically prescribed worship forms, and that kept families together during that most sacred time each week...

1. Can you see command for a regular, consistent, passionate gathering together of the Lord's people in Scripture? I can! (1 Cor 14:26; Col 3:16; Heb 10:25)
2. And don't miss the motive: for **Christ** alone! (Col 1:15-18)
3. Consider the nature of a New Testament church. Remember what we learned from 1 Corinthians: loving, accountable, holy, Gospel-sharing, disciple-making! (1 Cor 5, 6, 13)
4. Consider the nature outflow of the Gospel and the power of the Spirit in our midst: gifts being used, actions under control, giving towards widows and orphans, and fighting for "the least among us." (1 Cor 12, 14; Jam 1:27)
5. Consider what should occur on that day: the systematic preaching of Scripture, singing focused on Him, honest and loving fellowship, families sitting, singing, and serving together! (1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:1-5)

Imagine individuals and families who are free of financial shackles, who are debt free with growing savings, who invested, and who saw the multigenerational aspects of work and money. Imagine people who worked hard to fulfill the Dominion Mandate, which is the command to establish the rule of Jesus Christ in all areas and jurisdictions of life (the Family, the Church, and the State); the intentional expansion of His Kingdom by His subjects, the preaching of the Gospel, the discipling of

hearts, and the raising up of godly generations that declare, “Your Kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Imagine individuals and families with a Kingdom “work and money” vision...

1. This area seems to be a consistent problem for so many. But God’s Word speaks to it as well! What if we allowed the **Gospel** and the fear of the Lord to inform and direct our money habits? (Luke 16:13)
2. Imagine yourself debt free! Imagine the ability to more consistently direct resources towards that’s which honors Christ! Imagine having more freedom to educate and disciple your children! (Prov 22:6-7; Rom 13:8)
3. Imagine not being “mastered” by a card or being so bound to worldly systems? Imagine a true family economic vision that lives beyond your life if the Lord tarries? (Prov 13:22)

Imagine a man or husband or father who loves God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength. Imagine him working hard, with a long-term vision of where he and his family might be by God’s grace. Imagine his priestly pursuit of holiness, refusing to hurt himself and his family through his own unrighteousness, and his willingness to repent quickly when he fails. Imagine how he lovingly, tenderly, but firmly declares God’s Word in his home and in the community. If married, imagine how he loves his wife with his whole heart, how he thinks and says she’s beautiful, how he covers her, provides for her, protects her, and is literally willing to die for her. Imagine how he counts it an honor to lead her, disciple her, and work so that she always feels safe and secure. If a father, imagine a man who teaches and discipulates his children. Imagine how he protects them from ungodly influences, instructs them, and casts great vision for who they could be. Imagine how he prays with them and prepares them for adulthood, marriage, and family!

1. This part of the vision unveils God’s heart for **manhood**. How badly biblical manhood is needed! (Mark 3:37; 1 Cor 16:13-14)
2. A Godly man loves God! He desires righteousness! He loves and discipulates his family! (Prov 20:7; Deut 6:1-12;)
3. He is strong but tender, willing to repent. (1 Pet 3:7)
4. If he is married, he loves and cherishes His wife! He is priest and prophet, provider and protector! (Eph 5:25-29; 1 Tim 5:8)
5. If he has children, he casts great vision for who his children can be! (Ps 78:5-8; Hab 2:1-3)

Imagine a woman or wife or mother who loves God with all her heart, mind, soul, and strength. Imagine her working hard many times outside the house, but certainly at home. Imagine how she pursues God’s long-term vision for her life. Imagine how chaste she is, how virtuous, how modest! Imagine how she lovingly and tenderly instructs her children and others in the Word, much like Timothy’s mother and grandmother. If married, imagine how she loves and submits to her own husband as to the Lord. Imagine how she supports him, lifts him up with her words and actions, cares for him, and is willing to sacrifice her agenda to pursue his, seeing her role as a “helper” or a “helpmeet” as a honor bestowed upon her by God Himself! If a mother, imagine her tender care for her children, teaching them, loving them, and caring for them, casting great vision before them about who they could be in the Lord, praying for and preparing them for adulthood, marriage, and family.

1. This part of the vision points towards God’s heart for **womanhood**. How bad biblical womanhood is needed! (Prov 14:1; Titus 2:3-5)
2. She understands the power of her home and ensures it reflects God’s precepts! (Prov 31:10-31)

3. She is chaste and modest and has a gentle and quiet spirit! (1 Pet 3:1-6)
4. If she is married she respects her husband! (Eph 5:22-24)
5. If she has children, she casts great vision for her children...who they can grow to be! (Hab 2:1-3; 2 Tim 1:5)

Imagine homes filled with biblical care groups and hospitality. Imagine open doors and open hearts, dinner tables filled with friends, fellow church members, laughter, Scripture, encouragement, and meaningful conversation...less television and more discipleship. Imagine how many problems would be solved without a class, a program, or a counseling session through prayer, Scripture, and true Christian friendship. Imagine the new friends and church members who would finally feel welcome in a covenant community and as a result are taught more about the tangible love of Christ. Imagine the teachable moments to train children how to serve others. Imagine life with more meaning...

1. Our lives are supposed to be **different!** We are supposed to live in love and community, joyfully serving Christ and others! (Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 5:10; 1 Pet 4:9)
2. God never designed a class; He did however give us a church! He gave us one another! (Matt 16:18; John 13:35; Rom 12:10; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:13)
3. In fact, Paul's admonition to Colossae sums up much of what we've shared today:

Col 3:12-25 ESV Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, (13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (14) And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (17) And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (18) Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. (19) Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (20) Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (21) Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. (22) Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. (23) Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, (24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (25) For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

CRCC, if I have erred in this dream please forgive me. If I have misrepresented God's Word, please correct me. But to the extent that the above is honorable and loving and scriptural and based in the heart of Christ and the commands, principles, and patterns of Scripture...will you run with me?

The world, the flesh, and the devil will fight this vision at every turn. He will attempt to pervert it; to create disunity because of it; to unleash so much drama and distraction that we simply give up and do nothing. BUT I plan to keep running. What about you?

For His glory alone.

Amen.