

God's Vision for You

Colossians 1:9-14

Pastor Mark Kremer

All summer long the coach had been thinking about this day. He understood and knew that vision is the fuel that propels life. And as he thought back to his team from the previous year – the high school football team – he saw some things that really excited him. He saw potential. So he began to think about what kind of a vision he would put in front of his high school players when they came that first hot, muggy Monday morning of August for two-a-days.

And as they straggled into the locker room and gathered in, he began to talk to them. He said, “Men, (*high school juniors and seniors love to be called men*) I don’t know if you know this, but you have great potential. I’ve been watching you. I’ve watched how you worked out. I’ve seen how you played last year. I see the talent that you have. And if you will listen to me, if you will work with me, if you will allow me to teach you the things that could help you be the very best at what your position is, I think we can accomplish some great things this year. I love working with you. It’s the greatest privilege in my life to come alongside. And I want to see you succeed. And I believe this is the year you can make our school proud. As you bear the name of this school and its reputation, I believe you can be highly successful. In fact, I envision for you a state championship.”

As he shared that vision with the players in that locker room, you could see the heads come up and the lights begin to come on. And some of them were saying, “Wow, could it really be possible? Could it really be that we could be that good?” And he also saw the look of skepticism on a couple of faces of those thinking, *you know what, I’m just not buying it.*

Petersen, the wide receiver, was one of those. All summer when he would get up to go work out, Petersen’s dad would just say, “Oh, you know you’re just wasting your time. You guys will never be any better than you were last year. You just as well go out and have some fun because this team’s never really gonna be that good.”

So Petersen speaks up when the coach asks if anybody had any comments. And he says, “Coach, just a minute. I mean, Coach we were 3 and 7 last year. I mean, we’re slow where we need to be fast. We’re small where we need to be big. Okay, so Clark and Stoner bulked up a little bit over the summer. And we got a couple of new guys. But, I’m just not buying it Coach, that we can be that good.”

Do you believe that vision is the fuel that propels the engine of life? How many of us in our own personal lives have had people like Petersen’s dad who’ve been casting visions for us that are far less than what really is possible?

I’m reminded of the story I read not long ago about a player who was on a state championship football team. And down on the field after winning the state championship as all the parents and fans are crowding around, this kid’s dad came up to him and looked him in the eye and said, “You could’ve done better.” And now at 45, 48 years of age, that’s the message that’s still playing in his head. “You could’ve done better.” And he’s spent his whole life thinking, *I’m really not that good. I really can’t do that much. I’ll never really amount to much.*

Vision is the fuel that propels our life. So the question I have for us this morning is what is God’s vision for your life, for my life? And do you think God’s vision for you is greater than your own vision for your life? Do you think God has a bigger dream, a bigger idea, a bigger plan of what He

can do in your life – what you can become? Or do you think you have a bigger vision? Or maybe bigger than the visions that other people have put on you?

Last week we began our study of the book of Colossians – a letter Paul wrote to this young church, these young believers at Colossae. And Paul, in our text today, is going to give them a glimpse of God’s vision for them. And that’s what I want us to look at. If you have a Bible, please turn to Colossians, chapter 1, and we begin in verse 9:

Last week we looked at the first eight verses where Paul is celebrating what God has done in bringing the people of Colossae to faith - the work that God has already done. And he’s celebrating the work of God in their life. And he did that by way of thanksgiving, of praising God for what He’d already done. And now he picks up after that praise and celebration in verse 9, saying,

For this reason also, [referring back to what God has already done, “because God is already present and at work and you are already in Christ”] **since the day we heard of it,** [the day we heard you were in Christ] **we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,** (Colossians 1:9; *NASB)

Paul is saying, “I haven’t stopped praying for you since the day I heard that you were in Christ.” Paul, like our church, had a vision that went beyond just conversion. It was not just to get people a ticket to heaven. And then say, “Well, you know, whatever follows in this life, I guess it doesn’t really matter. You’ve got your ticket to heaven. It’s okay.”

No, Paul says, “What God has already done, what we are celebrating is the very reason why I have the grander vision I want to share with you. It’s God’s vision for you. And I’m praying this vision into your life. I’m not stopping in my praying for you that this vision might become a reality in your life.”

Now there are two words here in verse 9 that you might want to circle in your Bible because you’re going to see them again and again. Not only throughout the book of Colossians, but you’re going to see them even repeated again just in this text.

The first one is “filled.” He says, “I’m praying that you might be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.” And then he further defines that “in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” In other words, what Paul is praying is that what God has begun would continue, that God would fill their life with the essence of the character of Christ, that they would be full of knowing and living out all that was true – all of God’s eternal purposes. They would understand it. They would live it. That they would understand what God was up to, what He was about. They would understand truth, that they would know it and live it. That they would have wisdom to know how to apply all the knowledge of God’s will, everything that God possesses and knows – that they would know and understand it and know how to apply it in their daily life. And they understood that that was not something that they were going to do for themselves. He said, “I pray that you might filled with the knowledge of God’s will – that God might fill you with the knowledge of His will. That He might give you all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

Now that’s a grand vision – that someone’s life would be permeated by the reality of who God is and what He’s called us to do and what He’s up to in the world – that we would have a complete understanding and that our lives would be guided and directed by the will of God. That everything that God is up to, everything that God is about would be directing every facet of our life – every decision, every action, every thought – that God’s desires, God’s purposes would permeate the core of one’s entire life.

And when you see something like that, the first thing you might ask yourself is, *What I wonder is has anybody ever really lived that? Has anybody really ever lived their life in such a way that they were actually filled with the knowledge of God's will and they possessed all spiritual wisdom and understanding?* And yes, there is someone who is a model of that isn't there? Jesus did that. Jesus from every moment that He was here on this earth was living within the will of God. He was always doing what God wanted Him to do. He was always acting and moving and deciding, thinking within the framework of God's grand purposes and design. And everything in His life was permeated by God's will and presence.

So in reality what Paul is praying is that God would fill us with the attributes, the characteristics that Jesus possessed. That God would make us like Jesus here in this life, not just in the next life, but here and now. And he's not going to stop praying until that becomes a reality. "I am going to continue unceasingly to pray that you might be permeated and under the influence of the attributes and characteristics of Christ, that you might be like Jesus."

To put it back into our football analogy it would be the coach responding back to Petersen's hesitation and skepticism by saying, "Oh, I forgot to tell you something. What I discovered over the summer was that when you step out onto the field, all of the attributes – both mental and physical attributes – of the greatest player to ever play the position that you play, you now possess. You will possess, when you step on the field, all the greatest attributes of the greatest player who has ever played in the position that you are in."

Do you think that those players might say, "You know what? Now I believe maybe we could win a state championship." They'd probably say, "Hey, bring on the Kansas City Chiefs; bring on the NFL! We're going to possess the greatest attributes of the player who's played in the position that I am in."

Paul says, "That's the vision and dream that I have for you. That we, as followers of Jesus, as those who are in Christ, would have our lives filled with the attributes and characteristics of Christ. We would have all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Every thought, every decision, everything that we do and think about, engage in, every decision we make would be permeated by God's purposes and will and the characteristics of Christ. That in essence, we would become full of Christ in order to be like Christ."

Now you've got to wonder, *What would that actually look like if that happened? If that were possible, what would my life actually look like? What would be true of a person who's life is filled with the characteristics of Christ?*

Well, Paul goes on in these next verses to give us a glimpse of what that means. It's probably the clearest and most articulate place in the Scripture that describes what it would mean or look like to be complete in Christ – to be like Jesus. He begins in verse 10, again saying,

so that [in other words, if you're filled, if God fills your life with the attributes and characteristics of Christ, then] **you will** [you will be able to] **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects,** (v. 10a)

Think about that. I know for a fact that I have been declared worthy before God by what Jesus did on the cross. But when I examine my daily life, I still see there are areas that are not really worthy to bear His name. There are things that I do, there are thoughts that I think, there are reactions that I have that don't look at all like Jesus. But Paul's vision and God's vision for us is that one day, by the power of God working and filling us, we could have a life that is completely worthy of bearing the name Jesus. In other words that Jesus could stamp His name on every single day, every moment

of our lives. And every single thing we do, “in all respects,” he said, “that we would bring God pleasure.”

Again, I already know God delights in me. He delights in walking with us. But I know also that there are a lot of things that I do that I know God can't really be pleased with, that grieve Him because He wants something better for me. But imagine what it would be like if we were so filled with the characteristics and attributes of Christ that everything that we did would bring pleasure to Him? That everything that we did, every thought we thought, every action we took would bring a smile to His face. Just like God looked down on His creation in Genesis chapter 1 and said, “It is good. It is good.” That we would become like Job when God looked at Job's life and He said to Satan, “Hey, look at my servant Job. Look at what he is. Look what I've done with him. Look who he has become. I'm proud of him. He brings pleasure to me.” That everything that we would do in our life would bring God great pleasure and delight.

What else does God envision for us? Not only that we would be able to see Him stamp His name on everything we do and we bring Him pleasure, but Paul goes on to say,

bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (v. 10b)

Now we have said many times here that God has given us a mission, that He has called us to do certain things. That He's given us talents and passions and interests, and there's a call on our life that we are to engage in helping to bring the good news, the gospel, to people who need it. And to make our world a better place to live. And God's called us to do good works.

But what Paul is saying here is that when we're filled with the attributes of Christ, in every good work we would bear fruit. There would be eternal impact from every single thing we engage in. Is that not something that you would want to see happen? How much of my life is spent spinning my wheels, working really hard at something, and thinking, *man, is anything good coming out of this? Will there be any lasting value to what I'm doing?* You young moms and dads are sitting here and thinking, *I change diapers; I tie shoes; I pay the bills. Is there anything of eternal significance that's going to come out of that?* God's grand vision for us is that in everything we do, everything that we engage in in this life, that there would be fruit that would be born. Growth in us and influence on others. That no effort would be wasted. Would you not want to have a life where no effort is wasted? That's a grand vision that God has for us.

And with “**bearing fruit in every good work,**” he says, “**and increasing [growing] in the knowledge of God.**” Another way to say that would be: increasing in intimacy with God, growing in intimacy. And I think it's very interesting that those two things are put in the exact same phrase. That while we are bearing fruit in every good work, we're also growing in intimacy with God. You can't separate those things.

God envisions you doing both of those things simultaneously as a part of your life. That as you grow in intimacy with Him, as you get to know Him better and better, that you would be more and more fruitful. And as you grow more and more fruitful in your life and see greater impact, greater change in your own life and in the lives of others, you would have a desire to know Him even better. And you know Him better and you have greater impact. And they fuel each other; and they're hand in hand. And you can't separate those two things. And God envisions for your life and for mine as Paul did for those Colossian believers, that we would bear fruit in everything we set our hand to and grow in intimacy with Him.

But that's not all. Verse 11. Paul envisions yet more as a result of our being filled with the knowledge of His will. Verse 11:

strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; (v. 11)

Another way to say that would be, “empowered with all power according to His mighty or glorious power. Again the word, “all.” God wants to pour out His power into your life and into my life.

And Paul says the power that God wants to give us is according to the power that He possesses. That phrase is very important – “according to,” because God doesn’t give us power “out of” His marvelous great power. He gives power “according to” His power. And the difference is this. If you were in desperate need and had nothing to eat and you went to somebody who had a million dollars and they gave you a hundred dollars, they would be giving you out of their wealth. But if you went to that same person who had a million dollars and they gave you \$200,000, they would be giving to you according to or in proportion to their wealth.

And this is what Paul’s saying, “What I envision for you is that God would pour His power into your life in proportion to the power that He has.” How much power does God have? All power. He spoke and the worlds came into existence. He holds everything together by the word of His power. He raised Jesus from the dead. He is all-powerful.

And here’s what God envisions for you, and Paul is praying for those believers at Colossae that we would be strengthened with all God’s power in order to attain steadfastness and patience. Now when I first read that, my heart sank a little bit because when I’m thinking God pouring power into me, I’m thinking about some heroic thing that God wants me to do. Don’t you think about that big thing? That God might want to call me to do something really significant and important for Him? And that’s kind of how we think. Get power for that big thing.

But God’s vision, I think, is even bigger than that. God’s vision is that we would be empowered in order to be steadfast—that means to have endurance. That God would pour out His power so that everyday in every circumstance, our eyes would never be taken off of Him. That we keep pursuing Him, that we would keep loving Him regardless of the circumstances we face in life. That’s endurance. That’s what He envisions for you.

And you know what? That’s way harder, that takes way more power of God than just to have a blurb of power, a little extra power for one particular moment and then go back to living poorly. God envisions us thriving in all circumstances. That we would have endurance to run the race all the way to the end – never wavering away from our relationship with Him.

And along with being able to endure or have steadfastness in all circumstances, he adds the word “patience” which has to do with how we deal with people in our life. Oh, my goodness! If circumstances in life aren’t bad enough, there are the people. You know those people that God has allowed in your life that just cause you distress and they don’t understand you and you don’t understand them and you have to live with them and work with them and be around them and they drive around you and they’re everywhere. And God envisions pouring His power into your life so that you would be able to respond with love regardless of how you are treated. The word really means that in spite of injustice and mistreatment and misunderstanding that you would continue to love the people around you – like Jesus.

You know in the last four or five years, our immediate family has gone through more stressful things than I think I could have imagined happening in a short period of time. Have you ever seen those scales where they talk about stress factors and they give a value to each of these things? If these things happen, that’s a one; and you tally these up, you know, and you’re about to die if you

get to ten? We're at like fifteen! I mean, every conceivable thing that could happen in a family, over the last four years has happened in our family.

And I will tell you that one thing that has been incredible for me to witness is not my doing or Donna's doing, it is God pouring out His power to produce endurance in us. And through all of that, God has given us the power to have an unwavering love relationship with Him that is growing stronger and stronger and better and better. And I just can't believe it, because there's no way humanly possible that I could ever have gone through those things and be where I'm at in my relationship with God today apart from Him pouring His power into my life.

Now, the "patience" thing? That's another story. We were driving the other day in Dallas going to our meeting – Kirk Hovendick and Brad Brestel and myself – and we're at a stop light. And these two cars come whipping around the corner right beside us. And the guy behind is honking his horn. And the other guy slams on his brakes right beside us. Gets out and starts screaming obscenities into his door. I thought, *man, what in the world are we in the middle of?* You know, that's how people respond to things in the world – right? Anger.

But God envisions for us people of patience. People who love. People who respond like Jesus regardless of how we're being treated. That's His vision for your life and for mine.

But there's more. At the end of verse 11 is the word "joyously" and the theologians argue back and forth—does joyously belong with verse 11 or verse 12? Is it joyously enduring with patience? Or is it joyously giving thanks in verse 12? And I have to tell you, I am not kept awake at night by that question. I guess I'm not a good theologian. But I would say that it fits in both places. So you take your pick because I think God not only wants us to endure and to be patient with joy – that He would want us to be joyful in that, not grudgingly enduring people and circumstances, but joyfully, joyfully being steadfast and patient. But I think it also fits with verse 12 because the other thing God envisions for your life and mine is that we would be joyfully thankful at all times. That we would be filled with thankfulness for what God has already done in our life.

You know we often talk about the young Christian who's very excited and very enthusiastic about what God has done in his or her life. And then we think, *you know as time goes on...it just kind of fades*. But God envisions that you would actually be increasingly, joyously thankful for what God has done. That you would have a growing appreciation of all that He has done for you and all that He is to you. And here Paul gives three specific things in verses 12 and 13 that we ought to be rejoicing and thankful for. The first is verse 12:

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. (v. 12)

That word "qualified" is interesting. You know if you're going to try to qualify for something – qualify to take a test, qualify to get into a school, qualify for a race – that means that all the requirements have been met. Do you understand what this verse is saying? That the inheritance that God has given to us—what Bryan called last week the warehouse of treasure that God has for us, everything that we have in Christ that God wants to give to us—all the requirements to receive that have been met. Not by you, not by me, but the Father met all the requirements for us.

Do you believe God loves you? That the Father met all the requirements so that you could share in the inheritance of the saints in light? Well what does that mean? He goes on to expound on that in verse 13:

For He [the Father] rescued us from the domain of darkness [or the kingdom of darkness], and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (v. 13)

What the Father did is He looked down on us and saw us in our blindness and in our slavery to sin. Trapped in that world of gloom and without hope and without God. Struggling to try to just make it on our own. And God saw us in our hopelessness in the domain of this world, under the control of the evil one, and He rescued us and took us out of the kingdom of darkness and planted us into the kingdom of His beloved Son – the kingdom of light. To walk with the One who is light. To live in that realm where we very much can experience the presence of God, the direction of God, the wisdom of God. Where we're now in His kingdom. We're not in the kingdom of darkness anymore. We're not under the control of the evil one. We're in God's kingdom. We're in the kingdom of light. And the Father has rescued us and transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness into light. You and I didn't do that.

Not only that, but in verse 14 Paul says:

in whom [speaking of the Son in verse 13 – in the Son] we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (v. 14)

Redemption speaks to being set free. Not only are we transferred out of the kingdom of darkness, we are set free from our enslavement to sin. We are no longer bound to have to do the things that came so naturally before. We can live differently. We can actually see this vision that God has for us become a reality because we're not enslaved anymore. We're free. You're free from your past. You're free from the things that controlled and dominated you before you were in Christ. They have no power over you anymore. You are free from those chains that bound you in the past when you did not know Christ.

And not only that, but all the record of everything that you've done, all the sins and failures that you've had in the past are completely washed away and erased. You are forgiven; you are set free; you are released and declared righteous before God. That's what God has done for you in the Son. The Father and the Son have been working on your behalf. They see you; they know you. It's God's vision for us that we would live this vision.

Paul wasn't being cruel. It would be cruel to write a letter to people and say, "Hey, I'm praying for you this incredible thing. I'm praying that your life would be filled with the attributes and characteristics of Christ and that you'd be worthy and that you'd have power and you'd have endurance and you'd have patience and you'd have joy and you'd have thankfulness—BUT it's not really possible. It can't really happen. I'm just casting an unrealistic picture." That's cruel.

Paul declared to these people exactly what he was praying for them because he knew it was possible. And so the very thing that we become thankful for that God has already done becomes the basis on which we can believe that He can fulfill the vision that He has for us. Because of what God has already done, I can believe that His vision for me is possible. It can become a reality in my life.

When our little son Sam was in the neonatal intensive care unit at the hospital for two months after his birth, my wife had a devotional that she'd read, and this particular saying was in that devotional. And it was written on the little white board above Sam's head. It has become a truth that I believe not only relates to this passage, but it is the reason why this morning even though you might be like Petersen and doubt that this vision could become a reality, this will tell you and remind you that it can happen in your life. A.C.A. Hall said,

**Thanksgiving for the past makes us trustful in the present and hopeful for the future.
What God has done is the pledge of what He will do.**

Now you will notice something is really missing from the passage in Colossians. It doesn't tell us anything that we need to do in order to live this kind of a life. This is God's doing. Paul understood there's nothing he couldn't tell people. You know, "Go out and try to live a life worthy of the Lord to please Him. Go out and strive to please Him."

It says that all of those things—a worthy life, a pleasing life, a fruitful life, a growing intimacy life—are all God's doing. It comes about as a result of God pouring His life into us. As a matter of fact, you won't find anything that we're responsible for making this happen until you get to chapter 3 and verse 1. You're going to have to wait a long time.

So you Type A people here who hear this and say, "Man, I'm going to pull myself up by the bootstraps. I'm going to make it happen. I mean, I go out in life, and I make things happen. I take the bull by the horns, and I run with things, and I make stuff happen. That's how I'm wired. That's what I am." You're going to go out and you think, *Man, I'm going to go out and try hard. I'm going to live a worthy life. I'm going to do these things.* I'm telling you. You're going to be badly mistaken. And you will fail, because you cannot make this vision become a reality in your own human effort. And God never asked you to. This is His doing. Just as by faith in the work of God on our behalf we were transferred into the kingdom, so the living out of God's vision for us is His work.

How many Christians get saved and they understand it was the grace of God. You know, *God did it; I couldn't have saved myself.* And they understood, *I'm a misfit; I'm a sinner; I'm a loser.* And they come to faith in Christ and then they think, *Okay, now I've got to do it all on my own.* And God says, "No. Just as you received Christ, so you have to walk in Him." He's got to empower your life. He's got to fill your life with Himself. And we're not going to get to what our responsibility even is until chapter 3 and verse 1, so hang on for that. But I'm just going to tell you Type A people you're going to be very, very disappointed when you get there. You will not be asked to do what you think you would really like to do.

So for those of you who are in that category, this morning you hear a message like this and you say, "Man, that's a great vision. I want it. I'm going to go out and get it." Then my word to you this morning is repent. Change your mind. Surrender. Acknowledge now before you waste the next ten-fifteen years of your life trying to make this happen on your own and wear yourself out and make yourself sick—emotionally, spiritually, even physically—trying to measure up, trying to make God happy – just surrender this morning. And say, "God, the vision's too big. I'm going to believe that You're going to produce it in my life. And so instead of me doing something about it, I'm going to pray it into my life. Instead of trying to make the vision I have for my kids come to reality, I'm going to pray this vision into my kids. I'm going to pray it into my family and friends. I'm going to pray it into the people in my LifeGroup. It's God's vision. And God has to do it. And I'm just going to pray that God would bring this to reality, that He would bring the vision to reality."

There are some of you here this morning who are on the other end of the spectrum. You very much knew you were a sinner and a misfit and a loser. And people have had visions for your life that told you you weren't worth much, that you weren't going to amount to anything. And you're thinking is, *Man, if I could just survive until I die. You know, if I can just make it without really embarrassing God. If I can just kind of make sure I don't screw up too bad.* That's the biggest vision you have of your life this morning, *God, help me to get through without making such a big mess of it.* And the

biggest vision you have for your kids is, *God, just help them to get through school. Help them to get a job and keep it. Help them to get a wife and stay with her. Help them to be good.*

God wants to blow your vision right out of the water and say, “I can envision something for you that you can never even imagine. I envision you being like Jesus. I envision you filled with the characteristics of Jesus. I envision you being worthy and making an impact on this world and having endurance and patience – things you’ve never possessed in your whole life in the kingdom of darkness. I envision you becoming that.”

And God is asking you this morning to embrace that vision. Believe it. This is not a vision for someday in eternity. This is God’s vision for you whether you’re seven or seventy-seven. This can become a reality in your life. And we just need to pray and believe that God can make this vision become a reality, that we would so seek after Christ that we would allow Him to fill us up and make this vision become real.

And then think with me about 5,000 of us going out into this city. And we go to the marketplace; we go to our neighborhood; we go to the schools – where we live and work and play and the people we’re around. And people out there are wondering, *I wonder what Jesus is like? Why are there no Jesus people in this world?* And there would be 5,000 of us who are seeing this vision become a reality in our life. And they would never have to ask that question. They would be seeing people like Jesus every single day. And they would know Him because they would see you, because you’re living the vision and the dream that God has for you.

The vision that you have of your own life is the fuel that propels your life. You are moving towards the vision you have. What I believe God wants this morning for us is that we would say, “Yes, God, I’m going to embrace the vision You have for my life. And I’m going to pray it into reality for myself, for my kids, my family, people in my LifeGroup.” Can we see each other as people who could become like Christ because we are in Christ?

Our Father, I thank You for the grand vision You have for us. We repent of our petty and small dreams that pale in comparison to the amazing thing You’ve put before us. And I pray for myself and for each person here and us together that we would be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And that out of that filling by Your Spirit would come a life that is worthy of Your name, that would bring You great pleasure, that You would bear fruit through us, that You would cause us to increasingly have intimacy with You. God, that You would give us power to have endurance, steadfastness and patience, that You would fill us with joy and thanksgiving. Lord, that we would become people like Christ. Lord, help us to believe and embrace that vision for it is Your vision for us and for our kids and for our friends. We pray it may be so in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Study Questions
Complete in Christ: A Study in the Book of Colossians

God's Vision for You

Colossians 1:9-14

Pastor Mark Kremer

Opening Discussion

1. Who do you consider to be some of the great visionaries in the last 100 years? What was their vision? How did it influence people?
2. What makes for a compelling vision versus one that is not compelling?
3. What vision(s) have close friends and family had for your life? Was it compelling? How did their vision affect the way you lived your life?
4. Have you ever had a vision of your own life that was negative or destructive? Why was this so?
5. Do you believe God has a vision for your life personally?

Bible Study

1. Read Colossians 1:9. What motivated Paul to pray for the believers at Colossae? What can we learn about Paul from this prayer?

2. What do you think was his reason for letting them in on what he was asking God to do?

What is the essence of his request to God on their behalf? (See Colossians 1:9)

3. What does it mean to be “filled with the knowledge of God’s will”? Where does this “filling” come from?

In what ways did Jesus demonstrate verse 9 during His days on earth? Why is this important?

If everything else in God’s vision for believers flows out of this “filling” of verse 9, how important is it for followers of Jesus to understand what this means?

4. The word “all” appears repeatedly in this text and throughout Colossians. Why do you think Paul uses it so often? What is he communicating?

5. Read Colossians 1:10-12. What will be true of the person who is “filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding”?

6. What does it mean to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord”?

7. Why does being “filled” bring God pleasure?

8. What is the “fruit” that is produced “in every good work”?
9. What is the difference between God empowering believers *out of* His glorious might versus empowering us “*according to* His glorious might”?
10. What is steadfastness? What is patience?

Why is “all power” necessary for the “attaining of all steadfastness and patience”?

11. Read Colossians 1:12-14. What are the realities for which Christ followers can be “joyously giving thanks”?

What role do these past actions by God on our behalf play in seeing God’s vision for us become a reality?

Application

1. What has been the prevailing vision you have had for your life here on earth?

How is God’s vision for you different from your own vision or the vision others have had for you?

What excites you most about God’s vision for you?

2. What are the barriers and/or obstacles that stand in the way of you believing and embracing God’s vision for you? What can you do about this?
3. Are you more tempted to think you can live this vision through your own efforts or to think that it is too lofty a vision and it will never happen? Why?
4. How does this vision affect the way you view prayer?

Is prayer essential if we are to become complete in Christ? Why or why not?
5. How does the fact that only God can bring this vision to reality change the way you pray for yourself? Pray for your family? Pray for your friends?
6. What impact do you think we would have on our community and the world if we believed and began to live this vision?
7. What will be different in your life this week because you are embracing God’s vision for you?