

Power of a Focused Life (Craig Cook)

I. FOUR COMPONENTS OF A FOCUSED LIFE

- A. **Overall Life Vision:** *What you believe.* The primary purpose and core values of your life.
- B. **Assignment Goals:** *What you hope to do.* Comprised of short and long-term goals that are the made using the **S.M.A.R.T. Goal System** applied to the 7 specific areas of life.
- C. **Action Plan:** *How you plan to do it.* Your detailed plan to accomplish you goals using sample Action Plan. (Attached)
- D. **Schedule:** *What you are doing now.* The focusing of your time to accomplish your action plan to achieve your goals will cause you to begin to attain you life vision.

II. LIFE/MINISTRY VISION: PERSONAL PLUMBLINE OF THE 1ST & 2ND COMMANDMENT

Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Proverbs 29:18, KJV)

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint. (Proverbs 29:18)

- A. It is interesting how many of the people in the earth plan their lives. Especially in western culture, there is planning for our future finances, education, jobs, children etc. But, in all this, ***Christians rarely have a plan for their life in God.***
- B. Developing an overall life vision is the ***plumb line***, or the ***measuring stick*** of our activity, time management, resource management, and is the first step in ensuring that we are loving God in a manner that reflects the 1st Commandment and causes on the 2nd to flow from it on a ***personal and consistent basis.***

Jesus said to him, “ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22.37-39)

- C. Loving God is the first priority. Jesus did not call it the first option, but a commandment. Jesus makes it clear that cultivating love for Him is the first emphasis of the Holy Spirit. Loving God is a glorious ***end in itself***; however, it never ends with loving God but always overflows with loving ***ourselves and others*** (believers and unbelievers).
- D. There is no other starting place for our life vision than the place of loving God. God chose the human response to be the channel in which we express love. How we love God is expressed in how we live our lives and how we ***live our lives*** should be ***guided by our life vision.***

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- E. God's ultimate eternal purpose for creation is to provide a family for Himself that includes faithful children for Himself and an equally yoked Bride for Jesus as His eternal companion. God promised to give Jesus an inheritance consisting of a willing people whom He fully possesses in love.
1. **Mandatory Obedience**: God will cause all creation to obey Jesus.
(Philippians 2:9-11)
 2. **Voluntary Love**: God will raise up people who voluntarily choose to love Him.
(Psalm 110:3)
- F. As we develop a life vision, we work through the actual process of bringing ***ourselves/families*** (*I mean this in the entirety of the thought*) into alignment and agreement with His will. (**Obedience**). And we are putting language to our callings and bringing clarity to the desire for further faithfulness as faithful children (**voluntary love**).
- G. In the process many false assumptions, fantasies are exposed. Opposite of that, many prophetic promises from scripture and personal subjective experiences/promises are seen in a new light.
- H. It is applicable to both have a family life vision that is an overarching vision for your family unit, if you are married, and a personal vision. They cannot contradict one another, nor can the 2nd displace the 1st!
1. **Cook Family Life Vision**: *To love God completely, each other correctly, honoring individuality while always upholding family unity, with one heart, praying, serving and proclaiming Jesus until He comes.*
- J. When beginning the process of creating a life vision, you are identifying your core values and then developing the language to communicate it from a heart level that is clear and helpful. Avoid fluffy wording. **Go for the core values**.
- K. **Core Values**: Defining **attributes** or **standards** that guide your internal conduct and your relationship others in the external world.
- L. There are different ways at arriving at your core values. Here some examples:
1. Ask yourself what those who know you best would say of you at the end of your life.
 2. Pretend that some just asked you, "*Why should I care about you, your ministry, family, organization etc.*" When you answer that question, asked in that way it provokes a heart response and will tend to be a passionate reflection of your core values.
 3. There are several "core value" assessments on-line. Most of these use a "values" list. I do not think this is the most accurate, sincere, nor reflective of ones true core values but, may be helpful for some.

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- M. Our overall life vision is to be the **“plumbline”** and the **“measuring stick”** of all we do or plan to do. If we fail to reach the core value, and are not able to make it plain and clear, then the chances of living in **regret, complacency and compromise are drastically increased.**
- N. This is different than assignments.

III. ASSIGNMENT GOALS

- A. The likelihood of you achieving your live vision without setting goals that help to guide you into obtaining the vision is very slim.
- B. Studies show that less than 3% of Americans set goals. The vast majority of that 3% are the wealthiest in our nation.
- C. Mainly, people **do not lack the time, nor the energy** to begin to achieve their life vision. They **lack direction.** Goal setting gives that us the direction needed to ensure that we are going for our life vision.
- D. I have found the **S.M.A.R.T. Goal System** works very well for me. When thinking about goals, if you use the this mnemonic it will increase your ability to not only achieve the goals of your life and your life vision, but it will assist you tremendously in you action plan.
- E. **S.M.A.R.T. Goals:**
 - 1. **Specific:** Make your goals detailed, clear, and well thought out.
 - a. Instead of *“I want to go to Bible College”* spell it out more. *“I want to go IHOPU in Kansas City to the Biblical Studies program.”*
 - 2. **Measurable:** It is beneficial to have short-term measurements built into your goals. Though this will fall into your action plan, begin to think in these terms while creating the goals.
 - 3. **Attainable:** Identify goals that are most important to you then begin to discover the attitudes, abilities, skills and financial capacities to facilitate attaining them.
 - a. Goals need to stretch us, but they also need to be attainable, or the commitment that you are making must involve planning the necessary strategy to attain it. **You must plan beyond “good intentions.”**
 - 4. **Relevant:** Relevant means setting goals that ensure this project fits in your overall vision. It is unrealistic to set a goal that has not basis in your ministry or life vision.

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5. **Time-bound:** We must set time frames to our goals. Are they next month? Next semester? Next decade?
- a. Failing to set a time frame will make your commitment to vague and procrastination will set in. Timeframes cause us to begin our goals with a sense of urgency.
 - b. Within your time-bound goals, remember to make them measurable. For example, I want to know more about the Book of Revelation; I place that within a 1 year timeframe, and within that 1 year timeframe, I would also make small measurable to steps within 1 year. Such as:
 - 1 month reading the whole book (take personal notes, skim commentaries)
 - 2 months on each of the 4 parts = 8 total
 - 2 months studying correlating books/passages
 - 1 month finalizing eschatology and insights through outlining, writing, reading and preparing notes
- F. We (the Cook family) started setting goals within the 7 realities of our family life vision. This was really helpful because it connected us more with the actual statement.
- G. Your S.M.A.R.T Goals should be set in these ***7 specific areas***. It is also very helpful if your ***life vision*** reflects these areas as well.
- H. Each goal should include Long-term (10 years and over) and Short-term (3 months to 3 years).
- I. **The 7 specific areas include:**
1. **Spiritually** (prayer time, fasting days, Bible study, etc.)
 2. **Relationally** (family, friends, etc.)
 3. **Vocation** (marketplace calling, etc.)
 4. **Ministry** (in the church, outside the church, etc.)
 5. **Economically** (spending, giving, saving, investing, etc.)
 6. **Physically** (exercise, health, diet, etc.)
 7. **Rest** (recreation, vacation, play, entertainment, sports, etc.)

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IV. HELPFUL TIPS

- A. Remember to write your goals from position of **“reaching for light”** not **“running from darkness.”**
- B. Get feedback. This will help you establish the goals as well as begin a sense of accountability as you begin to put them into action. However, refrain from sharing them with people during the goal writing process that will not give you whole-hearted support.
- C. **Actually follow them** after they are set. I know this sounds funny, but it is one thing to get them articulated and clear on paper and another thing to be living them out. For some personalities, once goals are written they seem to be intimidating to actually follow. That is where “Action Plan” and “Scheduling” will be helpful.
- D. Do not set your goals until you have set your life vision. Goals should be governed by your core values, if they are not, you might actually obtain a goal that you were not supposed to. And in light of the Fear of the Lord, I don’t advise it.
- E. Do not be a “reed shaken in the wind” obstacles and bumps in the road will come. Be flexible and keep the goal before you.

V. ACTION PLAN: WITHOUT A PLAN, THERE WILL BE LITTLE ACTION

- A. The Action Plan is what you **strategically plan to do to achieve your goals** and make your life vision a reality. You must determine your course of action that it will take to make these goals happen.
- B. Attached is a very helpful template for an Action Plan with the example goal we used above concerning the book of Revelation. You will see that using S.M.A.R.T. Goals will translate much easier to the Action Plan.
- C. Before filling in the template, clearly restate the goal and define the objective you might have for setting the goal.
 - 1. **Spiritual Goal:** To study Revelation.
 - 2. **Objectives:**
 - a. To understand Jesus in the end-times
 - b. To be able to clearly communicate its main themes and message
 - c. To understand the overall eschatological framework of the book
 - d. To comprehensively understand judgment of God

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EXAMPLE ACTION PLAN:

Action Steps	Responsibilities?	Timeline?	Resources	Potential Barriers
1. Read Revelation 1x a week for one month	Craig - Schedule, collect resources	August 17th - September 17th	Walvrod - commentary \$28	FPD Trip, September 5th - 11th
2. Study Part 1 for 2 months	Craig - Schedule, get a meeting with C. Stark for insights	September 17th - November 17th	Bickle Revelation guide \$10	Teaching on Forerunner message in Track I October 6th - 10th and Tools weekly in Track II
3. Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

VI. SCHEDULING YOUR LIFE

- A. The most crucial part of turning your overall life vision into reality is actually scheduling the time to put your Action Plan into action!
- B. Several handouts are available for you to begin to schedule your implementation of your plan. We must learn how to commit varying projects into our limited 168 hours a week. This is where the majority of us get derailed in focusing our life to accomplish our vision.

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PERSONAL WORKSHEET

STEP 1: LIFE VISION

Write out your overall life vision (your primary purpose in life):

What would you want those who knew you best to say about you at the end of your life?

Indicate specific people and the statements you would like to hear each of them say about you.

Person: Jesus

Statement about you:

Person: _____

Statement about you:

Person: _____

Statement about you:

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Person: _____

Statement about you:

Person: _____

Statement about you:

STEP 2: LIFE GOALS

Write your short term goals (3 months 3 years) and long term (over 10 years).

1. Spiritually (prayer time, fasting day, Bible study, etc.)

Short-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Long-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Relationally (family, friends, etc.)

Short-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Long-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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3. Vocation (marketplace calling, career, etc.)

Short-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Long-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. Ministry (in the Church, outside the Church, etc.)

Short-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Long-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. Economically (spending, giving, saving, investing, etc.)

Short-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Long-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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6. **Physically** (exercise, health, diet, etc.)

Short-term goals:

1. _____

2. _____

Long-term goals:

1. _____

2. _____

7. **Rest** (recreation, vacation, play, entertainment, sports, etc.)

Short-term goals: _____

Long-term goals: _____

STEP 3: ACTION PLANS

Describe your specific activities you will do to accomplish these goals.

1. **Spiritually** (prayer time, fasting day, Bible study, etc.)

Short-term goals: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-terms goal: _____

Action steps: _____

2. **Relationally** (family, friends, etc.)

Short-term goals: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals: _____

Action steps: _____

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3. **Vocation** (marketplace calling, career, etc.)

Short-term goals #1: _____

Action steps: _____

Short-term goals #2: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #1: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #2: _____

Action steps: _____

4. **Ministry** (in the Church, outside the Church, etc.)

Short-term goals #1: _____

Action steps: _____

Short-term goals #2: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #1: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #2: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #3: _____

Action steps: _____

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5. **Economically** (spending, giving, saving, investing, etc.)

Short-term goals #1: _____

Action steps: _____

Short-term goals #2: _____

Action steps: _____

Short-term goals #3: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #1: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #2: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #3: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals #3: _____

Action steps: _____

6. **Physically** (exercise, health, diet, etc.)

Short-term goals: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals: _____

Action steps: _____

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7. **Rest** (recreation, vacation, play, entertainment, sports, etc.)

Short-term goals: _____

Action steps: _____

Long-term goals: _____

Action steps: _____

STEP 4: SCHEDULING YOUR TIME What specific times will you implement your action plans?
This is the most crucial part of turning vision into reality. (Make copies of these schedules).

POWER OF A FOCUSED LIFE SCHEDULE

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6:00AM							
6:30AM							
7:00AM							
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