

What people are saying about Dr. Myles Munroe's books...

God has an exciting purpose, plan, and vision for every one of His children. If you haven't found yours yet, *The Principles and Power of Vision* will help you discover and fulfill your God-ordained destiny. This is truly one of the best books I've ever read on the topic of vision!

Bill McCartney
Founder and President, Promise Keepers

What a great book! Myles Munroe has captured a clear and concise roadmap for discovering the vision for our lives and, more succinctly than anyone else, how to fulfill it.

Dr. Bill Winston
Pastor, Living Word Christian Center
Forest Park, Illinois

The Principles and Power of Vision seeks to inspire men and women to pursue the vision that God has placed in their hearts and is also a practical tool for maximizing one's potential. The book is spiritually and mentally stimulating as it explores the concept that "vision" is powerful and a motivator to human activity, and that it requires the application of basic rules and principles for effective fulfillment.

I congratulate Dr. Munroe on the success of this book, which is indicative of the desire within readers for such material. I have no doubt that Dr. Munroe's desire to impart his insights and concepts to the world through this medium will bear much fruit.

I highly commend this book to individuals in all aspects of leadership—spiritual and secular—and pray that God will bless those who strive to fulfill the vision He has placed in them.

Dame Ivy Dumont
Governor-General
The Commonwealth of the Islands of the Bahamas

After reading your book,...I was challenged to my marrows. I began to see the potential hidden in me which needs to be tapped.

*Evangelist Chidiebere
Nigeria*

Your book on potential touched my life. It made me realize that I am pregnant with lots of things that I have to bring out. I need to be a young man who is fully committed to God.

*Phineas Mahlatsi
South Africa*

As one who has been enriched through the teachings and writings of Dr. Myles Munroe, I find the message in *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Men* both significant and challenging.... This is an on-time and end-time book, not just to read, but to be used as a reference in charting our course for a better society and a richer life.

*Dr. Bill Winston
Pastor, Living Word Christian Center
Forest Park, Illinois*

Understanding the Purpose and Power of Men helps males understand what it means to be a man, husband, and father so they can become change agents towards rebuilding families, communities, and ultimately a nation.

*Mr. Jerome Edmondson
President and Founder
Christian Business Network, Inc.
Southfield, Michigan*

Your book, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Men*, is one of the best books I have read. It has brought my relationship with God alive.

*Terry Hall
Oregon*

I finished reading *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer*. It is an awesome teaching. You will never know how it has touched my spirit and life.

*Mary Campbell
Westport, Indiana*

THE PRINCIPLES AND
POWER
OF
VISION

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KEYS TO ACHIEVING
PERSONAL AND CORPORATE DESTINY

DR. MYLES MUNROE



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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THE PRINCIPLES AND POWER OF VISION:
Keys to Achieving Personal and Corporate Destiny
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Dedication

To the visually impaired among us. May the visions of your hearts replace the limitations of your eyes.

To my spiritual father and mentor, Oral Roberts, whose visionary leadership accomplishments inspired my own.

To Richard Pinder III, my faithful friend and partner in vision. Your faith and belief in me and the vision over the years has encouraged me.

To my executive leadership team at BFMI. Thank you for your visionary support.

To the millions of people in the developing Third-World countries who daily aspire to believe in a vision of a better world. I believe, also.

To my beloved wife Ruth, daughter Charissa, and son Chairu. Thanks for believing.

To the Source of all true visions and the Sustainer of all dreams.

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No achievement in life is without the help of many known and unknown individuals who have contributed to our lives. We are all the sum total of what we have learned from others, and we owe any measure of success to the array of input from so many. Here are just a few who made this work possible:

To my wife Ruth, for your unwavering support.

To Lois Puglisi, my talented and excellent editor. Your relentless pursuit of and patience with me during the inception, incubation, development, and delivery of this work was a tremendous source of motivation and encouragement. You're a writer's dream.

To the members and followers of BFMI who allowed me the privilege of sharing and testing the ideas and principles in this book in our relationship over the years. Without you, my vision would have remained just a dream. I am forever grateful.

To the friends and distinguished members of the Board of Trustees of the International Third World Leaders Association, for your example of visionary leadership over the years. You inspired me to believe in mine.

To my friend, Jim Rill, who helped with the early stages of the development of this work and the conceptual development of the cover design. You are a part of my history. Thank you.

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Preface

Vision is the source and hope of life. The greatest gift ever given to mankind is not the gift of sight, but the gift of vision. Sight is a function of the eyes; vision is a function of the heart. "Eyes that look are common, but eyes that see are rare." Nothing noble or noteworthy on earth was ever done without vision. No invention, development, or great feat was ever accomplished without the inspiring power of this mysterious source called vision.

Civilizations were born and developed through the driving power of a visionary leader. The canvas of history is painted with evidence of the creative, tradition-defying force of vision. Social, economic, architectural, medical, scientific, and political achievement and advancements owe their conception and birthing to the power of vision.

Any civilization that is trapped in a time warp of the past, suffocated by the traditions of past experiences and buried in the grave of the glories of past successes, is doomed to die. Vision is the key to unlocking the gates of what was and what is, to propelling us into the land of what could be, and has not yet been. Vision sets you free from the limitations of what the eyes can see and allows you to enter into the liberty of what the heart can feel. It is vision that makes the unseen visible and the unknown possible.

Vision also makes suffering and disappointment bearable. Vision generates hope in the midst of despair and provides endurance in tribulation. Vision inspires the depressed and motivates the discouraged. Without vision, life would be a study

in cyclic frustration within a whirlwind of despair. Vision is the foundation of courage and the fuel of persistence.

It was vision that inspired the first biblical civilization established by the great hunter Nimrod. Vision produced the great Egyptian civilization over four thousand years ago and gave rise to the towering pyramids that still amaze us today. Vision inspired the Greeks to produce philosophy and art that still impact the thinking of our world. Vision motivated the great Roman empire to expand its influence and colonize the known world. Vision inspired the explorers who circumvented the globe and ignited the creation and expansion of many of the nations that we know today. Vision transformed the agricultural world into the industrial age. Vision gave birth to the thousands of inventions in the last two centuries that have transformed our lives.

It was the vision of flight that inspired the Wright brothers to invent the airplane. It was the vision of light that possessed Thomas Edison to invent the lightbulb. It was the vision of a desk-sized computer that motivated Stephen Jobs to invent the desktop computer. It was the vision of giving every person access to people-friendly software that inspired Bill Gates to develop and invent the Microsoft global empire. Vision is the energy of progress.

Our world today is in desperate need of vision. Even a casual look at the prevailing conditions in our twenty-first century world is enough to produce fear, hopelessness, uncertainty, insecurity, emotional and social trauma, depression, disillusionment, discouragement, and despair. The threat of economic collapse, social disintegration, moral decay, religious conflict, political instability, global health epidemics, ethnic cleansing, and the clash of civilizations demands leadership that can see beyond the now into a preferred future, that has the skill to transfer that vision into reality, and that has the courage to inspire us to go there.

The wise king of Israel, Solomon, stated in his book of Proverbs, *"Where there is no vision, the people perish"* (Proverbs 29:18)

κiv). These words have been quoted and repeated by millions of people over the years because they capture the significant role vision has in our individual, corporate, and national lives. The full essence of his statement implies that where there is no revelation of the future, people throw off self-control, personal discipline, and restraint. Simply put, vision is the source of personal and corporate discipline.

There are many who have no vision for their lives and wonder how to obtain one. There are others who have a vision, but are stuck in the mud of confusion not knowing what to do next. Then there are those who had a vision but have abandoned it because of discouragement, disillusionment, some measure of failure, or frustration. If you are in one of these categories, *The Principles and Power of Vision* is designed to help you understand the nature of vision, define vision, capture or recapture a personal vision, simplify your vision, and document your vision.

I also hope to help you understand the principles of vision and to provide the practical tools and skills necessary to bring your vision into reality. You were born to achieve something significant, and you were destined to make a difference in your generation. Your life is not a divine experiment, but a project of Providence to fulfill a purpose that your generation needs. This personal purpose is the source of your vision and gives meaning to your life. I therefore encourage you to believe in your daydreams and to reconnect with your passion; your vision awaits your action. Your future is not ahead of you—it lies within you. See beyond your eyes and live for the unseen. Your vision determines your destiny.

Introduction: Life without Vision

In the mid-twentieth century, in Bangkok, Thailand, the government wanted to build a large highway through a village. Yet in the path of the planned road was a Buddhist monastery with a little chapel, so they had to relocate the monastery—including a heavy, eleven-foot clay statue of Buddha—to another place. Using a crane, the government workers moved the monastery in sections. When the workers transported the statue of Buddha to the new location and began to lower it into place, however, the clay on the statue started to crumble and fall off. The people were afraid because this was a precious religious symbol to them, and they didn't want it to be destroyed. Yet the more the workers tried to place the statue, the more it fell apart until, eventually, all the clay was falling off. Suddenly, the workers stared in amazement because, as the clay fell away, something unexpected was revealed: The statue was pure gold underneath. Before the statue was moved, people thought it was worth about fifty thousand dollars. Today, that golden Buddha is worth millions and, because of the story behind it, is visited by hundreds of thousands of people every year.

This story illustrates that what we can see is not necessarily what really is. I believe that many of us are living as clay vessels when, in reality, we are pure gold inside. Our lives do not reflect who we truly are or what we can be. I travel around the world speaking to various groups, and I meet people on every continent who have no sense of personal purpose. I see them struggling with aimless or misdirected lives.

A lack of purpose and unfulfilled potential is epidemic in our world. Yet just as the gold statue was hidden inside the clay one, the “gold” inside each of us is waiting to be revealed. This gold is the dreams we have—or once had—for our lives that are not yet reality, the gifts and talents that we have not yet developed, the purpose for our lives that is not yet fulfilled, the “something” we’ve always wanted to be or do but for some reason have not been able to accomplish.

No matter who you are or what country you live in, you have a personal purpose, for every human being is born with one. God created each person with a unique vision. He has tremendous plans for you that no one else can accomplish. The tragic thing is that many people live their whole lives without ever recognizing their visions.

How do you remove the clay and uncover the gold within you? Your dreams, talents, and desires can be refined in a process of discovering and fulfilling your life’s vision so that the pure gold of your unique and personal gifts to this world can shine forth.

Helping you capture and fulfill your vision is the purpose of this book. My own life’s vision is the transformation of followers into leaders and the maximization of individual potential, and I’m excited about the potential within you right now. Every person is a leader in his or her own vision, because that person is the only one who can imagine, nurture, and fulfill it. What is your vision? What have you always wanted to do? What is your heart’s desire? What is your dream? When you can begin to see your vision clearly, you will be able to fulfill your life’s purpose.

What does it mean to capture the vision for your life? Ted Engstrom, the former president of World Vision, told a story that went something like this: A little girl was on a cruise ship, and she and her father were standing on the deck. It was a beautiful clear day, and the air was crisp and fresh. The little girl, standing on tiptoe, said to her father, “I can’t see anything.” The father picked her up and put her on his shoulders, so that she

was higher than everyone else on the deck and was able to see everything around her. "Daddy!" she exclaimed. "I can see farther than my eyes can look!"

That little girl's statement captures the essence of vision: the ability to see farther than your physical eyes can look—to see not just what is, but also what can be and to make it a reality. Vision is a conception that is inspired by God in the heart of a human. The greatest gift God ever gave humanity is not sight, but vision. Sight is a function of the eyes, but vision is a function of the heart. You can have sight but no vision. Throughout history, progress has been made only by people who have "seen" things that were not yet here. Vision is seeing the future before it comes into being. It is a mental picture of your destiny. God gave humanity the gift of vision so we would not have to live only by what we see. The words *vision* and *revelation* are sometimes used interchangeably. To reveal means to unveil. Something that is unveiled was there all along but could not be seen externally.

Consider this analogy: The destiny of an acorn is a tree. By faith, you can see the tree within the seed. You have a vision of it in your mind's eye because you know the potential in the seed. The same thing is true for you and me. God has given us birth for a purpose, and as far as God is concerned, that purpose is already finished because He has placed within us the potential for fulfilling it. We can see that purpose through faith. To paraphrase the Bible, faith is the substance of things you hope to accomplish, the evidence of things you can see even when others cannot. Only by seeing what is not yet here can you bring something new, creative, and exciting into existence.

For true visionaries, the imaginary world of their visions is more real to them than the concrete reality around them. In fact, a visionary's vision is his reality. There is a story about when Disney World had just opened and had only one ride. Walt Disney was sitting on a bench on the grounds, seeming to just stare into space. One of his workers, who was manicuring the grass, came past him and said, "How are you, sir?" Without

looking at the man, he said, "Fine," and kept on staring. So the man said, "Mr. Disney, what are you doing?" "I'm looking at my mountain," he answered. "I see the mountain right there." Walt told his architects about this mountain. As he talked, they wrote down what he said, and then they drew up the plans. Walt died before Space Mountain was built, so he never saw it constructed. When Space Mountain was dedicated, the governor and the mayor were present, and Walt's widow was also there. One of the young men stood up to introduce her, and said, "It's a pity that Mr. Walt Disney is not here today to see this mountain, but we're glad his wife is here." Mrs. Disney walked up to the podium, looked at the crowd, and said, in effect, "I must correct this young man. Walt already saw the mountain. It is you who are just now seeing it."

The most powerful force in life is the force of vision. A young man did a college paper in his economics class on his vision for overnight mail. The professor took a red pen, gave him a "C," and wrote, "Do not dream of things that cannot happen." The young man left school and started Federal Express. I wonder where the professor is today. Your vision determines your destiny. When you can see what is possible and believe that it can come to pass, it makes you capable of doing the impossible.

At age thirteen, I wrote down my vision for my life. I carried it with me all through junior high and high school. Much of what I'm doing right now was on paper when I was a young teenager. Vision makes you persistent. Once you know what you really want and can "see" it, then, no matter what comes against you, you never give up. Persistence in fulfilling one's life purpose comes from vision. As long as a person can hold on to his vision, then there is always a chance for him to move out of his present circumstances and toward the fulfillment of his purpose.

I believe with all my heart that when you have no vision, you will simply relive the past with its disappointments and failures. Therefore, vision is the key to your future. Think about what happens to some football teams that are losing the game

at halftime. The players go to the locker room and meet with the coach. The coach changes certain game strategies and gives them a pep talk, telling them what they can accomplish. When they come back out, their whole attitude and perspective seems to have changed, and they win the game.

No matter where you are in life, and regardless of how old or young you are, it can be “halftime” for you. You can reassess your life’s strategies and focus on fulfilling your purpose. This book will help you to make the necessary adjustments in your life so you can know how to plan for the future and stop making the same mistakes and decisions that have hindered you in the past. It will answer crucial questions, such as these:

- How can I know what my vision is?
- What do I do if I have multiple interests?
- What are some strategies for overcoming hindrances to my vision?
- How can I set the right priorities for my life?
- What should I do when others criticize my dream?
- How can I make my vision a concrete reality?

By the time you finish this book, you will be able to say, “I can see farther than my eyes can look!” You will be able to see not just what is, but also what can be, so that you can fulfill your personal vision.

—Myles Munroe

Part I

What Is Vision?

Chapter One

Vision: The Key to Fulfilling Your Life's Purpose

GOD HAS PLACED WITHIN EACH PERSON A VISION THAT IS
DESIGNED TO GIVE PURPOSE AND MEANING TO LIFE.

Years ago, during the Christmas season, my wife and I took our children to a large toy store. At the time, my son Chairo was about four years old, and his eyes lit up when he spotted a rocking horse. He climbed on, held tightly to the ears of the horse, and began to rock back and forth. After a few minutes, I tried to get him off, but he became angry. When we were about ready to leave, he was still having a wonderful time on that rocking horse, so we let him continue while we walked through the store one last time and told our daughter it was time to go. When we came back, Chairo was rocking even faster. By then, he had been going for about half an hour, and he was soaking wet with sweat. As I watched him, I felt as if God was saying to me, "That's how most people live. They're working hard, sweating hard, but they're making no real progress in life. They're not going anywhere."

Our world is filled with people who are busy but not ultimately effective or satisfied. They are doing much, expending time and energy, but getting little of value accomplished. Consequently, they spend their lives toiling away but never making any headway.

Where Are You Going in Life?

Consider these statistics of American employees:*

Nearly 50 percent of all U.S. workers feel overwhelmed by a growing number of job tasks and longer working hours.

—Families and Work Institute, 2001

Eighty-eight percent of employees say they have a hard time juggling work and life.

—Aon Consulting, 2000

Only 48 percent of workers aged 35–44 are satisfied with their jobs, down from nearly 61 percent in 1995. Older workers, aged 55–64, also express a low level of satisfaction. Only about 48 percent say they are satisfied.

—Conference Board, 2002

In all income areas, satisfaction levels have fallen since 1995.

—Conference Board, 2002

These statistics show that a number of people in the United States are struggling with job and life satisfaction issues. It's disheartening to work hard and not receive satisfaction and fulfillment from your work. What about your own life? What are you using your precious energy on? What are you accomplishing? Do you get up every day with a sense of anticipation and meaning because you know you're doing what you were born to do? Do you feel that your work is a match for your abilities and personality? Or are you pouring your life into your job without feeling fulfilled or having much to show for it? Have you been spending your life helping to make someone else rich while you are left with little or nothing? Have you secretly thought you were meant to do something significant in life, but you don't know what it is?

One of the dilemmas of contemporary society seems to be a lack of meaningfulness and purpose in everyday life. Some people are acutely aware that they aren't fulfilling their potential. They

* Source: <<http://www.fishervista.com/statistics.htm>> (31 October 2002)

dread Mondays and live for the weekends because they hate their work. Their whole lives seem centered around the only two days they are free from the trapped feeling they experience at work. They long to pursue their own interests and talents. In *Waiting for the Weekend*, author Witold Rybczynski wrote,

For many people weekend free time has become not a chance to escape work but a chance to create work that is more meaningful—to work at recreation—in order to realize the personal satisfactions that the workplace no longer offers.*

Other people are fairly content with their lives, but they have a vague sense that there should be more significance to life than they are experiencing. Still others live on a surface level, pursuing a series of emotional highs that leave them empty and constantly searching for the next thrill that might satisfy them. Neither of these groups of people realizes that hidden within them is the key to living a more fulfilling life than they ever imagined.

Do you know why you exist?

Whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with their lives, the eventual goal of most people is retirement. Yet were we born just to go through certain life rituals—find a job, get married, buy a house, raise children, change jobs or careers, retire—and then die? Or is there more to life?

No Reason for Living

If you ask people, “Why do you exist?” most cannot tell you. They can’t explain their purpose in the world. They have no vision for their lives.

Do you have a sense of personal purpose? Do you know why you were born? Does your purpose give you a passion for

* Witold Rybczynski, “Waiting for the Weekend,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1991. <<http://theatlantic.com/issues/91aug/rybczynski-p2.htm>> (31 October 2002)

living? You may ask me, “Do I really need to have a reason for my existence?” My answer is, Absolutely! Life is intended to have meaning; you were not born just for the fun of it. If all you have to look forward to after working for years for other people is a gold watch and a pension, then your life is a tragedy in the making. You can know why you exist, and you can experience a remarkable life in light of that knowledge. Life doesn’t have to be an aimless, repetitive exercise, because you were not designed to simply ride a rocking horse. You were meant to be going somewhere, to be headed toward a destination.

Living without a Dream

When I speak to groups of people about vision, whether it’s in the context of business, government, or the church, I always emphasize the following truth because I believe it is crucial for each one of us to understand: The poorest person in the world is a person without a dream.

Maybe you’ve never known what you wanted to do with your life. Or maybe you had a dream once but lost sight of it through discouraging circumstances or the busyness of day-to-day living. No matter how much money you may have, if you don’t have a clear vision for your life, you are truly poor. It has been said that if you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there. What’s worse, you won’t even know when you have arrived. Unless you have a definite idea of where you want to go, the chances that you will get there are remote.

The problem is that most people have no vision beyond their current circumstances. Without a vision of the future, life loses its meaning. An absence of meaning then leads to a lack of hope. Whenever people are hopeless about their life situations, they can become resentful of their jobs or families. They feel as if they are wasting their lives, and they start living with a vague but constant internal longing for something more. They may even stop participating in life in any significant way. No matter how much money a person may have, anyone who lives like this is poor. A visionless life is a poverty-stricken existence.

Yet if you can see beyond your present circumstances, if you can have hope for the future, you have true riches, no matter how much money you have in your bank account. That is why the Bible encourages us with these words: *"I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'"* (Jeremiah 29:11). It doesn't matter what you currently have or don't have, as long as you can see what you could have. This vision is the key to life because where there's a dream, there's hope, and where there's hope, there's faith—and faith is the substance, or fulfillment, of what you are hoping for. (See Hebrews 11:1.)

The poorest person in the world is
a person without a dream.

Living with Unfulfilled Dreams

Having a vision, or a dream, is inherent in being human. What is your dream? What do you imagine yourself doing? What do you want to accomplish? Are you doing what you really want to do with your life?

Maybe you once had ideas of what you wanted to be and do, and you still have those ideas. Do you see yourself becoming a lawyer and starting your own firm? Do you dream of owning a successful boutique where people are waiting in line to buy the fashions you designed? Do you think about owning a day-care center that has a first-class curriculum and services two hundred children? Do you want to write a novel? Do you imagine yourself owning a prosperous business and being able to give more money to your church? Do you dream about going back to school and doing something with your education and academic abilities?

By the end of the work week, many of us are very tired. The question is, After exhausting ourselves, are we any closer to where we wanted to go? People have all kinds of ideas in their minds, but they rarely act on them. This is the pattern that often occurs: Five or ten years will go by, and they still haven't done anything

to help realize their dreams. Twenty years will pass, yet they haven't become what they really wanted to be or accomplished what they wanted to build or create.

While the poorest person in the world is a person without a dream, **the most frustrated person in the world is someone who has a dream but doesn't know how to bring it to pass.** This is the person whose dream has become a nightmare of unfulfilled expectations. When people feel that they are just wandering through life and wasting their potential, their despair can spill over into other areas of their lives, including their relationships, causing additional heartache. These people come to the end of their lives drained, rather than completed, because there's no relationship between their jobs and their visions; there's no relationship between their present circumstances and their dreams.

It's depressing and frustrating to have an idea for years that you haven't yet seen come to pass. Are you weary of having high expectations that never work out? Maybe by now you have so many unfulfilled dreams that it hurts too much to dream anymore. Perhaps you started to pursue your vision, but you got sidetracked or something went wrong, and you abandoned it—there wasn't enough money, it was too time-consuming, people were working against you, your day job became too demanding, or your family said it would never succeed. Since continuing to pursue your dream was so difficult, you backed off, saying, "Forget it! I'm not going to try to be what I really want to be. I'm going to get a 'regular' job with a secure salary and settle down. I'm going to live as a normal person with normal friends in a normal house with a normal paycheck and be buried in a normal grave."

Born to Be Distinct

You will never be satisfied living that way because you were not created to be "normal." You were designed by God not to blend in, but to stand out. Think of the thousands of kinds of flowers in the world. They are all flowers, but each one is unique in its species. Think of a forest. At first glance, the trees all seem

to blend together. When you get closer, however, you see that the shape of each tree is unique. Every type of tree has leaves with a distinct design. Why? Uniqueness is part of God's creation.

Individual design is as true of humanity as it is of nature. God doesn't want any one person to get lost in the midst of everyone else. There are over six billion people on the planet—and not one of them has your fingerprints. We can become complacent about this astonishing truth, yet it is something we must continually remind ourselves of since it is easy to feel lost in the crowd. Some people may consider you to be "just another person," but they are wrong. Don't ever allow anyone to cause you to think of yourself as ordinary. If anyone makes you feel less than you are, just look in the mirror and say, "You original thing, you." You are one of a kind, irreplaceable, original. There is no one else like you on the earth. God made you that way because He wanted you to be perpetually rare.

God has given you a unique vision.

In economics, the value of something is determined by how rare it is. For example, real pearls are costly because they are found only in a small number of mollusks, and they must be searched for. When you buy a real diamond, it is expensive because no two diamonds in the world are alike. Gold is costly because it is difficult to find. It is the same way with oil; it does not (usually) just spring up in your backyard. You generally have to dig deep to find it.

Similarly, God wanted you to be perpetually valuable, so He made you permanently rare. He created you as one of a kind. If you go to a sale at a discount store, you'll notice that many of the dresses, sports coats, or ties on the racks are just alike. You'll see twenty items of clothing with the same pattern and color. They're inexpensive because they were mass produced. If you want an original dress, however, you have to go to a designer.

You are not like mass-produced clothing; God has not placed you on a sale rack. You are Designer-made.

Born with a Unique Vision

God not only created each person on earth with a distinct design, but He also placed in everyone a unique vision. No person can give you this vision. It is only God-given. You can go to as many seminars as possible and receive all kinds of wonderful instruction, but no one except God can give you the idea you were born to fulfill.

The poor man, the rich man, the black man, the white man—every person has a dream in his heart. Your vision may already be clear to you, or it may still be buried somewhere deep in your heart, waiting to be discovered. Fulfilling this dream is what gives purpose and meaning to life. In other words, the very substance of life is for you to find God's purpose and fulfill it. Until you do that, you are not really living.

God has a dream and a vision for you that's supposed to carry you right out into eternity because that's what is pulling it. When you die, you're meant to leave this earth not on a pension but on a purpose. You need to make sure you can say at the end of your life, as Jesus did, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30) and not just, "I am retired," for your dream is much bigger than mere retirement.

Jesus said, "*For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth*" (John 18:37). You must have a clear reason for your life, as Jesus did. I know what mine is. I was born to raise up leaders and to train them so they can impact their entire nations for generations to come. That is my reason for living. I was born to inspire and draw out the hidden leader in every human being I meet. When you are around me, suddenly you are going to feel good about yourself. If you stay around me long enough, you'll start being your true self. Why? I was born for that. I was wired for that. What has God wired you for?

Born to Be Known for Something

Every human being was created to accomplish something specific that *no one else can accomplish*. It is crucial for you to understand this truth: You were designed to be known

for something special. You are meant to do something that will make you unforgettable. You were born to do something that the world will not be able to ignore.

The Bible is a great Book for recording the stories of people who did little things that the world can't forget. One example is Rahab, the prostitute, who risked her life for people she didn't even know. She was born to hide Joshua's spies so that the Israelites could defeat Jericho. (See Joshua 2, 6.) Everyone who reads the Old Testament knows about her act of courage.

What has God wired you for?

In the New Testament, there is the story of the woman who took an alabaster jar of perfume and anointed Jesus' head with it. This woman was taking a chance by violating the accepted social code of the day and interrupting a group of men who had gathered for a meal. Yet she decided to pour out her life in gratitude to Jesus, no matter what the consequences. Some of those present severely criticized her because she had "wasted" costly perfume on Jesus when it could have been sold for charitable purposes. Yet Jesus said to them, *"Leave her alone....I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her"* (Mark 14:6, 9). No matter how small the act may be, if you put your whole life into it, it won't be forgotten.

A Vision for Your Life

It is a deeply distressing fact that, while we all have been given unique visions, too many of us bury our dreams in a lesser existence, making ourselves a graveyard of God's precious treasure.

Perhaps you are eighteen years old. What have you done so far? Have you spent so much time trying to please your friends that you don't know who you are or what your life is about? If so, you aren't doing yourself any favors. You aren't fulfilling

your purpose. You may say you are just reacting to “peer pressure.” In reality, you are allowing others to rule your life.

Maybe you are forty years old. What have you done so far that the world can't forget? How long will you drift along without working toward your dream? Procrastination can become a full-time occupation. Some people are experts at it. They know how to avoid the real issues of life with precision. They know how to do nothing all day, or they know how to do everything except what is really important. It's depressing to be around people who are just existing, but it's exciting to be around people who know that they are doing what they were born to do.

Too many of us bury our dreams in a lesser existence, making ourselves a graveyard of God's precious treasure.

Many people spend a lifetime wandering away from who God made them to be because they have never recognized who they are in the first place. For example, perhaps you have been a secretary for twenty years. You are at the same level as when you started, even though you dream of being an administrator. You should move from being a secretary to an executive secretary, from an executive secretary to an administrative assistant, and from an administrative assistant to an administrator. People don't fulfill their visions because they have no sense of destiny. They say, “Well, I have a job. I just want to keep it.” Merely holding on to a job is like treading water. Every job should put you on a track toward a goal that is bigger than the present one so that you can fulfill your vision.

We need to be like the apostles, who were known for their acts, not their talk. The biblical book about them is called The Acts of the Apostles because they were doers. They had a destination, and they were busily working toward it. They weren't on a rocking horse. Instead, they were changing systems. They were affecting government. They were

transforming the world. Nations were afraid of them, and towns became nervous when they showed up because they were said to have “*turned the world upside down*” (Acts 17:6 NKJV). How do people feel when you show up? Do they say, “Oh, here she comes again. She probably has another new idea”? Change will always upset people who are content to be stagnant, but that shouldn’t stop you. You should be known for your vision.

What Your Vision Will Give You

It has been said that there are three kinds of people in the world: First, there are those who never seem to be aware that things are happening around them. Second, there are those who ask, “What just happened?” Third, there are those who *make* things happen.

I have observed firsthand the truth of this statement, paraphrased from John Stuart Mill: One person with vision is greater than the passive force of ninety-nine people who are merely interested in doing or becoming something. Most people have an interest in their destinies, but they have no passion or drive to fulfill them. They don’t really believe the dreams God has put in their hearts. If they do believe them, they don’t do the things that will take them in the direction of fulfilling them. Yet that is what separates the people who make an impact in the world and those who just exist on the planet.

Have you discovered what your vision is? Finding something you can put your whole self into will fill your life with new hope and purpose. It will give you a reason for living. My purpose has become my passion. It wakes me up in the morning, and it keeps me going when I’m tired. It is an antidote to depression. It causes me to have joy in the midst of great opposition because I know that what God has given me to accomplish cannot be stopped by anyone.

When you discover your vision, it will give you energy and passion. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*” The vision in your heart is the spark

that will enable you to pursue your dream because, unless you do so with all your enthusiasm and strength, it will not happen. I believe this Scripture expresses a truth that most people miss: You accomplish only what you fight for. Again, if you are merely interested in your dream, it will never come to pass. However, if you are willing to put all your energy into it, then nobody can stop it from succeeding.

I believe this Scripture also implies that if you set your hands to do something, there will inevitably be resistance, opposition, and difficulties; therefore, you have to apply pressure in order to fulfill your dream. You must put your whole might behind it. Hard work and diligence are essential ingredients to success, but they require an internal motivation. That internal motivation is vision.

Your purpose will become your passion.

Vision is the primary motivator of human action, and, therefore, everything we do should be because of the vision God has placed in our hearts. Vision influences the way you conduct your entire life, such as what you spend your time and money on and what your priorities are. Without vision, you have no values to guide your living. Life has no sense of direction. Activity has no meaning. Time has no purpose. Resources have no application.

Vision is the juice of life. It is the prerequisite for passion and the source of persistence. When you have vision, you know how to stay in the race and complete it.

Your Gift Will Make a Way for You

How is the fulfillment of vision meant to work in practical terms? Proverbs 18:16 is a powerful statement that reveals the answer: *"A man's gift makes room for him"* (NKJV). You were designed to be known for your gift. God has put a gift or talent into every person that the world will make room for. It is this gift that will enable you to fulfill your vision. It will make a way

for you in life. It is in exercising this gift that you will find real fulfillment, purpose, and contentment in your work.

It is interesting to note that the Bible does not say that a man's *education* makes room for him, but that his gift does. Somehow we have swallowed the idea that education is the key to success. Our families and society have reinforced this idea, but we will have to change our perspective if we are to be truly successful. Education is not the key to success. Don't misunderstand me. I believe in education. I'll talk more about the importance of education shortly. However, if education were the key to success, then everyone who has a Ph.D. should be financially secure and happy.

If you are intelligent but are not exercising your gift, you're probably going to be poor. If you're educated but have not developed your talent, you're likely to be depressed, frustrated, and tired; you will hate going to work on Monday mornings. There are those who have degrees in finance who have a hard time making ends meet. Doesn't it make you nervous when people who don't have any money try to tell you how to make a million dollars?

Education, in itself, doesn't guarantee anything; it is your gift that is the key to your success. The second part of Proverbs 18:16 says, "*A man's gift...brings him before great men*" (NKJV). You don't realize that the gift you're sitting on is loaded. The world won't move over for you just because you're smart. Whenever you exercise your gift, however, the world will not only make room for you, but it will also pay you for it. Anyone—yourself included—who discovers his or her gift and develops it will become a commodity. If you're a young person in high school or college who is planning your career, don't do what people say will make you wealthy. Do what you were born to do, because that is where you will make your money. No matter how big the world is, there's a place for you in it when you discover and manifest your gift.

Michelangelo poured his life into his art. That's why we still remember him five hundred years after he lived. Beethoven and

Bach put themselves wholly into their work, and their music lives forever. Alexander Graham Bell believed that sound could be converted into electrical impulses and transmitted by wire. No one remembers all the people who thought Bell was crazy; we remember only the man who had vision enough to create the telephone. Thomas Edison reportedly would spend eight or nine days straight locked up in a room working on his experiments. He didn't just happen to make a mistake and create a lightbulb; he had a dream. Although it took him a long time, he believed that we could harness energy and that it could produce light. Because he believed it, he stayed with it until he saw the fulfillment of his vision. That's what makes him unforgettable.

Anyone who develops his gift
will become a commodity.

If you do things in a halfway manner, you will probably always be able to find some sort of job, yet you are going to be simply a mediocre employee. It is when you decide that you're going to find something that is truly yours that you will find your gift, fulfill your vision, and be remembered by others.

Stirring Up Your Gift

While the gift is in us, we have the responsibility to stir it up. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, *"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you"* (2 Timothy 1:6). In the *New King James Version*, the verse is translated, *"Stir up the gift of God."* The gift is not something we learn. It is something God gave us. It is something we need to discover and then stir up. No one else can activate your gift for you. You have to do it yourself.

You stir up your gift by developing, refining, enhancing, and using it. That's where education comes in. Education can't give you your gift, but it can help you develop it so that it can be used to the maximum. Proverbs 17:8 says, *"A gift is as a precious*

stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth" (KJV). In other words, a gift is like a precious stone to the one who has it, and whenever he stirs it up, it turns into prosperity. If you use your gift, it will prosper you. Many people are working for money. That's an inferior reason to work. We must work for the vision within us.

Moreover, you are not to mimic the gifts of others. You are to stir up your own gift. Unfortunately, many people are jealous of other people's gifts. Let me encourage you not to waste your time on jealousy. Jealousy is a gift robber. It is an energy drain that will always take away the passion of life from you. You should be so busy stirring up your gift that you don't have time to be jealous of anyone else or to feel sorry for yourself.

I once read an article about Louis Armstrong, the jazz artist, who reportedly applied to go to music school when he was a young man. At his audition, he was given scales to sing, but he could sing only the first two notes properly, and he was told he didn't have what it takes to be a musician. The story said that he cried at first because he had been rejected from the music program, but that he told his friends afterward, "I know there's music in me, and they can't keep it out." He eventually became one of the most successful and beloved jazz musicians. He sold more records and made more money than scores of others who were more talented at singing. Now he is forever etched in the history of music.

What made the difference? Louis Armstrong put his life into the gift he knew he had, and this gift made room for him. He was an original, and he knew it. He wasn't about to waste time feeling sorry for himself. Instead, he put his energies into developing the musical gift within him.

Although we are all born as originals, most of us become imitators. I used to think about becoming like everyone else and joining the rat race. Yet I soon realized that if all the rats are in a race, and you win, you simply become the Big Rat. I recommend that you get out of the rat race, stop competing with the community, stop being in a contest with society, stop

trying to keep up with the Joneses, stop trying to please everybody, and decide, “I’m not going to be a rat. I’m going to find my own niche. I’m going to make room for myself in the world by using my gift.”

Perhaps you are fifty-eight, sixty-five, seventy years old. You’re looking back over the last fifty years and asking, “What have I done with my life? What have I contributed to the human race? What have I really left for the next generation to know that I was here? I have left no footprint in the sands of history.” Do you wish you had had a better understanding of vision when you were younger? Are you thinking, “I’m too old now. I don’t have the energy or time to stir up a gift”?

If you believe you’re too old to use your gift,
you’re believing a lie.

I am deeply sorry that many people in the world have worked very hard all their lives and accomplished little. Yet if you believe you’re too old to use your gift, you’re believing a lie. We read in the Bible that God went to people who were already past retirement age, and He recharged them. They have become noteworthy in history because they started over when others (even they themselves) thought their lives were almost over. (See the stories of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:11-15; 21:1-8, and Elizabeth and Zechariah in Luke 1.) Your gift will give you your youth back. Your gift will give you energy and strength. You’ll be healthier. You’ll stop talking about dying and start talking about living.

Realizing Your Vision

If you have a dream, or if you want to discover your vision, remember this: *God loves dreamers*. He gives visions, and He is attracted to people who love to dream big. Don’t forget that you are unique, special, and irreplaceable. You are not meant to be like anyone else. When you decide to be part of the norm, your

destiny is shortchanged. God wants you to stir up the gift He has given you and to develop it to the fullest.

What is the difference between the dreamer who realizes his dream and the dreamer whose dream becomes a nightmare of unfulfilled hopes? The dreamer who succeeds is someone who has a clear vision and acts on it. As long as a person can hold on to his vision, then there is always a chance for him to move out of his present circumstances and toward the fulfillment of his purpose.

If you feel trapped, underemployed, or underutilized in your job; if you own your own business and want it to grow; if you want to know how to pursue your goals in life; if you are the leader of an organization or group; if your children are grown or in school now, and you are considering reviving old interests; or wherever you are in life right now, *The Principles and Power of Vision* will enable you to—

- understand vision and why it is essential to your success.
- discover and live out your purpose in life.
- identify your vision's goals and stay on course.
- overcome obstacles to your vision.
- learn the key principles necessary for fulfilling your life's dream.
- develop a specific plan for achieving your vision.
- live the life you were always meant to live.

My desire is that you will be inspired, motivated, and challenged to get back in the race toward your dream, to get back the passion for fulfilling your goal. I want you to achieve your greatest in God's purpose for your life. I want you to get off the rocking horse and find a living stallion—your life's vision.

To do this, you need to understand and practice principles that transcend current trends and even conventional wisdom. Your success will not depend on the state of the economy, what

careers are currently in demand, or what the job market is like. You will not be hindered by your initial lack of resources or by what people think you can or cannot do. Instead, the time-tested principles of this book will enable you to fulfill your vision no matter who you are or what your background is.

You are the sum total of the choices and decisions you make every day. You can choose to stay where you are right now, or you can choose to move forward in life by pursuing your dream. I want to challenge you to stop making excuses for why you can't accomplish what you were born to do. Take your life out of neutral. God has given you the power and the responsibility to achieve your life's vision.

Most people do things because they have to. Wouldn't you like to do things because you have *decided* to, based on your purpose? You must choose to be on the offensive rather than the defensive. I hope you will decide you have had enough of being "normal" and that you will declare your distinction. Remember, you were created to stand out, not to blend in. You were designed not only to be special and unique, but also to specialize. You were created to accomplish something that no one else can accomplish.

Never expect anything less than the highest thing you can go after. Don't let people tell you, "You shouldn't have high expectations." Always expect more than what you have, more than what you are currently doing. Dream big. Somewhere inside you there is always the ability to dream. No matter how challenging it gets, don't give up, because *your vision is the key to fulfilling your life's purpose.*

Chapter Principles

1. The poorest person in the world is a person without a dream.
2. The most frustrated person in the world is someone who has a dream but doesn't know how to make it come to pass.
3. Every person was created by God to be unique and distinct.
4. God has placed in every human being a unique vision and call that is designed to give purpose and meaning to life.
5. No person can give you your vision. It is God-given.
6. Every human being was created to accomplish something that no one else can accomplish.
7. Every person was created to be known for something special.
8. One person with vision is greater than the passive force of ninety-nine people who are merely interested in doing or becoming something.
9. Your gift will make a way for you in the world and enable you to fulfill your vision.
10. You are responsible for stirring up the gift within you.
11. God loves dreamers. He gives visions, and He is attracted to people who love to dream big.
12. As long as a person can hold on to his vision, then there is always a chance for him to move out of his present circumstances and toward the fulfillment of his purpose.