

HEART: A Vision for Your Life

VISION #1 – Pastor Gary Combs – January 4, 2026 – Philippians 1:3-11

INTRO: Good morning church! Happy New Year! We're beginning a new sermon series today from the book of Philippians called "VISION: Seeing Your Place in God's Story."

When we talk about vision, we're not talking about an eye exam. We're not asking how clearly you can see your future. We're asking how clearly you can see God, His purposes, and your place in His story. And here's something important to understand right from the start: God's vision always works from the inside out. He doesn't start by fixing our circumstances; He starts by forming our hearts.

Over the next four weeks, we're going to see how following God's vision touches every part of our lives. This week, we'll talk about the heart—a vision for who you're becoming in Christ. Next week, the home—how God's vision shapes our families and relationships. Then the hands—how God sees our work and service. And finally, the harvest—how God wants you to be a witness in this world. But it all begins here... with the heart.

Need: Some of us may feel like we have no vision at all. We're drifting, reacting, just trying to get through life. But the Scriptures warn us:

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

Without a vision for your life from God, life slowly loses direction and purpose.

Others of us do have a vision, but it may be unclear, incomplete, or even in conflict with God's purposes. We know what we want, where we're going, and how we plan to get there. But our vision may be shaped more by ambition, fear, or trying to stay in our comfort zone, rather than following Christ.

Trans: Whether we have no vision or the wrong vision, the problem is the same: our hearts need to be aligned with God's vision for our lives. And that's exactly what the apostle Paul prays for in Philippians 1. From a Roman prison, he shows us how God changes the heart so that our vision becomes aligned with His purposes.

BODY: In the apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians, he expressed his joyful gratitude and pastoral affection for them and prayed that they would grow in following God's vision for their lives. We can choose to follow God's vision for our lives. How can we follow God's vision for our lives? The text gives three heart-priorities for following God's vision for our lives.

Read Text: Philippians 1:3-11 (ESV) 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace,[a] both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

THREE HEART-PRIORITIES FOR FOLLOWING GOD'S VISION FOR YOUR LIFE:

1. A heart that is shaped by God's gospel.

EXP: (3-5) Paul expressed continual gratitude and joy as he remembered their "partnership in the gospel" (5)—a word that speaks of shared commitment, not casual association. From the very first day, their hearts had been captured by the gospel, and that gospel shaped their priorities, generosity, and faithfulness.

"Thank" (3) (εὐχαριστέω, *eucharisteō*) - to be grateful, feel thankful; give thanks

"Remembrance" (3) (μνεία, *mneia*) - remembrance, memory, mention

"Prayer" (4,9 - 3x) (δέησις, *deēsis*) - a seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty to God; petition, prayer

"Joy" (4) (χαρά, *chara*) - joy, gladness, exceeding joyfulness.

"Partnership" (5) (κοινωνία, *koinōnia*) - fellowship, communion, joint participation.

"Gospel" (5, 7 - 2x) (εὐαγγέλιον, *euangelion*) - good news ,the glad tidings of salvation through Christ.

ARG: The gospel does not only save us from sin but reshapes us for mission.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

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The gospel is not just the entry point of the Christian life but the power source of it.

Romans 1:16 (ESV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

ILL: When the Philippian church first began, it didn't start with a group of people who all looked alike or came from the same background. In Acts 16, we meet three of the first people in Philippi to encounter the gospel: 1) Lydia—a successful businesswoman whose heart the Lord opened to believe the gospel and opened up her home to the apostles. 2) a slave girl—exploited, powerless, and trapped by both spiritual and human bondage. Scripture doesn't tell us what became of her, but it does show us the brokenness of the world the gospel confronts. And then there was the 3) Roman jailer—a hardened man whose life and whole household was turned upside down in a single night.

These stories remind us that the gospel moves into every layer of society. It reaches the respected and the rejected, the comfortable and the captive.

APP: Have you received the gospel? Are you being truly been shaped by it? A heart aligned with God's vision treasures gospel partnership and lives with His eternal purpose in view. That's why we say the church "exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ who have a growing HEART FOR GOD expressed in passionate worship and generous giving." As gospel partners, let's make a commitment to gather for worship every Sunday and to give generously of our time, talent, and treasure to God's work in the church!

2. A heart that is confident in God's grace.

EXP: (6-8) Paul expressed deep confidence that God would complete the work He began in the Philippians. Their perseverance did not rest on their strength, but on God's faithfulness. Even Paul's imprisonment could not diminish his affection or his confidence in God's sustaining grace.

"Work" (6) (ἔργον, ergon) - that which one undertakes to do, any product, work

"Completion" (6) (ἐπιτελέω, epiteleō) - to bring to an end, accomplish, perfect, execute, complete

"Day of Jesus Christ" (6) (ἡμέρα, hēmera) - the day; eschatological ... the day Christ will return.

"Partakers" (7) (συγκοινωνός, sugkoinōnos) - participant with others in anything, joint partner

"Grace" (7) (χάρις, charis) - that which affords joy, charm, loveliness, unmerited favor.

"Imprisonment" (7) (δεσμός, desmos) - shackled, chained. They sent gifts to him in prison (cf. Phil. 4:18)

"Defense" (7) (ἀπολογία, apologia) - a plea ("apology"); answer (for self), clearing of self, defense.

"Confirmation" (7) (βεβαίωσις, bebaiōsis) - to make firm, establish, confirm, make sure

"Affection" (8) (σπλαγχνον, splagchnon) - bowels, heart, as the seat of the tenderer affections.

ARG: God's grace begins the work, sustains the work, and perfects the work.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

ILL: Have you ever started a project you couldn't finish? You got halfway through and realized you didn't have the time, the skill, or the energy to complete it. And eventually it just sat there... unfinished. But Paul tells us something profoundly different about God. God never starts a work He doesn't intend to finish. He never runs out of power, patience, or purpose.

Your life is not a half-finished project sitting in God's garage. You are His workmanship. Even when you feel weak, discouraged, or stuck, God is still at work—shaping and completing what He began by His grace.

APP: When we trust God's grace, we stop living in fear of failure and start living in confidence of His faithfulness. We follow God's vision with assurance because He is committed to completing His work in us.

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3. A heart that is aimed at God's glory

EXP: (9-11) Paul prayed that their love would abound with knowledge and discernment, leading to moral purity, righteous fruit, and ultimately the glory and praise of God. God's vision was not merely personal maturity, but lives that reflected His glory.

“Love” (9) (ἀγάπη, *agapē*) - affection, good will, love, charity

“Abound more and more” (9) (περισσεύω, *perisseuo*) - to exceed measure, over and above measure.

“Knowledge” (9) (ἐπίγνωσις, *epignōsis*) - precise and correct knowledge and understanding

“Discernment” (9) (αἴσθησις, *aisthēsis*) - perception, not only by the senses but by the intellect; cognition, discernment: of moral discernment in ethical matters.

“Approve” (10) (δοκιμάζω, *dokimazō*) - to test, examine, prove. “To have an intelligent apprehension of what was right and wrong - of what was good and evil... It is remarkable here how anxious the apostle was not only that they should be Christians, but that they should be intelligent Christians, and should understand the real worth and value of objects.” (*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*)

“Pure and blameless” (10) (εἰλικρινής, *eilikrinēs*) - pure, sincere, pure when examined by the sun's light

“Righteousness” (11) (δικαιοσύνη, *dikaiosunē*) - the condition acceptable to God; rightness

“Glory” (11) (δόξα, *doxa*) - magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace; majesty

“Praise” (11) (εὐπαινος, *epainos*) - approbation, commendation, praise; laudation.

ARG: Spiritual fruit-filled lives are God-glorifying lives.

John 15:8 (ESV) By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Jesus calls us to do works that bring glory not to ourselves but to the Father.

Matthew 5:16 (NKJV) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

ILL: A mirror and a window are both made of glass. But a mirror draws attention to you. A window lets you see beyond yourself. When our lives are aimed at our own glory, everything becomes a mirror: our achievements, our service, even our spirituality. But when our hearts are aimed at God's glory, our lives become windows. People don't walk away seeing us; they walk away seeing Him.

APP: As we begin this new year, we must ask: What is my life aimed at? Am I growing spiritually, “abounding more and more?” We follow God's vision best when our love grows, our discernment deepens, and our lives bear fruit that brings glory to God. Why not take the next step in your spiritual journey? Are you attending, but not serving? Start serving! Attend 1 - Serve 1. Make a commitment to worship together with as gospel partners every Sunday! Bring your most generous gifts and service bearing fruit to God's glory!

CONCLUSION: As we begin a new year, God is not asking about your plans—He's asking about your heart.

1. A heart shaped by the gospel.
2. A heart confident in His grace.
3. A heart aimed at His glory.

That's God's vision for your life. And when your heart is aligned with Him, everything else begins to follow—your home, your work, and your witness in the world.

So today, the question isn't, Do I have a vision for my life? The question is, Does God have my heart? Because if He has my heart, then He will help me see my place in His story.

Let's ask Him to align our hearts with His vision as we begin this new year.

Let's pray.