



COVENANT CHURCH

Déjà Vu – Breaking the Cycle, Part 2

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Main Idea – God has a vision for your life that He will show you if you surrender to Him and determine to change your old ways. When you have received that new vision, immediately take action that will move you forward.

The good thing about bad times

- The habits you have in normal times become amplified (or more obvious) during abnormal times.
- During abnormal times you are better able to identify things that need changing.
- Bad habits and cycles hinder you from seeing the cycles and purposes of God.
- After you have identified a problem area, God will show you a vision of a better way if you first surrender to Him and repent of the wrong way you've been doing things.
- Helen Keller is quoted as having said, "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."
- Knowing God's vision for you will give you hope for the future in any circumstance.

Be excited about volunteering to God

- The Old Testament prophet Isaiah served God, and Israel, during a dark time in that nation's history. Society was in decay, offensive morals were prevalent, and God was in the process of bringing judgment on Israel.
- In the midst of that situation, Isaiah willingly volunteered to be used by God. **Isaiah 6:1-2, 8** – **In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew . . . Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."** (NKJV)
- God is asking you the same question. Are you willing to be used by Him? If so, He will give you a vision – and directions - for how He will use you.

Vision gives purpose

- God will reveal His vision to you as you get to know Him better.
- Through Jesus, you will begin to get a sense of what God wants to do through you.
- **Proverbs 29:18** – **Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the**

law, happy is he. (KJV)

- **Proverbs 29:18** – If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; but when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed. (Message)
- Good things will happen when you attend to what God has for you.
- Receiving the vision begins with surrendering your life to God, and then abandoning the old ways you've been doing.
- If you are a parent, encourage your children to seek God's vision for their own lives, and then to believe it.

Old habits cloud vision

- Oftentimes, individuals give up on God's vision as they reach their middle years. Psychologist Judith Meyerowitz is quoted as having said, "Something happens to many people at around the age of 45. They lose the vision of a greater future for themselves."
- If bad habits caused you to forget God's vision for you, don't despair. Recommit yourself to the vision. Volunteer again for it. God's best is still ahead of you.
- If you give up on the vision, it won't happen.

Ignoring habits steals vision

- The Old Testament character Samson is familiar to most Christians.
- **Judges 13-17** tell of the prophecy given to Samson's parents (13:5) and the subsequent major events of Samson's life.
- God had set Samson apart for specific purposes even before he was born.
- However, Samson fell into bad habits that damaged his life and the lives of many around him.
- In life, Samson wanted what *he* wanted more than he wanted what *God* wanted.
- Don't make the same mistakes as Samson. Don't make compromises on what is right, or try to ignore a problem that exists.

Obedience restores vision

- If you have fallen into some bad habits or patterns in your life, you will need to take some kind of action.
- The Apostle Paul, before his conversion to Christianity, persecuted Christians.
- Jesus appeared to Paul in a vision that caused Paul to change his ways and enthusiastically serve Jesus.
- **Acts 9:3-7** – As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to

him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. (NKJV)

- The phrase "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" apparently indicates that - for some time - Paul had been struggling with his conscience. Jesus was telling Paul that it was difficult to continue with sinful behavior when his conscience was bothering him.
- Paul took action. He repented of his ways and - through Jesus - became one of the Bible's most effective individuals.

Vision brings freedom and releases purpose

- The Old Testament prophet Elisha dramatically changed his direction in life after an encounter with God through Elijah. **1 Kings 19:19-21 – So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant. (NKJV)**
- In these latter days before Jesus returns, that same type of dramatic change in direction can happen for you. The Bible tells that new visions and dreams from God are especially common right now. **Acts 2:17 – 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'**
- Surrender to God. Repent of your old ways. Begin to walk in obedience.
- "Where you are going is not the problem, what you aren't willing to leave behind to get there is."

Reflective Questions for Déjà Vu – Breaking the Cycle, Part 2

1. The prophet Isaiah enthusiastically said, “Send me!” when God asked for a volunteer. If you are blessed by being similar to Isaiah in that way, what do you feel when you volunteer for God’s purpose?
2. Did you have a purpose from God from which you drifted away at some point? If so, why did you lose focus? Is there anything from this sermon message that encourages you to revisit that original vision?
3. What does it mean to surrender to God? Why is repentance (casting off bad habits and re-focusing on right things) necessary for a vision to be renewed?
4. Has your conscience ever bothered you even as you were enthusiastically involved with a wrong, or meaningless, behavior?
5. The prophet Elisha took action. The apostle Paul took action. Is there any action you need to immediately take to restore God’s vision and purpose in your life?