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Title: 4 Biblical Priorities for the Future

Purpose: Provoke people to embrace 4 essential Biblical priorities in 2026: faith, vision, obedience and our mission.

Truth for Today: Four essential Biblical priorities to embrace in 2026 are: faith, vision, obedience and the mission Jesus gave us.

Topic: Values, Priorities, Faith, Vision, Obedience, Mission.

Text: Hebrews 11:6

Series title: Pastors Prescription for 2026

Series purpose: Provoke people to remember the past, teach them how to face the future and make Biblical choices for spiritual growth and significance in 2026.

4 Biblical Priorities for the Future

I. Introduction

- A. Review, mini–New Year’s Series: ‘Pastors Prescription for 2026’...the past, the future, and the process for spiritual growth and significance. Last week we talked about remembering the past.
- B. Today we’ll talk about facing the future guided by 4 essential Biblical priorities: faith, vision, obedience and our mission. Our priorities shape our lives; they determine the kind of person we are and what’s important to us. That’s why it’s so important to align our priorities with Biblical priorities.
- C. Title: 4 Biblical Priorities for the Future

II. #1 Face the future with faith in God

- A. [Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)] [...it is impossible to please God without faith...] Def. faith: a firm conviction of belief in God and the truth of God’s Word.¹ Being certain that God exists, God can and will do what He says and often what we ask in prayer. Faith is how we are saved, receive answered prayer, and endure difficulty. (3 faith lessons)
- B. #1 Faith believes and acts upon God’s Word and Spirit. [Luke 5:4–6 (NLT)] When he (*Jesus*) had finished speaking, he said to Simon...let down your nets to catch some fish.”⁵...Simon replied, “we worked hard all last night and didn’t catch a thing. **But if you say so**, I’ll let the nets down again.”⁶ And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear!] Peter had Jesus but we have the Bible and Holy Spirit to speak to us. When the Lord speaks, we need to have faith and act. E.g. Gander
- C. #2 Faith acts like what we believe for will happen before it does. [Philemon 22 (NLT)] ... **please prepare a guest room for me**, for I am **hoping** that God will answer your **prayers** and let me return to you soon.] E.g. Larry building churches; land \$ only.
- D. #3 Faith and doubt have a voice. We need to speak what we believe. E.g. lost shears
- E. NY, let’s seek God’s will and face the future with faith in what God will do.

III. #2 Face the future with a vision of doing something for God that has eternal significance

- A. What will you be remembered for when you die? Paul’s priority in life [2 Cor. 4:15 18 (NLT)]...we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will **soon be gone**, (*NIV temporary*) but the things we cannot see will **last forever**

- (*NIV eternal*).] When our life on earth is over, trophies, possessions, achievement awards won't be remembered. Only what we do for Jesus will last forever.
- B. Testimonies: **Pics** Karen Rayfield single mom on the street, Terry Andersen disabled CR, LaNell 12 yr. cancer survivor with a heart for the world. # trips, countries, teams
 - C. All of us have spiritual gifts, natural abilities, resources and life experiences that can reach people for Jesus. Let's prioritize doing something with eternal significance NY.
- IV. #3 Face the future determined to do God's will by obeying His Word and the Holy Spirit.
- A. Doing the will of God should be our highest aspiration. [**Psalm 143:10 (NLT)** **Teach me to do your will (NCV to do what you want)**, for you are my God. May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing.]
 - B. How do we know what God's will is? Do what the Bible says and do what the Holy Spirit leads us to do.
 1. Do what the Bible says. [**John 14:15 (NLT)** **"If you love me, obey my commandments."** **Psalm 119:93 (NLT)** I will never forget your commandments, for **by them you give me life.**] Do we see God's commands as restrictions or protections as the way to please and honor God? **E.g.** bike street.
 2. Do what the HS says. [**Acts 8:26–31 (NLT)**...Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, **"Go...down the desert road..."**²⁷ So **he started out**, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia...he was reading aloud from the book of...Isaiah. ²⁹ **The Holy Spirit said to Philip**, "Go...walk along beside the carriage."³⁰ **Philip ran** over...and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"] Philip tells him about Jesus and he is baptized. The same HS lives in us and wants to speak to us.
 3. In 2026 we all want to obey God's Word and hear and obey the HS. **E.g.** Wake up and say (1) Lord I want to do your will today! (2) If you come back today, I want to be ready. (3) Help me obey your commandments and hear and follow the HS.
- V. #4 Face the future committed to the mission Jesus gave us.
- A. What is our life's mission main mission as a Christian? To reach and disciple as many people around the world as we can for Jesus; to help as many people as we can go to heaven and escape hell. It's called, the Great Commission, given 5 times by Jesus.
 - B. This was the main priority of Paul [**1 Cor. 9:19–22 (NLT)** Even though I am a free man...**I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ.** ²⁰ When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ...²¹ When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. ...²² When I am with those who are weak (*sick, helpless, powerless, low social standing, unbelievers*), I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, **I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.**] **E.g.** He told people about Jesus in synagogues, political leaders, demon possessed, in jail, everywhere he went. His #1 priority
 - C. At COTR this passion drives us. Last year we invested \$1,539,810 outside the 4 walls of the church to reach people. We witness and pray for others, we give away Bibles, build churches, support missionaries and ministries, and do events here and around the world. In the NY let's do more, individually and together as a church.

- D. In 2026, let's each share our faith and pray with as many people as we can, let's invest as much as we can, and support as many missionaries and ministries as we can.

VI. Conclusion: Let's commit to adopt these 4 essential Biblical priorities in 2026:

- A. (1) Expectant faith for what God will do, (2) A vision for eternal significance, (3) Obedience to God's Word and Spirit and (4) Invest ourselves fully in our mission to reach people for Jesus.

VII. Response

- A. Souls:

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Ac 8:5). Broadman Press.
2. Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

IX. Supplemental material

- A. // Dr's prescription for our spiritual life. Last week we talked about remembering the past. (1) Remember where we came from and rejoice in what God has done since saving us. (2) Remember how God helped us in the past with trouble, problems or a crisis. (3) Remember how God provided for us and met our needs in the past. (4) Remember the outcome of past sinful choices and the people who got us in trouble.
- B. They determine whether we tell the truth or lie, what we do with our time and money, how we treat people, how we do our job, what we do when we make a mistake, and most importantly whether we're pleasing God or not.
- C. Face the future with Courage
- D. Face the future with the right people...committed Christians in your inner circle.
- E. Face the future fighting back when Satan attacks
- F. Faith compels us to do illogical things when we're convinced God is leading us.
Peter water, Elisha and widow/ oil
1. E.g. Why? I believe the Lord told me to do it so it's His responsibility to meet the need.
- G. Faith believes until...the answer comes or circumstances change. Someone dies
1. My prayer...thank you I'm one day closer to being healed
 - 2.
- H. 1 Peter 1:17 (NLT) And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents."
- I. 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV) Each of you should **use whatever gift you have received** to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.]
- J. Acts 8:26–31 (NLT) As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷ So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and he was now returning.

Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹

The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.” ³⁰

Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.

- K. **Philip** (Φίλιππος [*Philippos*]). The deacon (6:5) and evangelist (21:8), not the apostle of the same name (Mark 3:18).¹
- L. The greatest battle we face is whose will am I doing, mine or Gods?
- M. Matthew 26:39 (NLT) He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”
- N. Why did Paul have this priority? He literally had a vision of heaven. He knew heaven and hell are real and everyone will spend eternity somewhere and he cared about their soul. Because Jesus saved him, he wanted to see as many people as possible saved using his time, talent and treasure. We should follow his example in 2026. E.g.
- O. Don’t forget the hurting, needy and broken, Mt 25 compassion for the hurting and broken and lost
- P. Put your money where your mouth is. Prioritize the Great Commission in giving and investing
- Q. Matthew 6:9–10 (NLT) Pray like this: Our Father in heaven...¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. **May your will be done** (*NCV what you want*) on earth, as it is in heaven.] Before mature Christians pray for themselves, daily bread, they pray for God’s will to be done in their lives and throughout the world.
- R. Do what the Holy Spirit says. [Acts 9:10–17 (NLT)...**The Lord spoke** to him in a **vision**, calling, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord!” he replied. ¹¹ **The Lord said**, “Go over to Straight Street...ask for a man... named Saul...¹³ “But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I’ve heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!...¹⁵ But **the Lord said**, “Go...¹⁷ **So Ananias went** and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”]