

## Vision (Part One)

There Must be a Connecton Between Long and Short Goals

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This chain of thoughts began with hearing the English lady, Susan Boyle, singing a song from the musical *Les Miserables*. It was titled "I Dreamed a Dream." In the musical, the song is sung by a female character, Fantine. She's a miserable young factory worker dying of disease. She was a pretty young woman who had conceptions of love, husband, married life and children, but she became pregnant during a summer romance with a man she thought would help her to fulfill her dreams, but he abandoned her when she became pregnant.

Her dream was thoroughly shattered when she found that she could not support herself and her baby on the factory income, and so she began to sell all of her value things to get some money. When that did not work, she turned to prostitution. When our fellow employees heard of the prostitution, they persecuted her. When her supervisor discovered it, he fired her. Despite her dreams, she found herself alone with grave responsibility to an infant. She was unemployed, destitute, and in addition, a disease with silently and insidiously her taking her life.

The song was sung while she was in the hospital, dying. It has an appealing, plaintive melody. The lyrics, I think, are something that we can all relate to, especially the last verse of the song. I am going to tell you what it is. She said,

*I had a dream my life would be  
So different from this hell I'm living  
So different now from what it seemed  
Now life has killed the dream I dreamed*

A dream is a function or an aspect of a much broader subject of vision. Understanding vision begins with knowing it is related to the faculty or the sense of sight. It means the ability to anticipate, to make provisions for future events. It also means to have insight or imagination, to be able to picture, to conceptualize. It is very important to creative power, and therefore, motivation to accomplish. It is vision that plays a major role in creating anticipation, and therefore, even hopelessness in times of despair.

The entire chapter 11 of Hebrews is devoted to vision's importance in supporting the faith of Abel, of Enoch; of Abraham, who looked for a city; of Isaac, concerning the

blessing of Jacob over Esau; of Joseph—though he died in Egypt, he desired to be buried in the Promised Land. Moses forsook Egypt, because he saw in his mind's eye Him who is invisible. Even Rahab, Gideon, Barack, Jephthah and yes, even Samson, who finally saw after he had been blinded. Such strong testimony tells me that *vision* is an absolute necessity to a Christian's life.

I'm going to re-read the last verse of Fantine's song again. Listen to the words, maybe a bit more carefully this time:

*I had a dream my life would be  
So different from this hell I'm living  
So different now from what it seemed  
Now life has killed the dream I dreamed*

Life's realities—this world—killed the dream she dreamed. This, brethren, is the danger that we face every day in our life. It is this world were called to come out of, because if we allow it, the world will destroy our vision of living in the wonderful World Tomorrow the gospel portrays for us. Can we understand, brethren, that having a vision does not stand alone? Vision must be supported by other sub-factors in order to sustain successfully accomplishing it.

Back again to what the song tells us about Fantine. Fantine dreamed of a romantic marriage and family life, but she permitted herself to commit fornication. She got pregnant, and step-by-step, her vision began shattering and her life began to unravel. Fantine's vision was supported by neither godly morality nor godly ethics. She was not denied the God-given right to imagine beauty, but ignorance of support qualities destroyed her.

The vision of beauty all by itself is not enough. That vision may include the beauty of living eternally in the Kingdom of God with Christ as our Leader, without disease, and combined with constant challenge and accomplishment, or even having the beauty of holiness itself. That vision may supply a measure of motivation, to be sure. But it must be supported by an ever-increasing understanding of the goal itself, as well as what it takes to accomplish it.

This means that there must be a program, a plan for accomplishing the goal one desires to attain. I am talking about a detailed plan, one detailed enough to adhere to, by and through internal controls that will not permit one to deviate very far to either the right or the left. Fantine did not have this.

I think that most of us find what God offers, as shown in the gospel, as being easily understood and exciting, to say the least. I believe also that we find, as we get involved in pursuing what God sets before us, it's a lot more complex than we first imagined. Then we believe what Jesus said: The way is narrow and it's difficult.

I also believe the place where we confront the most significant failures is in managing our part of this great adventure. It requires focus, diligence, and the sacrifice of time and energy to support the vision. The long-term achievement of the vision is built upon a tremendous multitude of short-term achievements. Emotional control over the small amounts in a single day makes a big difference in the long term.

Fantine is, of course, a fictional character, merely a literary device Victor Hugo, the author, used to move the story along. But a principle of great value can be learned from her. It was a tragic part of her way of life. She was only living for her enjoyment for that day and that day only. Her long term dream and her daily ethic were not coordinated. There was no plan to connect them. Both were, in effect, loose ends, rather than her understanding the absolutely essential need for her to see the connection between the two.

We must know, brethren, that each day of our life is connected to the dream.