

SEEING YOUR FUTURE WITH FAITH, NOT FEAR

The Awesome Power of Vision – Rick Warren
Parts 1-2

Paul: “I have not been disobedient to the vision God gave me.” Acts 26:19

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18

AN UNCLEAR VISION LEADS TO . . .

- Double minded people can't make up their minds. They waver back and forth in everything they do. James 1:8

- When a country is in chaos, everybody has a plan to fix it. But it takes a leader of real understanding to straighten things out. Proverbs 28:2 (The Message)

- Some have refused to let their faith guide their conscience and their faith has been destroyed like a wrecked ship. 1 Timothy 1:19 (GW)

Jesus: “Your eyes are the lamp of your body. If your eyes are open and good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your vision is bad, your whole life will be full of darkness. And if the light you think you have is really darkness, it's the worst kind of darkness you can have!” Matthew 6:22-23

EXAMPLE: SEEING THE FUTURE WITH FAITH OR FEAR

“Moses gave the men these instructions as he sent them out to explore the new land: ‘Go northward through the Negev into the hill country and SEE what the land is like and FIND OUT whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? Do their towns have walls or are they unprotected? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there many trees? Enter the land boldly, and bring back samples of the crops YOU SEE.’” Numbers 13:17-20 (NLT)

“So they SPIED OUT the land all the way from the wilderness . . . up to Hebron. There THEY SAW the Ahmanites, the Sheshites, and the Talmites, all families descended from Anak. When they came to Eshcol, they cut down a cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it back on a pole! They also took samples of pomegranates and figs.” Numbers 13:21-23 (TLB)

“After SEEING the land for forty days, the men returned to Moses and Aaron, and the people of Israel waiting at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community WHAT THEY HAD SEEN and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land.” Numbers 13:25-26 (NLT)

LOOKING AT THE FUTURE WITH FEAR CAUSES PROBLEMS

1. I OVEREMPHASIZE

“This was their report to Moses: ‘We arrived in the land you sent us TO SEE, and it is indeed a magnificent country—a land “flowing with milk and honey!” Here is some of its fruit as proof. BUT the people living there are powerful, and their cities and towns are fortified and very large. We ALSO SAW the Anakim, descendants of Anak, who are living there!’” Numbers 13:27-28 (TLB)

2. I PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO

“The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the Hill Country; and the Canaanites live near the Sea and along the Jordan River!” Numbers 13:29 (NLT)

3. I UNDERESTIMATE

“But the men who had gone up with Caleb said, ‘WE CAN'T attack those people; they are stronger than we are.’” Numbers 13:31 (NIV)

Job: “What I have always feared has happened to me. What I have dreaded has come to be.” Job 3:25 (NLT)

“They said, ‘The land we explored DEVOURS those living in it! ALL the people we saw there are of great size! We SAW GIANTS there! We seemed like grasshoppers IN OUR OWN EYES, and we looked the same to them!’” Numbers 13:32-33 (NIV)

4. I

They SPREAD A BAD REPORT about the land they had explored.” Numbers 13:32

“Don't say that everything people call a conspiracy is a conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear. Don't let it terrify you.” Isaiah 8:12 (GW)

5. I

“Then all the people began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. And they grumbled and complained in a great chorus against their leaders, Moses and Aaron. ‘We wish we'd died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!’ they wailed.” Numbers 14:1-2

THE ANTIDOTE:

“Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go at once and take possession of the land RIGHT NOW! WE CAN certainly do this!’” Numbers 13:30 (NLT)

“Then Joshua said: ‘We saw the land ourselves, and it's very good. IF WE OBEY the Lord, he will surely give us that land rich with milk and honey. So don't rebel. We have no reason to be afraid of the people who live there. The Lord is on our side, and they won't stand a chance against us!’” Numbers 14:6-9 (CEV)

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WHEN YOU NEED A FRESH START

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God: "I'll save the people of Joseph. I know their pain and I'll make them as good as new. They'll get a FRESH START, as if nothing had ever happened! Why? Because I am their God and I'll do what needs to be done for them." Zechariah 10:6 (The Message)

God: "I will make a FRESH START with Israel. They will burst into bloom like a crocus in the spring." Hosea 14:5 (The Message)

"God gives a hand to those down on their luck, and he gives a FRESH START to those who are ready to quit." Psalm 145:14 (The Message)

SIMPLE STEPS TO A FRESH S.T.A.R.T.

S

EXCUSE 1:

"Then Gideon started making excuses: He said, 'But Lord, how can I save the nation of Israel? I belong to Manasseh, the smallest tribe, and my family is the weakest and poorest family in the tribe. And I am the youngest and least important person in my family!' Then the Lord replied, 'But I will be with you.'" Judges 6:15-16

EXCUSE 2:

"The Lord says this: 'Do not cling to events of the past and do not dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do! It is happening already. Just look and you can see it starting now!" Isaiah 43:18-19 (GNT)

"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance." Proverbs 28:13 (TLB)

EXCUSE 3:

"Don't give up and act helpless in times of trouble." Proverbs 24:10 (CEV)

EXCUSE 4:

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done."
Ecclesiastes 11:4 (TLB)

T

ASK:

"You have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He's the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power."
Colossians 2:10 (TLB)

ASK:

"You have experienced many things. Were all those experiences wasted? I hope not!"
Galatians 3:4 (ICB)

"You should continue following the teachings you learned. You know they are true, because you trust those who taught you." 2 Timothy 3:14 (NCV)

ASK:

"Get all the advice you can and you'll succeed; without it you'll fail."
Proverbs 15:22 (GNT)

A

"According to your faith will it be done to you." Matthew 9:29 (NIV)

"We should make plans—counting on God to direct us." Proverbs 16:9 (TLB)

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

R

"Be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind, having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude." Ephesians 4:23 (AMP)

- "Happy are those who . . . are always meditating on God's Word . . . They are like trees along a river . . . that do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do." Psalm 1:1-3 (GNT)

- "Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts."
Proverbs 4:23 (GNT)

T

"When the clay pot that the potter was forming on the wheel didn't turn out the way he intended, he simply started over, using the same clay to make a new pot."
Jeremiah 18:4

"Then God said to Jeremiah, 'Can I not do with you as the potter does? Just as the potter works the clay in his hand, so are you in my hand and I am working on you.'"
Jeremiah 18:5-6

"When anyone becomes united with Christ, he becomes a new person inside. He is not the same anymore. The old life is gone and a fresh new life has begun!"
2 Corinthians 5:17

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CHRIST'S VISION: A UNIFIED FAMILY

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Parts 1-2

Jesus: "Again, this is what I'm commanding you to do: You must love each other!"
John 15:12

"I am not praying for the world, but for those you've given me, because they belong to you. Now I am departing the world and I'm leaving them behind . . . Father, protect them by the power of your name so that they may be united as one just as we are one." John 17:9, 11

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will believe in me because of their testimony. And my prayer for all of them is that they too will be one—just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and the world will believe you sent me." John 17:20-21

1. MY UNITY WITH OTHER BELIEVERS IS _____

"I'm giving you a new commandment: you must love each other! You must love each other in the same way that I have loved you. Your love for one another will be the proof to the world that you really are my disciples." John 13:34-35

2. THE TRINITY IS OUR _____

"Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one with each other as we are one." John 17:11 (NIV)

3. _____ WAS THAT WE'D LIVE IN UNITY

"My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father—that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and the world will believe you sent me." John 17:21 (TLB)

4. GOD GIVES US _____ SO THAT WE'LL BE UNIFIED

"I have given them the glory you gave me, SO THAT they may be one, just as we are."
John 17:22 (NLT)

5. OUR UNITY IS OUR GREATEST _____

"May they be brought into complete unity so that the world knows that you sent me and that you have loved them even as you have loved me." John 17:23 (NIV)

6. UNITY _____

"Then all the believers united together in prayer. After this prayer, the building where they were meeting shook and they were all filled with God's Holy Spirit. And they began to speak God's message with boldness." Acts 4:24, 31 (TLB)

7. WHEN A CHURCH IS TRULY UNIFIED, _____

"The entire group of believers were completely united in their hearts and in their spirit. Everyone shared their possessions with each other. In fact, they shared everything they had." Acts 4:32

8. _____ ARE VISIBLE SIGNS OF UNITY

"For just as your body is a unity even though it has many different parts, it is the same with Christ's body, the church. We're all different, but we form one body. We've all been baptized into Christ's body by the same Spirit, no matter whether we were Jews or Greeks or slaves or freemen, we now have all received the same Spirit."
1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (AMP)

"When we eat the bread that we break together, isn't that sharing in the body of Christ? By sharing in the same loaf of bread, we become one body, even though there are many of us." 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (CEV)

9. FOCUSING ON _____ CREATES UNITY

"Dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves! Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose."
1 Corinthians 1:10 (TLB)

10. UNITY BEGINS WHEN WE REALIZE _____

"Yes, we're all different parts in Christ's Body, but there's still only one body! So the eye can't say to the hand, 'I don't need you' and the head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you.' There must never be any division in the body allowed. Instead, all the members must care for each other equally." 1 Corinthians 12:20-21, 25 (NLT)

"When one part of the body suffers, every other part is to suffer with it. And when one part of the Body is honored, every other part is to rejoice with it! Together you are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of that Body!" 1 Corinthians 12:26-27

11. JESUS DIED TO _____

"By his death on the cross Christ reconciled us and united different races into one body, He brought us all back to God, ending the hostility." Ephesians 2:16 (GNT)

12. JESUS EXPECTS ME TO _____ AT UNIFYING CHRISTIANS

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. Bind yourselves together by living in peace with each other." Ephesians 4:3

"This is what I have asked of God for you: that you will be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love." Colossians 2:2 (TLB)

"Most important of all, love each other! Love is what holds you all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:14

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MY PART IN FULFILLING CHRIST'S VISION

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Parts 1-3

THE BIBLE: WHY UNITY IN CHRIST'S CHURCH IS SO IMPORTANT

1. My unity with other believers is the proof that I'm saved.
2. The Trinity is our model for unity.
3. Jesus' last prayer was that members of his church would live in unity.
4. God gives us his glory so we'll be united.
5. Our unity is our greatest witness to unbelievers.
6. Unity removes fear and creates boldness.
7. When a church is truly unified, everybody's needs are met.
8. Baptism and communion are visible signs of unity.
9. Focusing on our common purpose creates unity.
10. Unity begins when we realize we're incomplete without each other.
11. Jesus died to unite us, not divide us.
12. Jesus expects me to work hard at unifying Christians.

HOW CAN I BE AN AGENT OF UNITY IN MY CHURCH?

1. FOCUS ON _____

"Let us concentrate on the things which create harmony and the growth of our fellowship together." Romans 14:19 (PHILLIPS)

"There is only one Body and one Spirit, and we have been called to one hope. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and only one God, who is the Father of us all, who is over all, is through all and is in all." Ephesians 4:4-6

"Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with . . . They have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently."

Romans 14:1 (The Message)

"Let there be real harmony so there are no divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, UNITED in thought and purpose." 1 Corinthians 1:10 (TLB)

2. REALIZE I MUST CONTINUALLY _____

"MAKE EVERY EFFORT to keep the unity of the Spirit. Bind yourselves together by living in peace with each other." Ephesians 4:3

• DON'T BRING _____ INTO THE CHURCH

"You're acting (in the church) the same way unbelievers act in the world! The proof of your immaturity is your arguing and quarreling and the divisions you've created. That proves you still belong to the world and are living by worldly values! When one of you says, 'I support Paul,' and another says, 'I support Apollos,' you're acting like unbelievers, not like Christ. Is Apollos important? No! Is Paul important? No!" 1 Corinthians 3:3-5

• DON'T GET SUCKED INTO _____

"Jesus said, 'My kingdom is NOT of this world. If it were, my servants would fight.'" John 18:36 (NIV)

"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. The Lord's servant must never quarrel; instead, you must be kind to everyone, able to teach, and patient with everyone. You must be humble, gently teaching those who oppose the truth." 2 Timothy 2:23-25

"Don't tear apart the work of God over a rule about food." Romans 14:20 (NLT)

3. BE _____

"Nothing is perfect except your Words." Psalm 119:96 (TLB)

"Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." Ephesians 4:2 (NLT)

"Most of all, let love guide your life, for THEN the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony." Colossians 3:14 (TLB)

"Love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything." 1 Peter 4:8 (The Message)

4. OFFER _____

"Let's use ALL our energy in getting along with each other. Help each other by using encouraging words; Don't drag others down by finding fault."

Romans 14:19-20 (The Message)

"A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive he is." Proverbs 16:21 (GNT)

"What right do you have to criticize someone else's servants? Only their Lord can decide if they are doing right." Romans 14:4 (CEV)

"Why do you criticize and judge your brother or sister in Christ? Why do you think you are better than they are? We'll all be judged one day, not by each other's standards, or even by our own, but by the judgment of God." Romans 14:10 (PHILLIPS)

"You've been called to live in freedom—not freedom to indulge your selfish nature, but freedom to serve each other in love. God's entire law is summed up in 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' But you keep biting and devouring each other and tearing each other apart, you will be destroyed by each other." Galatians 5:13-15

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MAINTAINING HARMONY IN MY HOME, SMALL GROUP, AND CHURCH

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“Strive earnestly to guard and keep THE HARMONY of the Spirit.”
Ephesians 4:3 (AMP)

“God is not a God of disorder. He is the God of peace, and he wants it in all his churches.” 1 Corinthians 14:33 (GW)

HOW TO MAINTAIN HARMONY & PREVENT ‘EXPLOSIONS’ “Do Not Let . . .”

1. _____
“Preserve sound judgment and discernment. DO NOT LET them out of your sight.”
Proverbs 3:21 (NIV)

“What a shame—yes, how stupid!—to decide before knowing the facts!”
Proverbs 18:13 (TLB)

“Don’t get ahead of the Master and jump to conclusions with your judgments before all the evidence is in.” 1 Corinthians 4:5 (The Message)

“You should not pass judgment on anyone before the right time. And final judgment must wait until the Lord comes; he’ll bring to light dark secrets and expose the hidden purposes of people’s minds.” 1 Corinthians 4:5 (GNT)

“DO NOT LET anyone fool you by telling you things that aren’t true.”
Ephesians 5:6 (NCV)

2. _____
“DO NOT LET yourself cause anyone to be offended, whether they are Jews or Gentiles (non-Christians) or those in the church of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:32 (AMP)

“Live in harmony and be sympathetic.” 1 Peter 3:8 (GW)

“DO NOT LET what you know is good to get a bad name.” Romans 14:16 (GNT)

“Settle matters quickly with an adversary.” Matthew 5:25 (NIV)

“Anyone who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if you confess and forsake them, you get another chance.” Proverbs 28:13 (TLB)

“We can’t just go ahead and do whatever pleases ourselves. We must be considerate of the doubts and fears of others who are offended. We should think of what’s good

for others and build them up by doing what pleases them. For Christ did not please himself. Instead, he felt, as the scripture tells us, ‘When others insult you, it hurts me.’”
Romans 15:1-3

3. _____
“DO NOT LET your freedom become an excuse for indulging your selfish nature. Instead, let love make you serve each other. For the whole law of God can be summed up in one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if, instead of showing love, you’re always biting and devouring one another watch out! You’ll destroy each other. Instead, live by following the Spirit and you won’t do what your self-centered nature craves.” Galatians 5:13-16 (GNT/NLT)

“Aim for harmony in the church and build each other up. DO NOT LET the eating of food destroy the work of God. All foods are all right to eat, but it is wrong to eat food that causes someone else to sin. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that will cause your brother or sister to sin.” Romans 14:19-21 (NLT/NCV)

“Don’t think only of your own good. Think of other Christians and what is best for them.”
1 Corinthians 10:24 (NLT)

“I try to please everyone in everything I do. I don’t just do what I like or what is best for me, but what is best for them so they may be saved.” 1 Corinthians 10:33 (NLT)

4. _____
“DO NOT LET selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves.” Philippians 2:3 (NCV)

“DO NOT LET class distinction enter into your faith in Jesus Christ!” James 2:1 (NJB)

“Give the same respect to everyone alike. Pay no regard to social standing. Be humble and meet people on their own terms. And don’t think you know it all.”
Romans 12:16 (NJB)

“DO NOT LET kindness and truth ever leave you! Wear them like a necklace and write them deep within your heart!” Proverbs 3:3 (NAS)

“A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can destroy. By our speech we can . . . turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke from the pit of hell.”
James 3:6 (The Message)

“DO NOT LET any harmful words come out of your mouths, but ONLY what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”
Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

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WHAT SEEDS WILL YOU PLANT THIS SPRING?

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“The kingdom of God is like this: Someone plants some seed in the ground. Then, during both the day and night, whether that person is awake or asleep, the seed is growing silently. Now the person who planted the seed can't see how it is growing (because it's hidden under the ground). But in darkness, the soil is helping the seed to grow. First the plant sprouts through. Then the tender stalk appears. Then the stalk puts on buds, and finally the full head of grain or fruit appears. Then, when it is ready and ripe, the farmer cuts it, because it's harvest time!” Mark 4:26-29

LESSONS

1. God expects growth in my life and in my church.
2. Any fruit in my life (good or bad) comes from seeds planted by people
3. We often can't see the seeds growing in our lives.
4. Growth in my life is slow and gradual and happens in stages.

“Be confident of this: That He who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.”
Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

LAWS OF SPIRITUAL PLANTING

1. EVERYTHING STARTS _____

At Creation: *“Then God said, ‘Let the earth have seed-bearing plants and let trees bear fruit with seeds in them. Then let those seeds produce the same kind of plants and trees that they came from. So, the earth was filled with seed-bearing vegetation.”*
Genesis 1:11

2. A SEED HAS NO POWER _____

Jesus: *“Unless a grain of wheat is planted and buried in the soil, it cannot reproduce. It will remain only a single seed. BUT, if it dies, it will produce many seeds and much fruit. If you selfishly hold on to your own life, you'll lose it! But if you give up living for this world, you'll gain eternal life!”* John 12:24-25

“Does a farmer always plow and never plant? Is he forever cultivating his soil but never planting it? No! . . . The farmer knows just what to do, for God has given him understanding.” Isaiah 28:24, 26 (NLT)

3. SOME SEED SHOULD BE _____

“Because the famine was so severe, everyone in Egypt sold their land to Pharaoh . . . Then Joseph told them this: ‘I will provide you with seed so you can plant crops. Then, when you harvest it, you are to give 20 percent of it back to the King, and you get to keep 80 percent. But don't eat all your seed! Use your seed to plant next year's crops, so you can feed your family in the future.’ The people replied, ‘You've saved our lives!’”
Genesis 47:20-25

“God, who supplies seed to the farmer and bread to eat, will give you more and more seed to plant and he will make it grow so that you can then give away even more and more fruit from your harvest!” 2 Corinthians 9:10 (TLB)

4. WHATEVER I PLANT IS _____

“Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of God. You will reap exactly what you plant.” Galatians 6:7

“Dishonest people can get rich for a moment but if you plant righteousness, you'll harvest a reward that lasts.” Proverbs 11:18

“A stupid person plants discord and conflict by making arrogant assumptions. But those who listen to advice will be wise!” Proverbs 13:10

“Troublemakers plant seeds of strife, and their gossip separates the best of friends.”
Proverbs 16:28 (NLT)

“Those who plant seeds of injustice will harvest disaster. Their reign of terror will come to an end.” Proverbs 22:8 (NLT)

“If you plant the good seeds of righteousness, you'll harvest a crop of my love. So plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, so that he may come and shower goodness on you like rain.” Hosea 10:12 (NLT)

5. I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE _____

Jesus: *“I sent you to reap where you didn't plant; others had already done work before you, and you will gather the harvest.”* John 4:38

6. I HARVEST IN A _____

“There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven . . . A time to plant and a time to harvest . . . A time to scatter and a time to gather.”
Ecclesiastes 3:1-5

7. I ALWAYS HARVEST _____

“So Isaac planted seed where he was living, and that year he gathered a hundredfold harvest from what he’d planted because the Lord blessed him!” Genesis 26:12

*“Some seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, **MULTIPLYING** thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times.” Mark 4:8*

8. I CAN INCREASE MY HARVEST BY _____

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each one should give what he’s decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

“The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller.” Proverbs 11:24 (The Message)

9. I SHOULD ALWAYS BE _____

“Those who wait for perfect conditions will never plant seeds; and those who look at every cloud will never reap a harvest.” Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NCV)

“Do your planting in the morning AND in the evening, too! You never know whether it will all grow well or whether one planting will do better than the other.”

Ecclesiastes 11:6 (GNT)

10. WHILE WAITING FOR MY HARVEST, I MUST _____

“We must not become tired of doing good. We will reap a harvest at the right time IF we do not give up!” Galatians 6:9

Q: What losses have I experienced this past year? Keep planting seeds!

“Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. They weep as they go to plant their seed, BUT they sing as they return with the harvest!” Psalm 126:5-6 (NLT)

Q: What personal plowing and weeding do I need to do before planting?

“Your hearts have become hard, like an unplowed field where weeds have taken over. So plow up the hard ground of your hearts! Do not waste good seed by planting among weeds.” Jeremiah 4:3 (CEV/NLT)

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