

Are you Nearsighted or Farsighted in 2023?

Selected Scriptures

Introduction:

Purpose: Every Christ follower must have a vision from God that yearly expands its stretch of faith to grow spiritually personally and with the church family in our local church at PVBC.

Transition: Let's remind ourselves as we often do of the purpose of our church, its mission's statement and its core values.

Pleasant View Baptist Church Statements and Core Values

Purpose Statement

At Pleasant View Baptist Church, we believe according to God's Word our purpose in life is to worship and glorify God and to share the Good News of God's love in Christ Jesus with the world, beginning with the people of our community. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will seek to lead people to conversion, baptism, and a maturing relationship with Jesus Christ, through worship, outreach, discipleship, fellowship and service.

We do this in our church by encouraging people to corporately grow by being involved in worship at church / Connect Groups and Sunday School / Serving passionately in an area where you can use your spiritual gifts.

Vision Statement

Pleasant View Baptist Church is a multi-generational family of believers in Jesus Christ, seeking to connect others to God and His family, striving to grow spiritually and relationally, and finding our places of serving God in His church, in our communities, and in the world.

- Connecting people with God and His family
- Growing spiritually and relationally
- Serving God in His church, in our communities, and in the world

Connecting – Growing – Serving

Core Values

We the congregation of Pleasant View Baptist Church hold the following core values

1. We believe in gathering together for worship.
2. We believe the integrity of our individual lives is shown in biblical principles in our personal commitment and accountability to God.

- This is our personal worship time / Quiet time / Devotional time alone with God in Bible reading and prayer. You need both the personal time and the corporate time with the church to be balanced in your spiritual growth. No substitute for personal time in the Word and time spent in fellowship, worship and service with the local church.

3. We believe in the discipleship and equipping of every believer.

- We believe strongly in expository preaching where we learn verse by verse, precept upon precept within context the Word of God and its application to our lives.

4. We believe in the discipleship of children and youth.

- Awana, Chaos Student Ministry, Children’s Church and Sunday School

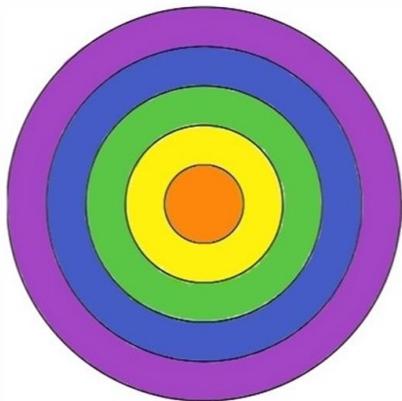
5. We believe in holding to Biblically sound teaching, preaching, and authority in our individual and corporate lives.

- Staying true to historical, orthodox Christian doctrinal teachings and historical ways to interpret to the Bible within its context leading to application.

6. We believe in encouraging and providing opportunities for individual and corporate prayer.

7. We believe in being a church family that shows love and concern for others in our words and our actions.

8. We believe in supporting mission work financially and with personal involvement.



Spiritual Growth Chart. Community – Crowd – Congregation – Committed – Core

PVBC Process of Assimilation Chart

- These are the things I wake up thinking about for the last nearly fourteen years. I have given myself fully to this vision. Jeff Scherer and I met at Cracker Barrel in Ottawa, Illinois, 14 years

ago in January when he gave me the keys and code to the church to me along with all the important paperwork the Vision Team and others went through in following the Retool process for this church. He explained the new vision of the church, its new structure of governance, a new Church Constitution and the weaknesses of the church in 2009 after extensive research and engaging the church through survey, meetings and prayer.

- Three weaknesses that were identified
 - **One, very little community outreach and connection to the needs of the community.**
 - **Two, poor communication and as a result, all the ministries had their own “silo” ministries but not connected in any unifying way to the church’s vision.**
 - **Third, lack of trust of the leadership of the church.**
 - I have attempted to connect us to the community, to overemphasize communication by being extremely transparent and to strongly encourage support, prayer and trust in the elders, deacons and deaconesses.
- As a result of the changes made due to the study and discovery of biblical values, this church moved away from a congregational rule church to an elder led church. We have six things we vote on. **Explain the difference between congregational rule (American democratic government), elder led, elder run. There is no perfect church government and the church government is only as spiritually solid as the people the congregation puts in the places of leadership.**
- These principles found in these charts, vision statements, and core values are what the leadership considers as they make decisions on ministries and volunteers.
- These thoughts are what are considered when it comes to doing outreach to our community.

Goals for 2022

1. Remodel project

2. New leaders for the following

1. Missions Team – 2 new members
2. VBS Director – Pat Stewart
3. Fellowship Team – co-directors Patty Lee / Pat Stewart

4. New Deacon – Jon Kendall
5. New Awana leaders
3. Attract new families and guest to our church
4. Finish livestream project
5. Security cameras – 17 new cameras in and outside of our building

Goals for 2023

1. Remodel project – For the Remodel Campaign and the meeting to vote on moving forward.
2. New leadership– need a Men’s Group leader. We need more elders, deacons and deaconesses!
3. Safety team – more meetings and communication devices. More discussions ongoing about security for our church.
4. Activities for families in the church and for new families with children to come and be a part of our church family. Developing community
 - Examples – Chili Cook off, Easter breakfast, Worship nights, Fire and Fellowship, Game nights, Movie Nights
 - New young leaders to step up and be trained to serve
 - Our church family would personally invite people to connect with our church at some event or church

Seeing God Work in 2023

Matthew 5:8

Scripture Reading

Matthew 5:1 – 10

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called son of God. 10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Transition: We will key in on verse 8 from this, the Sermon on the Mount.

Pure hearts bring change that lasts because it is from the inside out – Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 8:9- 11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:29 - 30

- Change comes from turning to Christ

- We fool ourselves into thinking sometimes that if I just will myself more I can bring about change.
- We also at times focus on the world's ways of changing us but they fall short because they are void of the resurrection power of Jesus that the Christ follower possesses through the Holy Spirit
 - That is why the message taught through Celebrate Recovery is so powerful because you don't have to connect to your "Higher Power" as one famous program to bring change encourages. The power for us to change as believers is the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9 – 11

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

- When I or anyone else sees sin as God describes it and agrees or confesses that it is sin in our lives, that is the first step to turning away from sin and tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin in our lives.
 - **Change comes when we trust in Christ**
 - We lack a pure heart and a true vision of God
 - If we believe all that we know and believe about God from the Bible and we desire to have a pure heart toward God, it will cause us to trust Him more and bring lasting change.
 - **Change comes when we treasure Christ**

Matthew 6:19 - 21

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Application: Are you allowing God to change you from the inside out?

Transition: Secondly, as we think about developing a pure heart;

Pure hearts keep us focused on putting Christ above everything else – Matthew 6:33; Luke 9:57 – 62; Colossians 3:1-4

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

- I get it so backward many times. God promises in other places in the Beatitudes to not worry about clothing, food, water, those things will be taken care of if we have a pure heart and seek Him first and obey His commands.

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart

- I don't know if you do this but I try to figure out and tell God in my prayers how to do things and what to do instead of being what God wants me to be and listen to Him.
- God says, sit back, keep your eyes on me, be available, and I will use you how I want to use you. With that in mind;
- **Keep your personal vision for 2023 in front of you**

Illustration – Faith

It was many centuries ago in a remote village in India. Word began to spread that something was about to happen that no one had seen in their lifetime - the prince was actually coming to visit this forgotten little village. Well, everyone was excited, but no one was more excited than the village beggar. Every day he eked out another day by sitting by the road with his little cup, hoping to get enough money to buy some rice to live one more day. He actually had two cups, one for collecting money and one for a few grains of rice. But now the prince was coming. I mean, the wealthy prince! And when that prince finally arrived, the beggar mustered his most impassioned appeal, "Alms! Alms for the poor!" And the prince stopped. The beggar's heart was pounding furiously.

"Give me your cup of rice." That's all the prince said. The beggar slumped down in disbelief. Here was the wealthiest man in the land, asking for his lousy little cup of rice. The beggar was about to refuse, but instead he reached in. He put three grains of rice in the prince's hand. The prince turned to his servant and said, "Bring me the bag of gold." The beggar could hardly contain himself. He eagerly stretched out his empty collection cup. The prince reached into his bag and placed three grains of gold in the beggar's cup. And then he disappeared, never to return, but leaving the beggar to wonder for the rest of his life what would have happened if I had given him my whole cup of rice?

- How are you allowing God to stretch your faith in this new year personally and in your spiritual walk and service to Christ?

Luke 6:38

“Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

- I believe God wants to take you and I personally, spiritually to new horizons and brand-new ways to trust Him more if we will open ourselves up to Him with no reservations!! What can you trust God for in your life in 2023?
- What about your relationships? How are you investing in those in 2023!
 - Grandparents - Grand Monday nights, **Long Distance Grandparenting by Wayne Rice**
 - Parents – Encouraging and investing into your kids preparing them to stand on their own. **Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids - By: Kara Powell, Chap Clark**
 - Spouse – Date nights / Be a better listener / Enhance your spouse’s love language by making it intentional and a priority for 2023.
- **Keep the vision of our church for 2023 in front of you**
 - What about your faith as far as your local church is concerned?
 - Service – We need new leaders and more volunteers for our ministries
 - Financial – Giving. We are about \$15,000 away from completing the funding for our Phase one if we vote to support the plan being presented after the worship service at our business meeting
 - Personal evangelism – making sharing your faith a lifestyle.
 - God is looking for unwavering commitment to Him by following Him no matter where 2023 takes you. We are not to bail in Him and His plan even if the going gets tough and we don’t get what we wanted.

Luke 9:62

57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” 59 To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” 61 Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” 62 Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Application: How is your plowing forward in your growth in Christ going?

Transition: Now thirdly, as we see pure hearts;

Pure hearts confront and overcome hypocrisy and division – Matthew 23:25 – 28; Psalm 86:11; Ephesians 4:1-7; 16; Psalm 133:1; Proverbs 4:23

- **Confront hypocrisy in your life**
 - Seek integrity in all areas of your life. How do we do that?
 - One way is to make sure our walk matches the talk. That who we are in public is who we are at home. That is tall order for some of us isn’t it.
 - Remember that our life preaches more than our words many times.

Matthew 23:25 – 28

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. 27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

- See Jesus emphasizing an inside out change, not just window dressing on the outside
- Character trumps the façade of focusing only on the outward beauty and behavior.
- Jesus is rebuking them for lack of purity in their heart. Integrity comes when the outside is the overflow of the inside person.

I Peter 3:3-5

3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

- Second, to maintain purity of heart, it is essential that we have a filter, a guard on your heart.

Illustration: VCR with the guardian on it. Covenant Eyes filter for your phone

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life

- Jesus said in His teachings that what comes into the heart goes out, it becomes how we behave
 - Confront a divisive spirit in your life

Hebrews 12:14 - 15

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled

- Strive for peace. We are to do our best to maintain unity among the brothers and sisters of Christ who we live and worship with in the Body of Christ – our local church.
- This doesn't mean we won't disagree or have conflict but over time, we come around to decisions and relationships that are in the best interest and the common good for the church family.

- We truly are a family here at PVBC. For some us, Diane and I included, you are more family in many ways than our biological family. Bhanu is leaving tomorrow to go to India, to see his mother and family. It has been nearly four years since he has seen her and his family. Just one example that our church family is dear and precious to him because he is here by God's leading for work here in Bettendorf, Iowa.
- See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God it says in verse 15

Deuteronomy 29:18

Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,

- We are not to do things that would cause others to become bitter. Anything we do personally that turns someone away from the Lord is like a sickness that goes through the body of believers. Bitterness in the Body of Christ, in the local church, creates hard feelings, grudges and divisiveness. We must do all we can not to allow that to happen.

Ephesians 4:15b – 16

We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love

- We are to do all that we can to seek unity and reconciliation when there are conflicts among us as quickly as possible. I have been told there are some folks who haven't been worshiping with us because they have been offended by someone and they haven't worked to reconcile the matter. That makes me feel sad.

Application: Are you dwelling together with your brothers and sisters in unity?

Transition: Lastly, to seek to have and maintain a pure heart;

Pure hearts have a healthy view of their commitment to being a heavenly and earthly citizen – Philippians 3:20; I Peter Matthew 5:16 – 18; I Peter 2:10 – 12

- Alliance to being a heavenly citizen

Quote: “As Christians, we have “dual” citizenship. One is eternal (heavenly) and is worthy of our ultimate allegiance. The other is temporary (earthly) and yet requires our engagement. Our heavenly citizenship does not allow us to neglect the responsibilities or shield us from the effects of our earthly citizenship, but instead informs, shapes, and equips us to participate in the public square as

ambassadors of God's kingdom." - Justin Jeppesen – Strategic Renewal Blog post – January 23rd, 2023

- **Engaging in this world as an earthly citizen**

Philippians 3:20

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

- What we need most—and what this world is waiting to see—are people marked by pure hearts and a fresh vision of God. As followers of Christ, we are called and have been equipped to incarnate the life of Christ in and through our lives. When we see God with pure eyes, we can then imitate God with integrity and authenticity.

Application: Are you balanced in your view of your responsibilities in being a dual citizen here on earth?

Transition: To wrap this message up in a sentence which is always my purpose with the key thought is to consider;

Key Thought: What steps will you take to keep your heart pure and focused on God in 2023 and what part you will play in the vision of PVBC for 2023?

Questions to Ponder this Week

1. **How will you guard your heart in 2023 to maintain a pure focus on Christ?**
2. **Will you do your part to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace in 2023?**
3. **What part will you write down and do as your part to fulfill the vision of PVBC in 2023?"**