

What's Your Future Perfect Paradigm? Exploring a Powerful Ministry Tool

What if there was a simple way of thinking about your day today, that could radically transform it?

The term “future perfect paradigm” originates from the work of Stanley Davis in the eighties. He used the term as a framework in strategic planning. Even though the term may **sound like just another cool way to talk about vision**, Davis brought some unique and helpful thoughts to the study of vision and planning.

I will explore a few key ideas from Davis in a series of posts. In addition, I want to expose you to some of Robert Clinton’s **adaptation of Davis’s work as the maven of Christian leadership “stages”** and timeline thinking.

Awesome stuff- I promise.

But let’s get started right now with a definition:

Paradigm: a controlling perspective which allows one to perceive and understand reality.

The Future Perfect Paradigm is simply looking at everything today through the lens of a powerful future perspective. The more clear and powerful the future perspective, the greater the impact it can have on the way you look at today.

Let’s unpack that a bit more. Put on your grammatical hat from Greek class and think of the future-perfect tense. **From a time perspective, the present is the past of the future.** So imagine having such a powerful image of the future that the present is transformed. **It is transformed because the present must lead to that future.**

One illustration is the world-class athlete that will fully envision the final performance before the event. Clinton explains, **“They will actually go through the event twice, once in their mind—a future perfect way of thinking, and then when it actually happens.”** It’s not that hard to image how decisions, priorities, practice and discipline are all shaped by a the substance of a necessary future that has been well defined. **Now read Hebrews 11 and consider the biblical concept of faith—“the assurance of things hoped for, the convictions of things not seen.”** Pretty strong connect to the future perfect paradigm, wouldn’t you say?

Stay tuned and we will take a look at how this adds some new meaning to the work of vision planning and vision casting.

What are some of the very cool things you can look forward to?

- How about a summary table of the “future perfect” vision of thirteen biblical leaders to get us started.

- Then I want to take a look at one of my favorite ideas for the visionary- “beforemath.” Beforemath is the kissin cousin to a term you already know- “aftermath.”
- Finally we will look at Clinton’s five stages toward developing a future perfect paradigm.

Read more from Will [here](#).