

The Power Of A Vision

by Kris Vallotton on October 8, 2009

“A man without a vision is a man without a future. A man without a future will always return to his past.” (P.K. Bernard)

“A knife cuts because it has a narrow focus” (Cleddie Keith)

“A coward dies a thousand deaths, but a brave man dies only once” (Roman soldiers)

“When God predetermined our destiny, He factored in our stupidity. Therefore there’s always enough time to finish?” (Larry Randolph)

The level of sacrifice that an environment requires will determine the size of people that will follow” (Kris Vallotton)

A progressive revelation of an ageless revival for our generation is growing in our hearts. It is for those who went before us and for those who are yet to be born. Yet, the question of how the vision is to be implemented remains.

One famous Proverb says:

Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law - **Proverbs 29:18**

Vision is the bridge between the present and the future. Without it we perish or go “unrestrained,” as the New American Standard Bible puts it. Vision gives pain a purpose. Those without vision spend their lives taking the path of least resistance as they try to avoid discomfort. The level of sacrifice that a vision requires will determine the size of people who follow. Sacrifice separates the small from the great.

Consider the example of a young man who has just graduated from high school and joins the military. As soon as he steps off the boot camp bus, the sergeant starts yelling at him. He has to march over to the barbershop and get his head shaved. Then he is up early in the morning to exercise with someone screaming at him and talking about his mother. Just a month before, he was in high school. He would have never put up with any of this nonsense from his teachers or classmates. But somehow his whole mindset has changed. Why? He is enduring the “cross” so to speak, because of the joy on the other side of it. He realizes that boot camp is preparing him for a greater destiny. His vision of the future is giving his present physical discomfort meaning and purpose.

So many of us go through life not understanding the purposes of our trials. We spend our days walking a crooked path, believing that every obstacle in the road is a problem and something to be avoided.

The second part of this Proverb says, “But happy is he who keeps the Law.” The law isn’t just something God gave to Moses. It is also the restraint, boundaries and disciplines we develop around our life to direct us through obstacles instead of around them. These obstacles become baptisms of fire that forge our character so we can attain and maintain a life of greatness.

WHAT IS VISION?

Vision is what we see, but it is also the way in which we see. Vision is the lens that interprets the events of our life, the way we view people and our concept of God. If we have a scratch on our glasses, it may seem like everybody around us has scratches too, but the problem actually lies with us because our vision is impaired. Jesus said that our eyes are the windows of our heart. Paul prayed that the eyes of our heart would be enlightened. In other words, we perceive with our eyes but we see with our hearts. Our minds receive images from our eyes but our heart interprets these images. If our heart becomes bitter, jealous, hurt or in some way infected, the lens of our heart is distorted. What we perceive is happening and what is really going on could be two completely different things. Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). The word truth used here is not referring to the Bible itself, (although all truth is rooted in the Bible) but here the word truth means reality. Jesus is saying, you will understand what is real and that will free you. So many of us live in a virtual reality. The way we view life can feel and look real, or make perfect sense, but still not be real at all. Have you ever watched a good movie and gotten totally into it? You experience all the emotions of real life. You may even leave the theater still "feeling" the movie, but it was just a movie? it was never real. The truth is: we see what we believe to be true. Another way to put it is, if you have the wrong pretext you will misunderstand the context. Having a revelation of what is real will deliver us from a life of torment that virtual reality often causes.

ESTABLISHING CORE VALUES

Therefore, the things we believe to be true determine the way in which we interpret life. These "things" are called "core values." Core values are the lens or eyes of our heart. It is important for us to realize the incongruence between what our core values presently are and what we really want them to be. Often, the things we say we believe and the things we actually believe are not the same. We must understand that it is not the truths that we believe in our head that are our core values, but rather the ones we believe in our heart. The things we perceive to be true determine the way we respond to the world around us and to God who lives within us.

These core values also help define the part of the flock that we find ourselves called and attracted to. The children of Israel experienced this principle when they came into the Promised Land. Joshua assigned land to them according to their tribes and divisions (Joshua 18:10). In other words, they received land according to their diverse visions. For instance, if they had a vision for farming, they probably did not go with Caleb to the mountain country but instead were given land that best facilitated their vision. Therefore the land they were given and their vision was congruent. From this perspective, it is not very hard to see how some church splits happen. Sometimes pastors, in their zeal to build their churches, attract people that have a vision for things that their churches or "land" (metaphorically speaking) will not sustain. This dual vision eventually ends up in di-vision.

FORESIGHT, INSIGHT & OVERSIGHT

True Godly vision consists of foresight, insight and oversight that come from His sight. Foresight is like looking at life through a telescope. This outlook allows us to know what is ahead as it connects us to our future. Foresight is the element of vision that helps life make sense and gives us the motivation that we described earlier.

Insight is like viewing life through a microscope. This perception gives us an understanding of why things happen in life. It also helps determine the underlying motivations of the heart.

Oversight puts life into context. It is like flying over our house in a helicopter. There is a perspective that we can only receive from this vista that helps us understand where we are with respect to where everything else is. The sons of Issachar are great examples of this kind of vision. The book of I Chronicles says that these men understood the times and had knowledge of what Israel should do (12:32). People that are blessed with this type of vision often have great wisdom concerning the seasons of life.

His sight assures us that the vision we have is from God. A vision from the Lord creates a mission from heaven. This is illustrated in the life of Moses when he went up on the mountain, received a vision of the tabernacle, and was told to construct it according to the pattern that he had received. (Exodus 24:16-28:43) Visions like this are just “pipe dreams” without some sort of administrative plan to complete them. A lot of people have lofty ideas about things they would like to accomplish for God but they seem to have no sense of how to see the dream fulfilled. There are entire books dedicated to this subject, therefore, I will just give an overview of how to accomplish a vision.

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

The first part of accomplishing any vision is to take it from the unseen world and bring it into the natural realm. This can be accomplished by simply writing down the vision. Articulating the vision on paper pulls the dream that is in your spirit (that no one can see but you) into the visible world so that others can capture it in their own hearts. Tools that help to visualize the mission such as architectural drawings, models, testimonies of others who have accomplished similar dreams, or visits to places that have a common purpose are all helpful in capturing and defining the vision for both yourself and others who will come alongside and help.

Then the LORD answered me and said, ‘Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay - **Habakkuk 2:2-3**

There is an old story about three bricklayers that helps illustrate what it looks like when people receive motivation from taking ownership of a vision:

There were three bricklayers working beside each other on a wall. Someone came up to the first one and said, “What are you doing?” “What;’s it look like I am doing?” he replied

sarcastically, "I am laying bricks!" The man asked the next guy on the wall what he was doing. He said, "Can't you see what I am doing? I am building a wall." Then the last man was asked what he was doing. He exclaimed, "I am building a great cathedral for God!"

Who do you think will do the best quality work and be the hardest worker? Vision causes people to love their work because they can see the big picture. Someone once said, "If you want to build a great ship, you can go out and find some talented craftsman or you can find a person who loves the sea." Imparting God's vision to the team around us is the single most important factor in seeing the mission accomplished.

The next step is to create a plan to accomplish the mission. The Bible says:

Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed; the plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD - **Proverbs 15:22 & 16:1**

From these two verses we see that although the vision must be from God Himself, men are to help develop the plan that brings about the fulfillment of the vision. Notice how Solomon highlights the fact that developing plans in a vacuum, (without the expertise and insight of others who have different gifts and perspectives than we do), will ultimately end in frustration.

It's important for administrative people to understand that they are there to administrate the mission. The word administrate means, "add-to-the-mission," not change the mission. Visionaries often do not like to work with administrators because by nature administrators are refiners and finishers. Sometimes administrators do not understand that they are being brought in to help visionaries determine how something should be accomplished, not what should be accomplished. If the vision is so large that it requires the help of Heaven (which it often does when it really is from God), it will be important that the visionary impart the vision and the faith to see it accomplished to the team. First Timothy 1:4 says that the administration of God is "by faith."

FEAR COUNTERACTS FAITH

People often disguise their fear as wisdom when they enter into a supernatural mission that can only be accomplished with the help of God. Moses had this problem when he sent the twelve spies in to the Promised Land to determine where they should enter. Ten of the spies misunderstood their mission and somehow thought they were being asked whether or not they should take the land at all.

This type of misunderstanding of the roles people are invited to play in the mission has caused the demise of so many would-be miracles, paralyzing the church of the living God. For years, the people of God have often settled for what can be accomplished by human effort and ability, because we have allowed the opinion of faithless people to determine what we will achieve, instead of being faithful (faith-filled) to the vision we

saw “on the mountain”. This is a perversion of the gospel of the kingdom. We should never settle for anything less than what God told us to do.

SETTING GOALS

After the plan is established, goals must be set. The Bible says:

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus
- **Philippians 3:14**

Goals are simply the vision broken down into smaller pieces that are measurable in time and space. In other words, they are specified parts of the mission that we will accomplish by a predetermined date. Many people don't like to set goals because they think that if they are not able to accomplish them on time, they have failed. The truth of the matter is that, “If you fail to plan you plan to fail.” Great leaders know that setting goals is what gives the mission a sense of urgency. Urgency is a friend to managers as it sets the pace for those who are carrying out the mission. If wisdom is used in goal setting, very little management is needed to motivate the workers since urgency manages them. However, be careful not to give your workers more to do than they have the faith to accomplish in a given time period. If it is too much, they will not even try, just like trying to catch a bus when it is already a block ahead. You probably won't even run after it, as there is so little possibility of you catching up to it. On the other hand, if the bus just starts to pull away from the curb when you get there, you will probably move out of your comfort zone to try to catch it. Yet, setting goals too low will not create a sense of urgency at all. People will not be very motivated and it will result in a lot more work for the managers.

When your vision is honestly birthed by God Himself, He will be delighted to direct your steps

The final stage of seeing the mission accomplished is establishing your steps. Proverbs says, “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps” (16:9). Psalms says, “The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the one who holds his hand” (37:23-24). Steps are your day-in, day-out walk with God: the step-by-step, moment-by-moment, hour-by-hour decisions you make and the things you do that take up your time and use up your life. When your vision is honestly birthed by God Himself, He will be delighted to direct your steps. The most important thing to remember about your steps is that they should be found somewhere in your mission. Go back through your planner from the previous month and retrace your steps. Does it look like they are directly attached to your mission? If not, either redefine your mission or redirect your steps. Remember, history is at stake.