



#5 "Visions are Birthed"
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One of the most common questions that pastors are asked is "What is God's will for my life?" The question is asked most often when someone is in the midst of transition, conflict, or confusion. While the question asked is "What is God's will for my life?" what most people are actually looking for is a Vision for their life. God has revealed His general will to us through His word but what most people are seeking for is a plan, a guide map for what they are to do to live beyond themselves and to outlive themselves.

One of the exercises that is required of students in a ministry leadership development program is for them to write their own epitaph or obituary. What is it that you would like to have said of you when you die? Take a few moments to think about your own obituary or epitaph and share it with the group.

To help you find your vision for life, let's take a look into the lives of some Biblical characters and see the different stages that they went through to find their vision.

Stage One: Core Values

"The **core values** are the guiding principles that dictate behaviour and action.

Core values can help people to know **what is** right from wrong;
they can help individuals to determine if they are on the right path and fulfilling their goals;
and they create an unwavering and unchanging guide"

Knowing what is core to who you are will help set vision for your life. Read the following texts and discuss what the core value is for each character:

Nehemiah – found in Nehemiah 1:1-4 Core Value = _____

Background – Nehemiah is a Hebrew captive in another land and is interested in what is happening with the nation of Israel

Esther – found in Esther 4:15-16 Core Value = _____

Background – Esther is a Hebrew maiden who has been chosen to be wife of the queen. She has discovered that the Hebrew people are to be annihilated and she must choose a course of action

Elijah – found in 1 King 18:19-21 Core Value = _____

Background – Elijah is a prophet of the Lord and is facing an evil king who has taken the nation of Israel into idol worship.

Joshua – found in Joshua 24:14-15 Core Value = _____

Background – Joshua has led the people of Israel faithfully for years. He is 110 and getting ready to die.

What are some of your Core Values? Share them with the group.

Stage Two: Spiritual Gifts

"Spiritual gifts are endowments which are given by the Holy Spirit. These are the supernatural graces which individual Christians need to fulfill the mission of the church."

Knowing how you are gifted for ministry allows you to move in areas of competency. Using the gifts that you have been given helps you to move in step with how the Holy Spirit has wired you for service. Here is a list of spiritual gifts. Take a few moments to circle at least one that you think you have and circle one for other members of the group. Discuss and affirm the gifts that God has given to each member of your group.

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:9-11 contain representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church.

Leadership—Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

Administration—Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).

Teaching—Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God's Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

Knowledge—The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God's Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).

Wisdom—Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

Prophecy—The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).

Discernment—Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

Exhortation—Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).

Shepherding—The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).

Faith—Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).

Evangelism—God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship.

Apostleship—The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

Service/Helps—Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).

Mercy—Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).

Giving—Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).

Hospitality—Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

Past Experiences

The things that you have gone through, both good and bad, can help to shape the vision that God has for your life. Both positive and negative experiences from our past can shape our responses to current situations.

Look at David's response to the formidable challenge of fighting Goliath found in 1 Samuel 17:32-37

1. What were the life experiences he brought to the situation?
2. How did he project that into what was happening ?
3. How did he use some of his life experience later in his role as King?

Answer the following questions In terms of past experiences that help shape your vision.

1. What are some of your greatest memories from childhood? From your adolescence? From your adult life?
 - a. E.g. –role in a play, leading a group of team, being centre stage, sharing knowledge

2. Is there a common theme in those instances?
 - a. E.g. – were you the centre of attention, did you support others, were you the expert, were you on your own or in a group?
3. These positive experiences reveal in part how you are wired. When you look at your life today, are you doing things that line up with how you are wired?
4. Have negative experiences caused you a “Holy Discontent?” A Holy Discontent is a situation that you must do something about.
 - a. How does God help you to recycle that pain?
 - b. Why do we sometimes fear recycling that pain?

When you look at your Core Values, Spiritual Gifts, and Past Experiences, you get a deeper sense of what your vision for life could be. But while you may have a deeper understanding of a vision for your life, what is a strategy to start living it out? What is one thing you could do this week to start walking in the vision for your life?

As you move ahead this week, it is our prayer that you will be able to gain a deeper sense of the vision that God has for your life and that you can walk more deeply into it. Peace.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please pray for **ASCENT: an Evening of Prayer and Praise**. Sunday May 15th at 7 PM.

In this time of spiritual deepening we will pray for our church, the needs of our community, and your needs. We will also be praying for the sick as outlined in the book of James.

Praise God for continuing to provide for our financial needs as we enjoy our new home and mission outpost.

Pray for summer volunteers: All Nations Church continues on through the summer and we need people to help with preparing refreshments at the Courtyard Cafe on Sunday mornings; throughout the week we need a few more cleaners to keep our building ready for services and events. You can call into the church office (705-673-6110) or sign up at the Welcome Centre.

Coming on June 15 a special family movie event fun and fellowship for all....more details to follow MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!