

SHARPENING YOUR SIGHT

By Al Ells, M.C.

Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run.

Habakkuk 2:2



A viable ministry requires vision; an inspired, unique, and God-given vision. Church consultant George Barna says a ministry without a vision is like a flashlight without batteries: willing but powerless. Inspired vision is like the itch you can't scratch. It stirs discomfort with the status quo and a deep inner drive to transcend the ordinary. While true vision can fuel a ministry, a lack of vision can kill it. What is your vision? What is the race you are running? What is it that God has inspired you to accomplish as part of your destiny in Him? The following tips may help you refine your vision or help someone you know who is struggling to find theirs:

DARE TO DREAM

God's plan for you is always larger than you can even dare to imagine, let alone fulfill by yourself. Visionaries are simply dreamers who do not limit God's ability with feeble thinking. If you deny yourself permission to dream, you limit God's potential in you. After all, He is your partner and His resources and abilities are infinite.

DECLARE A VISION STATEMENT

An effective method to gain clarity of vision is to write out a personal vision statement. A vision statement is a clear, concise mental picture of how you believe God is calling you to minister. Do you have a specific Christ-like passion or inner burning desire to serve in a specific way? It could very likely be placed there by God. Use that to create your vision statement.

DON'T SETTLE

Do not be passive about discovering God's vision for yourself. Others may tolerate not having a destination, but you should not. In scripture, aimlessness is often treated as a curse (Genesis 4:12-16). If you are not sure what vision God wants you to embrace, then be proactive and find out.

ONLY GOD CAN GIVE YOU VISION (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Barna states, "Vision is initiated by God, is desired by His people and is conveyed through the Holy Spirit." If your vision runs counter to the canon of Scripture, then doubt its authenticity. God is consistent. His vision for your life will match his word.

GET OVER YOURSELF (Romans 12:1)

If you are unwilling to hear what God wants to share, then don't expect Him to divulge His vision for your life and ministry. God entrusts great purpose to those who are greatly yielded to Him. The more willing you are and the more of Him you desire, the greater the trust He places in you. Too many of us still want to do our thing instead of His thing.

GREAT VISION REQUIRES GREAT RISK

Theodore Roosevelt said, “No man is worth his salt who is not ready at all times to risk his body, to risk his well being, and to risk his life in a great cause.” To risk is to be strong and of good courage (Joshua 1:6). The greater your willingness to risk, the greater the vision God can entrust to you.

DO NOT BE LIMITED BY FEAR

Many have difficulty picturing themselves being significantly used by God because of their own fears of inadequacy. Great vision is about inadequate and ordinary people entrusting themselves to an all-sufficient and daring God who is able to accomplish exceedingly and abundantly more through their lives than they could ever imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

WHEN IN DOUBT, FAST AND PRAY

My pastor often says that fasting and prayer is “getting serious” with God. Fasting and prayer is a means for making your “voice heard on high” (Isaiah 58:4). Every person used mightily by God found employed these spiritual disciplines. Knock and the door will be opened, seek and you will find God’s vision for your life and ministry.

KEEP A VISION JOURNAL

As you wait upon the Lord asking only for His will, he will speak to you. As you receive revelation, write it down. At times, it may only come in bits and pieces and at others you may be blessed with a deluge. Reflecting on what He has shared with you will give you perspective, inspiration and confirmation.

CONSULT YOUR SPIRITUAL MENTORS

Wisdom is a gift of grace the Lord makes amply available (James 1:5) through spiritual mentors. When your vision wanes or new sight is needed, seek wise counsel for confirmation and refinement.

PRAY BEFORE YOU ACT

All vision is intended for an appointed time (Habakkuk 2:2). The foundation of fruitful vision is the intercession you do on its behalf. Make prayer—not action—your priority. Prayer will refine your vision. Remember that every inspired vision has a prayer-price that is necessary to its accomplishment. More prayer: more power. Less prayer: less power.

WHEN WEARY, RETURN TO THE VISION

The will of God for your life is the last thing you heard Him say. Recheck your bearings. Have you gotten off track? Has the vision changed? Is the vision intended for a later time? Take time out. Pray. Seek counsel and God will refresh and reveal.