

Essentials to Leadership: Vision

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Course description: Vision – part 3

This course continues to discuss vision, specifically the vision we have of people. As mentioned last week, the way we see Jesus changes how we see others.

Course Objectives: By the end of the class students will have:

- A. Discussed the biblical context surrounding the necessity of vision and how vision supports the direction of the church.
- B. Listed at least five benefits of a personal and congregational vision.

Outline of the class:

- A. Divide the class into groups of four at each table and ask each table to take about 10 minutes to describe how they see people in the world.
 - 1. When we see people with tattoos, body piercings, dressed in all black, people from a different race, illegal immigrants, etc. how do we see them? What comes to mind? How do we feel about them?
 - 2. Before any discussion, ask the class to also consider how they saw Jesus last week through the progression discussed. Then, based on how they saw Jesus, does that change anything about the way we see others? If so, how? If not, why not?
- B. After ideas are written down, ask each group to share their list and why their words and thoughts relate to people in the world.
- C. Then, ask everyone turn to John 4:27-38.
 - 1. The design and intent of John 4 addresses the situation with the Samaritan woman and her people. However, there is perhaps a greater thought we need to consider in this text, as it relates to vision. How did Jesus change the way the apostles see people?
 - a. Notice the physical nature expressed in what the apostles saw when they returned from getting food to eat.
 - i. First, while they never said anything, they were wondering why Jesus was even speaking to this Samaritan “woman.”
 - ii. Secondly, their physical and literal way of thinking hinders them from understanding what Jesus says when they urge Him to eat. He says, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”
 - iii. The key is found in Jesus’ response, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.”

- b. Jesus uses an illustration to make His point to the apostles. He speaks to the harvest (yet four months away), but He invites them to “lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white to harvest.”
 - i. The reference here is to the Samaritans that were coming to meet Jesus, the One who told this woman everything about herself.
 - ii. Think about the phrase “lift up your eyes and look on the fields.” Ask: What do we miss because we are not looking? What do we miss because we refuse to look? What do we miss because we only look in one direction?

- 2. Working together with others to achieve God’s design for saving souls.
 - a. The last part of this section in John 4 highlights the power of everyone working together to achieve God’s purpose.

 - b. Jesus emphasizes the principle of the harvest: We reap what we sow.
 - i. The concept of sowing and reaping is a biblical principle used throughout scripture. Jesus spoke of this law in the Parable of the Sower. Paul wrote the church in Corinth regarding evangelism, one plants, one waters, but God gives the increase. This idea is also applied in our giving (2 Cor. 9:6) and the moral character of our life (Gal. 6:8).
 - ii. The task before us takes everyone working together in order to achieve God’s purpose.
 - iii. Jesus wants the apostles to learn they are reaping that for which they had not labored. They needed to know that others have sown, and they are entering into their labor.

 - c. Today, our vision for the future of the work must be discovered in light of the fact we are entering the work that was started long before us.
 - i. Think about the suffering of the apostles and the early church to share the gospel with others.
 - ii. Think about the study of great men in history who labored diligently to make it possible for us to have this collection of writings in one source.
 - iii. Think about the men and women in our own history who spent untold hours studying and preaching the gospel.
 - iv. Think about the individual who took the time and made the effort to share the gospel with us. Of all people, why were we so blessed to hear the gospel when so many in our world do not even know the name of Jesus?

Conclusion:

- A. We find several important lessons to consider from the text, as it focuses on the discussion between Jesus and the apostles.
 - 1. Receptivity is not always well defined: The apostles would never have considered this woman to be receptive. How many do we fail to reach out to, because we feel the same?
 - 2. Focus on the spiritual need of people: Physical sight often hinders us from seeing what we should see. At times, even our knowledge of someone's past creates the same obstacle.
 - 3. Learning to see through the eyes of Jesus: Perhaps the most critical lesson for us to learn is seeing people as Jesus saw/sees them, souls in need of a Savior.
 - 4. Everyone is needed in the work: No one person can do it all, and not all people will do the same task. The body is designed in a way that all the various parts have to work together to succeed.
- B. The apostles needed to learn these lessons, especially in light of the task Jesus would commission them to fulfill in sharing the gospel with the whole world. This would include Jews and Gentiles (all nations).
- C. Next week, we will examine several factors associated with vision as they relate to biblical context.