

Essentials to Leadership: Vision

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Course description: Vision – part 8

This course is designed to take additional components for creating a vision and begin the process of writing a vision statement for the church. Based on the questions, samples, and statements regarding a vision statement, this class will assist in the next steps toward actually writing a vision statement for the church.

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

- A. Answered two evaluating questions.
- B. Discussed differences between a mission statement and a vision statement.
- C. Examined vision statements as a basis to create a vision statement for the church.
- D. Considered five additional areas related to creating a vision for the church.

Outline of the class:

- A. There is not a need to have everyone in groups for this particular lesson, but the ideas considered in this lesson are key to the group discussions next week in creating a vision.
- B. As we move forward in the discussion of a vision for the church, there are two evaluating questions that must be answered.
 - 1. Do we see ourselves correctly?
 - a. One of the most important questions to consider. Too often we see ourselves based on three areas:
 - i. What we do (we seek success, but if we experience failure we do not see ourselves in a good light)
 - ii. What others say about us (we want them to speak well of us because it gives us a sense of belonging, we fit in, and we feel accepted)
 - iii. What we have (if we have material things, good health, good family, etc. then we see ourselves as more significant and important)
 - b. When we look at the temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4, we find a similar pattern as identified above. However, Jesus did not fall for these temptations because He knew who was; He saw Himself correctly.
 - i. Notice at the end of chapter 3, when Jesus was baptized. The voice out of heaven said, “This is my beloved Son...”

- ii. This is what we need to understand about ourselves in order to be useful in achieving God’s purpose for our lives. If we can remember that we are the beloved of God, then no matter what happens—what we do, what others say about us, or what we have—we remain secure in our relationship with God.
 - c. Based on these ideas, we begin to recognize that how we see ourselves plays a critical role in our vision, and it leads to the next question.
 - 2. Do we see our God correctly?
 - a. How do we see our God? Is He only someone we turn to once we’ve exhausted all other possibilities and resources? Is He the one we turn to when we realize we are unable to do something on our own? This is not the relationship we need to have with God, nor the way we need to see Him.
 - b. Think about who our God is:
 - i. He spoke the worlds into existence by the power of His spoken word.
 - ii. He providentially guided the people of Israel to fulfill a promise to Abraham that ultimately led to the coming of Jesus as the Savior of the world.
 - iii. Then, consider Eph. 3:20 “He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think according to the power that works within us.” Give this thought.
 - iv. What exactly could we do if we knew we could not fail? We can’t, because God is the One behind us. We need to stop thinking small and limiting our God based on what we have convinced ourselves we cannot do. The problem is not God, it is us.
- C. In some ways, a mission statement and a vision statement are similar. However, consider the difference between a mission statement (what we do) and a vision statement (desired end-state). The following information was presented at churchrelevance.com.
- 1. Although it is not always one sentence, a mission statement is generally believed to be “a one-sentence statement describing the reason an organization or program exists and used to help guide decisions about priorities, actions, and responsibilities.” For example, consider the following mission statements:
 - a. To plant churches and make disciples.
 - b. To Reach Up, Reach Out, and Reach In.
 - c. Love God, Love People, and Make Disciples.
 - d. To Live by Faith, to be Known by Love, and to be a Voice of Hope.

- e. Helping every person believe in Jesus, belong to family, become a disciple and build His kingdom.
 - f. Save, Equip, and Send out a highly motivated ARMY of believers who engage every segment of society while remaining true to our DNA.
 - g. To WIN people to Jesus Christ, TRAIN believers to become disciples, and SEND disciples out to impact the world.
 - h. Our mission is to help lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ by creating a dynamic environment for authentic worship and effective communication while developing genuine community with each other.
 - i. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always.
 - j. To equip the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to a unity of the faith.
2. Although it is not always one sentence, a vision statement is generally believed to be “a one-sentence statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from an organization or program’s work.” For example, consider the following vision statements:
- a. To reach the greater Dayton community and expand the Kingdom of God.
 - b. To continue growing, impacting lives and using technology and the arts to reach 100,000 people for Jesus Christ.
 - c. To make and deploy mature and equipped followers of Christ for the sake of Family, Community, and Global transformation.
 - d. To plant the gospel in key Australian, population dense, urban centers and from that seed to grow churches that engage the city, with, for, because, about, Jesus.
 - e. To build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement, by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel throughout the nations.
 - f. We not only want City on a Hill to be famous for being all about Jesus, we want the person and work of Jesus to be famous in our city. This fame begins in our own lives, and extends into our homes, workplaces, universities and city.
 - g. Growing disciples. Starting churches.
 - h. Impacting 100,000 Phoenix area residents by the year 2020.

- i. To become an equipping and mobilizing church that transforms our world for Jesus Christ.
 - j. We are the voice and the hand that encourages people to change their lives with hope, comfort and peace.
 3. Please note that all of the mission and vision statements above are not necessarily good or right for the church. They are simply samples that have been used by other churches throughout the world, and they serve as an example for our consideration. Many of these statements would need further clarification and specificity to be a good mission or vision statement. With that in mind, consider the next section.
- D. In order to create a vision for the church, there are five components that must be considered:
 1. Know what success looks like
 - a. When we think about success, are we only concerned with numbers? Often times, the idea of success is a numerical growth: the number of baptisms or restorations in a year.
 - b. We have to determine what we mean by success; what does it look like for the church?
 - i. Is it attendance?
 - ii. Is it changed lives (better families, better employees on the job, better citizens in the community)
 - iii. Is it being more evangelistic?
 - c. Our vision statement should be something that speaks to the success we want to achieve, but it must be based on knowing what we mean by success.
 2. Keep it simple
 - a. Vision statements range from a few words to a thousand words. When we are painting a picture for the future, there is a great deal of information that goes into all we want to see accomplished for the Lord's kingdom.
 - b. However, if we want the congregation to keep the vision in their hearts and on their lips, we need to develop a statement that summarizes the whole of the greater vision overall for the church.
 - c. The examples above illustrate the point.
 3. Concrete: "To be a great church" is not a good vision statement.

- a. Our vision needs to be as concrete as possible. Vague terms like great, majority, most, etc. tend to create more confusion than simplifying the change we desire for the future of the church.
 - b. When writing out a vision statement, ensure that the words used are clear, concise, and specific to what we see for the future.
4. Challenging, energizing, and meaningful
- a. Each of these words deserve individual development. However, there is a measure of overlap within them also.
 - b. When we consider these words, our vision needs to consist of elements that bring these results.
 - i. Challenging: A vision must challenge us to achieve something beyond our own abilities.
 - ii. Energizing: A vision must be the fuel behind every thought, action, decision, and program we employ.
 - iii. Meaningful: A vision must have meaning, but it must also be meaningful to the those we lead. If not, there is no energy or challenge. This is why these words go together.
5. Communication is essential
- a. There is perhaps no greater component to consider than this one. Communication is essential. Without it, there is no buy-in from the congregation.
 - b. A system is required to keep the vision communicated to the congregation.
 - i. Announcements
 - ii. Bulletin
 - iii. Banner
 - iv. Social media
 - v. Website
 - c. The elders, the preacher, classroom teachers, and everyone for that matter, need to constantly talk about the development of the vision.

Conclusion:

- A. A vision does not come quickly or easily. We must give a great deal of thought to what we can see for the future and how to phrase it in a way that everyone has buy-in.

- B. This lesson provides an opportunity to think about various ways others have crafted their vision, but with the intention to think about our own situation, where we are, the people we have to work with, and the resources available. Then, considering the incredible God we serve, create a vision that is beyond us to fulfill on our own, but with God's help.
- C. Next week, we will actually begin the process of creating a vision for the congregation.

Recommended Readings:

Kotter, John. *Leading Change*

Sinek, Simon. *Start with Why*