



Course Name: Defining Vision

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Course description:

This course focuses on defining vision and understanding the necessity of having a vision for the leader individually and for the church collectively. The class explores several areas related to the critical nature of having a vision.

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

- A. Defined the idea of a vision and how it relates to the individual and congregation needs.
- B. Examined a minimum of four reasons vision is vital to the future of the individual and church.
- C. Listed at least five benefits of a personal and congregational vision.

Outline of the class:

- A. At the beginning of class, divide everyone into groups of three or four people at each table. Ask each group to take 10-15 minutes to write out a definition of vision and what their current vision is for the church.
- B. Ask each group to share their definition and describe their vision for the church. A few definitions are provided below to help guide the discussion if these ideas are not mentioned in the class discussion.
 - 1. “A vision is a picture of the perfect future you want to create” (E.R. Haas, Kent Madson).
 - 2. “Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future” (John Kotter).
 - 3. “Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion” (Bill Hybels).
 - 4. “The art of seeing the invisible. In this respect, vision is not just seeing; it is not just ‘sight.’ Instead, vision is *insight*. It is the ability to see something that only you can see, something that others do not see because this something does not have a physical reality. It is something you see in your mind’s eye, something that exists in your imagination, something that is with yourself” (Alain Briot).
 - 5. No matter the definition used, we can all agree that a vision for each of us as individuals and the church collectively involves the ability to see something in the future and that we must work together to achieve.

6. Vision involves knowing where we want to go into the future and possessing an ability to communicate the direction in such a way that others can see and aspire to achieve the vision in a united effort.
- C. In a class discussion, ask the following question: What are the benefits of having a vision? Make a list of responses on a whiteboard. Below are some possible answers to consider in addition to what the class suggests:
1. Informs decision making
 2. Genuine vision engenders commitment
 3. Drives the actions of our life – church
 4. Creates meaning
 5. Challenges us to do something great
- D. John Kotter provides the following description of vision for the class to consider before next week’s class.
1. Imaginable – *Picture of the future*
 2. Desirable – *Appeals to long-term interests*
 3. Feasible – *Realistic, attainable goals*
 4. Focused – *Guidance for decision-making*
 5. Flexible – *Individual initiative / alternatives*
 6. Communicable – *Easy to explain*

Conclusion:

- A. We must understand the necessity of having a vision. We need a vision for our lives individually, but we also need a vision for the church.
- B. Vision is defined in several ways, and it is described with various characteristics, but we know a vision involves the future. It speaks to where we want to go. This vision must be communicated to the entire congregation in ways they can understand it and unite behind it. Then, they will give their time and energy to achieve it.
- C. Next week, we will examine several factors associated with vision as they relate to biblical context.

Recommended Readings:

Kotter, John. *Leading Change*

Sinek, Simon. *Start with Why*

McNeal, Reggie. *The Present Future*

Maxwell, John. *Developing the Leader Within You*