

PASSING ON VISION

It's been said that knowing why you do what you do impacts the way you do what you do. Vision is so critical to building people towards a goal. It's developing a burden for how things ought to be and having a clear strategy for how to get there. Vision is not something we come up with, it's something that is revealed to us. God has given us a vision for how He wants to reach the world for Himself. It's called the great commission. If we are to make disciples who are equipped and skilled to make disciples, we must help them catch vision for the great commission.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

Discuss: Do you have a heart for the nations?
Do you understand what's at stake if they don't come to Christ?

Do we see that God is desiring to build a family for Himself from every kind of person on the face of the earth? This is what's close to God's heart.

Read Matthew 9:35-38

In this passage, Jesus sees some things that He is trying to get His disciples to see. Before He gives them the great commission, He wants them to “see correctly”.

When we are making disciples who will in turn make disciples, we have to help them see correctly.

4 steps adapted from Dhati Lewis “Among Wolves.”)

To see with clarity

Jesus calls His disciples to see the crowds of lost people the way He sees them.

"And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When He saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Matthew 9:35-36

Jesus saw the great masses of people in the cities and they were lost. They had no shepherd to lead them, teach them, or pour into them the kingdom of God. The problem was not only that they were lost, but that they were lost without a leader to share with them and show them what life with God was all about. So later, when Jesus tells His disciples that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, He is helping them see that the real problem is that all of these people are out there and don't have someone to lead them. The question we have to answer is do we see the problem clearly? Do we, like Jesus, see that the one thing worse than masses of people lost in their sin is masses of people lost in their sin with no one to show them how to be rescued?

Discuss: How would you communicate that the greatest problem in the world is not enough disciple makers to reach the nations?

To feel with compassion

Jesus calls His disciples to feel the weight of the problem. In the verse above, it says that Jesus felt compassion over the problem He saw. Compassion there literally means his bowels were moved. His stomach was in knots. It was painful for Him to see. Jesus feels bad about large crowds being gathered with nobody to lead them. Lewis points out that Jesus'

reaction shows that gathering large crowds is not necessarily the mark of successful ministry, especially if they are gathered with nobody to invest in them. So when we are giving vision to our d-groups, help them feel the weight of the problem. The great commission flows out of the great commandment, which is to LOVE. If we love people, it should bother us that they have nobody to lead them and show them how to walk with Christ. David Platt says, "we all know the cost of discipleship is great, but the cost of non-discipleship is eternally greater."

To pray with confidence

Jesus calls His disciples to pray to God to fix the problem.

"Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" Matthew 9:37-38

Jesus wants the burden of this great problem to drive His disciples to pray. He wants them to realize that the weight is more than they can lift on their own, and so He tells them to pray for God to intervene. He tells them to pray earnestly, which is the idea of desperation and persistence. But He also tells them to pray to the "Lord of the harvest," a reminder that God truly has the authority and power to do something about it, and so they should be confident. Let's teach our d-groups how to pray for the mission. Spend time modeling for them how to pray for lost people and babes in Christ. Show them how to pray for God to raise up disciple makers, and then invite them to pray also. As we do this, we are now allowing them to join us in the ministry, by praying.

One of the most helpful things we can do for the great commission is to equip disciple makers who rely on the Spirit of God through prayer.

Discuss: How would you demonstrate and communicate the need for prayer in the great commission?

To respond with closeness

Jesus calls His disciples to be an answer to their own prayer. After vision and prayer in chapter 9, chapter 10 begins with Jesus sending his disciples out to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" to proclaim the kingdom. He knows that the solution to the problem is to go be with the sheep. Now the disciples have been sent to do ministry. As they are with the sheep sharing and showing the kingdom of God, they are then able to raise up new shepherds who are called from watching ministry, to joining ministry, to being sent to do ministry. Slowly but steadily the number of shepherds among the crowds of sheep begins to multiply and you have a kingdom movement. This is called disciple making! We must continue to hold our groups accountable to sharing their faith and building relationships with others, so that after a year, they are able to begin investing in a group of their own. We should be reminding them often that they are to be front line warriors in reproducing disciple makers, and passing on this vision.

Discuss: How would you describe your own vision and burden for the great commission? How would a vision for the great commission impact how a person commits their lives to it? What are the negative results of a church that has no vision for disciple making?

Pray

Ask God to help us grow in embracing the need for disciple making and giving that vision to others.

