

"FOLLOWING THE HEAVENLY VISION"

Zoe Christian Fellowship of Whittier
Bishop Edward A. Smith

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

Life Group Lesson Objective: To understand the power of following The Heavenly Vision.

Life Group Leader preparation:

REMEMBER: WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

As Paul was on his way to persecute Christians he had an “encounter with Jesus”. After his encounter with Jesus, he was a changed person, he started obeying the words of Jesus immediately.

- Paul thought he was doing God a favor by persecuting Christians, but Jesus asked him “why are you persecuting me”?
- The heavenly vision was not about Paul, it was about Jesus’ purpose....” to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may have forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me”. Acts 26:16-18

“Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” – Acts 26:19

- **Obedience:** Submission
- **Obey:** follow commands or orders
- **Agreement:** With God

Vision is something you can see....

Paul’s defense of his ministry and sharing the gospel.

Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his suffering.... Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own ... but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. (Phil. 3:7-16)

Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained.” They can’t focus, can’t reach their goal, can’t follow their dream.

God Has A Plan for you individually and for your church, and the body of Christ

- Within God’s overall plan for man; he has a personal plan for you. (*Jeremiah 1:4-5*)

God’s thoughts and plans are good not evil – Jeremiah 29:11

“FOLLOWING THE HEAVENLY VISION” – MAY 2018

WEEK #1: Obedience to “The Heavenly Vision”:

Discussion Question: Which is more important, Paul’s obedience or the heavenly vision?

Whatever personal vision or purpose God has given ...it’s not about us but about His purpose.

As for God His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is tried...2 Sam 22:31

...so, by the obedience of one (Jesus) shall many be made righteous – Romans 5:19

Paul was able to “follow” the heavenly vision due to his obedience...his submission and desire to follow Jesus’ command.

- God has given us written instructions/visions/commands to follow = The WORD

Paul was first the persecutor, then he became persecuted...what is your mindset, how do you handle persecutions, difficult times when following God’s vision for you, your family, the Church.

- Remember “we walk by faith not by sight” – Rom 5:7

- Think on these things – Phil 4:8
- I Cor 15:58 – Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord...

Acts 22:1 – And Paul earnestly beholding the council said Men and brethren, I have lived in all **good conscience before God** until this day.

Acts 22:10 – And I said, what shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go...

Proverbs 16:3; 9 Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed. **We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.** (NLT)

Are you helping someone else obey to obey the heavenly vision from God? Are you called to help? Is someone helping you?

WHATEVER GOD SAYS DO IT!

Let’s be honest – Discussion: What is your heavenly vision? Discuss ways you have discovered to help keep you on course with the heavenly vision.

WEEK #2 – Following the Heavenly Vision = Strength

Group Discussion Questions: Paul said he was convinced. What things, instances, circumstances have convinced you to follow the Heavenly Vision?

More Than Conquerors

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced. Rom 8:31, 38 NIV

- Are you convinced you heard from God?

Proverbs, 29:18 – “Where there is no vision, the people perish”

We must have faith in God to allow Him to be the main source of supply, help and strength in every area of our life?

People see things from their own perspective. Make sure you have a “Godly perspective”

Gen 18:14 KJV: Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Sarah laughs within herself after hearing she would have a child... then she received strength

- Hebrews 11:11 – By faith also Sarah, herself barren, received power for the conception of seed, even beyond the opportune age, since she considered the One having promised faithful. – BLB

•

Luke 1:30-38 – Mary – Virgin Birth

At first Mary doubted – “how can this be”

Then Mary said – “Be it unto me according to your Word”

Paul prayed for the Colossians: Col 1:11 – to be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power....

Let's be honest – Discussion: No vision is too small or too big, discuss challenges you may be having with vision.

WEEK #3: Following the Heavenly Vision = Favor of God

Discussion Question: How much pleasure are you bringing God? Is he looking for perfection or obedience?

FAVOR: tangible evidence that you have the approval of the Lord

- In following the heavenly vision... have a heart that is thirsty for God
 - I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do” (Acts 13:22)

God said David was a man “after” His own heart...what are you after?

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.” – 2 Chron 16:9

The steps of a [good and righteous] man are directed *and* established by the Lord, And He delights in his way [and blesses his path]. – Psalm 37:23 Amp

Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth] or away from home [and with Him], it is our [constant] ambition to be pleasing to Him. 2 Cor 5:9 Amp

Let's be honest – Discussion: How can sin & repentance effect the Heavenly Vision?

“FOLLOWING THE HEAVENLY VISION” – MAY 2018

Week #4 – Wait on the Vision – It’s working

Discussion Questions: Why is it taking so long?

VISION IS SOMETHING WE SEE

- Paul **saw** many believe in Christ, turn from darkness to light; from Satan to God; forgiveness of sins

Did you see an end or completion to your Vision?

Paul didn’t see the end of his heavenly vision. but he was able to say....

“But I consider my life of no value to myself, if only I may finish my course and complete the ministry I have received from the Lord Jesus--the ministry of testifying to the good news of God's grace. Acts 20:24

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”
– 2 Tim 4:7

Paul finished his course, he completed his race; however during his race/ministry he made other disciples who continued to carry on the vision that God had given him.

Proverbs 16:3; 9 Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed. We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps. (NLT)

Let’s be honest - Discussion: Have you made preparation for “the vision” to be carried out in the future without you?

Jesus told his disciples to “be filled with the Holy Spirit” and “go make disciples”. Jesus made sure that Paul had the same vision that He left with his other disciples