



Course Name: Developing Vision #3

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Course description:

This course builds on an understanding of where the church is NOW, where it wants to be THEN, and is designed to assist the process of developing a vision for the church. Specific components will be discussed that all contribute to the development of a vision for the future of the church.

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

- A. Examined four specific components that contribute to discovering the “Why” in relationship to a vision for the church.
- B. Discussed three ways these components assist in the development of the vision.

Outline of the class:

- A. Divide the class into groups of three or four and ask the groups to spend 10-15 minutes thinking about the history of the church in your location and answer the following questions.
 - 1. Who were some of the founding members in this community?
 - 2. Why did they introduce the gospel and establish the church in this area?
 - 3. What type of growth did the church experience numerically and spiritually in its infancy?
 - 4. Why did it grow?
 - 5. How does the founding of the church in this area align with what we read in the book of Acts?
- B. Ask each group to share their answers to these questions and then ask the overall group to express how their answers relate to where the church is presently.
 - 1. Does the same type of growth describe the present church?
 - 2. If the church is not growing numerically and spiritually, is there an identifiable reason that can be given?
 - 3. What can we learn from the history of the church in this place that will help us determine a different future?
- C. Ask each group to take a little time and answer this question: Why would anyone choose “this” congregation? What is about this congregation that makes it special, the one people want to attend?

1. After the groups have discussed their reasons, ask them to share with the entire class and make a list of their responses on the whiteboard.
 2. Look through the responses and ask the class as a whole to describe the thread that connects all of their responses.
- C. While considering the answers to the questions above, think about the following suggestions adapted from Simon Sinek's book *Start with Why*.
1. Look backwards:
 - a. The exercise above is designed to help each person go back and look at the foundation upon which the church was established in the area.
 - b. What we look for in this exercise is a better understanding of key factors that contributed to the growth of the church from its inception.
 - c. "The farther back you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see" Winston Churchill.
 2. Stay true to the purpose, cause, and beliefs upon which the church was established:
 - a. Purpose: Unless we understand our purpose, as it relates to the establishment of the church, we will struggle with creating a vision for the future.
 - b. Cause: The cause has not changed since the creation of the world. God has providentially orchestrated His plan throughout history to give us a cause worth giving our lives to achieve.
 - c. Beliefs: Now we are talking about the convictions upon which we will not change. This is the core of our existence, who we are regardless of the circumstances.
 3. Be balanced and authentic: Our vision must be based on our lives being both.
 - a. Balanced: We live in a time that is characterized by extremes.
 - i. The polarity of our culture is seen politically, economically, racially, and socially.
 - ii. These extremes filter into the church and result in a divisive atmosphere, which causes people of the world to see the church as no different than any other religious organization.
 - iii. Biblically balanced is the ideal of what the church could and should be for the world.
 - b. Authentic: If there is a term that describes what our current culture seeks, this is it.
 - i. The façade too many Christians put on today when they walk through the doors of the building does not help the situation.

- ii. We need to be genuine, not phony, but real people. The people of our world need to know that we are real people who have real problems just like everyone else.
 - iii. We must be careful not to come across as better than anyone else, or as though who do not know the challenges presented in life.
- 4. Be realistic:
 - a. When we consider the “Why” of our vision, we need to be challenged, yet also realistic.
 - b. This is the most difficult part of the equation. We want a vision that challenges us beyond what we are able to do on our own, but also one that is realistic in utilizing the resources and abilities of those who contribute to the vision.
 - c. The reason behind the previous weeks of considering our NOW and THEN is to help us understand this point.

Conclusion:

- A. The four factors described above provide a great benefit in laying the foundation for creating the vision we desire for the church. While more will be considered, these factors contribute to the direction ahead in the following classes.
- B. Please take time to think about all that was discussed today and consider some of the take-aways from this discussion and how we can build on this for the next lesson.
- C. Next week, we will continue to take essential steps in developing our vision.

Recommended Readings:

Kotter, John. *Leading Change*

Sinek, Simon. *Start with Why*