

**HEROES OF THE FATIH SERIES – How to get vision**

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**Introduction**

Enjoying this series - Felt today to take a break from looking at personalities, and instead to answer a practical question that is coming up, and to make sure we ground ourselves in the bible throughout this series.

**READING** – Proverbs 29:18 (KJV & Message)

- **Where there is no vision, the people perish:** but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (KJ)
- If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed. (Message)

Aware that for some, you may hear stories of amazing Christians who've gone for it, and changed the world.... And it leaves you feeling less encouraged. You ask the question... "That's all very well, but how do I get vision?" "How do I find my calling in the now, and how will I know if my calling changes in the future?"

Last thing we want! Don't want you to go away discouraged. The Heroes series are usually stories of normal people like you & me, who did extraordinary things not because they were super Christians or better educated etc – but because they were willing to be disciples of Jesus, and had the courage to step out for what they believed and knew about God. And Jesus never said that all his followers have to be internationally famous world changers. The upside down kingdom is all about the small scale, simple acts of service in our own street, our own daily lives and careers etc. Maybe it will build up to something for you in the future, but that's not the point...

So today – looking through the bible for some practical examples of **how to get vision** and calling. **How to know better what God is calling you to, and how to turn this into reality.**

**What is vision?**

**A sense of direction.** In life, in work, in family, in your education, in your week. A horizon beyond the present which you are determined to reach. Something which excites you, gets you going. Something to hold onto as your destination when you are getting on with the slog of life.

- **It's necessary.** "Where there is no vision, the people perish" Proverbs 29:18

Example from the 'Family Time' Course – 1<sup>st</sup> session asks "what is your vision for your family?" This really struck me, I'd never thought of family life in that way. Just thought it would happen by itself, that somehow over the years we'd get it right, and come out the other side with a perfect family, loving each other, smiling each morning etc.

- **But actually, the danger is that if you have no vision, you don't plan to go anywhere.** So you **end up going round in circles**, and missing opportunities to excel, to be the best for God in life, to meet your potential.

When you've got vision, it might be for a season or a project (eg. my vision is to see 5 people at work do an Alpha course over the next year OR my vision is to have finished renovating our house by 2008 so we can enjoy living in it free from clutter...), or it might become your calling for a season or even for life (my vision is to see the NHS radically transformed to serve the people and further the values of the Kingdom of God.)

So I'm not focussing on calling too much today – because I feel that will come out of you having a vision for different aspects of your life. **Vision first. Hear God's heart first. GET ON WITH SOMETHING first.....**

## Aspects of vision

### 1. There is a plan, and you can find it!

Eph 2:10 - For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- God has a plan for each one of us.
  - In fact, multiple plans & paths throughout life. And if we miss a few, he still works for the good of those who love him, and redirects our paths in the future
- Intended to do 'good works' – the things of the kingdom – through the power of knowing & following Jesus
- But it doesn't start with hard work, it starts with love & relationship.....

Galatians 5:6 – “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love”

Our vision & calling come out of wallowing in the free gift of God's grace in our lives.

- If you want to know more about what God wants you to do in life, get to know God more! Through the bible. Through the person of Jesus – read the gospels
- Learn about His character, His passions, His likes & dislikes. And as you do, HS will start to affect your own heart, and you'll start to be into the same things.

### 2. Everything that is YOU....

*Vision for life, if it's based in what God has for you, will be true to yourself, to who you really are & what you are like.*

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” (John 4:23-4)  
“Worship him in spirit and truth” – your own identity, what you're really like. Truth = true to yourself, your real identity.

- **You don't have to kill yourself....**
  - You may be a charismatic flag-waver, or a private person –both are FINE!
- “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps 37:4)
  - MEN listen up! The way YOU express your faith/love for God is legitimate too! It doesn't have to look like other people, or even your female friends or partner expresses it. You can be and should be true to yourself
- Don't have to be something you're not. Something that goes against the grain.
  - **Might stretch & challenge you, but it will also somehow fit.** And you will find joy, and peace and satisfaction in it

- And if you feel that you are pushed, or stuck, or backed into a corner, or its all a drag, in a position NOW that really doesn't fit....then maybe its not the right vision for this time
  - Don't forget, you might well be asked by God to do things which challenge you or don't naturally fit – but that's usually for a purpose that *does* fit within a wider vision.

### How do I work it out?

- Use various tools available (ask KC for them)
  - Personal passions sheet handout
  - Do 'Purpose Driven Life' or 40-Days of purpose
  - Use the Lifeshapes 5-sided to work out 5-fold ministry (apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor, evangelist)
  - Read some of the recommended books on KC website 'resources' section
  - Talk it through in your small groups
    - Make a bullet point list of your top 5 passions & dreams
  - etc

### Practical pointers (a handout of these points is available from KC)

- Emotions
  - What turns me on in life?
  - What turns me off?
  - What makes you cry? (Why)
- Bible figures that capture my imagination?
- Situations that make me feel alive?
- What makes life worth living?
- 3 most important people in my life? (Why)
- 3 most inspiring?
- What sins do I commit most often?
- My abilities
  - In what ways has God used me?
  - Where have I impacted?
  - Where do I feel I'm not especially gifted?
- What Goals have I set and reached in the past?
  - Including work goals etc
- How am I unique?
- If I could accomplish one thing in life, what would it be?

These are just some pointers to get you thinking.....

### Ask yourself the question: "Do I have a vision?"

Can I sum up in a few sentences what I'm essentially here for?

Is my life focussed on the things of the kingdom? (and getting a passion for them)

Where is favour currently resting?

What feels like an uphill struggle, not matching what I'm really about?

## **Its not just 'church' circles to work-out your vision & calling**

Sorry if the impression you've got, from this church or others over the years, is that the only legitimate place to express a Christian vision is through church circles. Eg. I'm passionate about God, so I should be a small group leader, or a childrens leader. Or the idea that the best way to live for God is to be a church leader!!

## **NO! We're all created for works of service, to bring Glory to God, IN THE REAL WORLD.**

KC/ST Toms leadership now exploring what this means in everyday life.

- Called to the workplace
  - To transform it, to mix it through with Kingdom values [SHAPER]
  - To evangelise your colleagues [MISSIONARY]
- Building Families
- Communities
  - To transform the social feeling – like Eden project, or others in St Toms who have moved into Firth Park, Pitsmoor, Shiregreen etc [SHAPER]
    - Political involvement – local council/groups etc
  - To evangelise – like some of the Woodseats people have a heart for [MISSIONARY]
- To be entrepreneurs – start your own businesses with kingdom purposes
  - Become a millionaire and fund your local church in mission!
- Some people will be called to church leadership/involvement
- Some people will still be called to overseas mission

### Read

Romans 12:1-8 (*different callings/giftings – same attitude of serving God & each other with what you have*)

### **3. Grounded in God**

*God gives us desires, passions, likes & dislikes. Vision & calling should be grounded in God's principles, and priorities.*

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matt 6:33) And all the practicalities you worry about each day will fall into place. Don't go after money! Don't take the next job JUST because of its salary package! Go after the kingdom first, and let the money work itself out!

- Examples
  - Eden Project Manchester – putting Kingdom principles above the normal 'comforts' of choosing where to live, who your neighbours are, what schools your kids go, how safe your car/house is at night to etc
  - Simple lifestyle options too
    - You might have a vision to 'practice hospitality' (Rom 12:13). That's a kingdom principle that you can put into effect several times a week!
- If you want more data – read more of the bible. Because... Romans 10:17 – “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

## 4. Given to God

*There IS a difference between finding & running with God-grounded vision, or choosing to follow our own vision in life. You have choices – to follow your own gut, hearts, desires – for your own reasons, or to seek and follow God’s heart for you.*

- “Who among you fears the LORD and obeys his servant? If you are walking in darkness, without a ray of light, trust in the LORD and rely on your God. But watch out, you who live in your own light and warm yourselves by your own fires. This is the reward you will receive from me: You will soon fall down....” Isaiah 50:10-11 (New Living Translation)

### **We are called to be disciples. That means choosing to follow.**

Heroes of faith – good example of disciples of Jesus who made hard choices, often at personal expense, to see the kingdom principles come more in their lives. Result – produced much fruit.

### How low can you go?

Those who want to keep hold of their life, are heading in the wrong direction! It’s not always a popular part of the message of Jesus, but he was quite clear – we are called to put kingdom vision, real fulfilment in life, finding and living our callings first.

- “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honour anyone who serves me.” **John 12:24-26**

As I said, the pay-off is well worth it. Actually getting on with a God-given vision is one of the most fulfilling things in life! He promises us ‘life to the full’. It’s very rarely boring...

## 5. Got on with for God

*James 1:22 - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (Also you could read James 2 & Eph 5:16-21)*

That doesn’t mean you win your salvation by working hard. “Grace is free, but it is not cheap.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer) But we are called to be people of action. The Great Commission says “GO!” into all the world and get on with things.... Sometimes the hardest step is for us to turn vision into reality. To turn ideas into actions.

Tips:

- Use the Lifeshapes Learning Circle – because the crucial aspect is ACCOUNTABILITY
- Share your God-given vision with others close to you
  - Ask for help & pray
  - Ask to be held accountable that you get on with things
  - We are a ‘body’ – make the most of the other parts. You may find others who share the same vision, and can actually add things to turn it into reality.

### **Summary - Vision & calling**

- **Grounded in God**
- **Given to God**
- **Got on with for God**