#### Module Aims

* To identify what vision is.

* To continue the process of discerning God’s vision for our lives.

* To explore one way of more fully discerning God’s priorities for our lives.

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### What is vision?

#### Biblical Vision: Exodus 3:1-12

* Vision of God (3:4-6).

* Vision for God’s people (3:7-9).

* Vision for Moses (3:10-12).

### What is Personal Vision?

* Finding and fulfilling God’s particular call for our life, giving direction to how we use our time, talents and treasure.

* Keeping the end in mind.

* Personal vision is like a magnifying glass; it helps create focus.

‘If we find God with great ease perhaps it is not God that you have found.’

Thomas Merton

‘Jesus knew his calling. He wasn’t just passing through life, but pursuing a vision.’

Leighton Ford

‘…the most important thing for you is your vision, your sense of God. The richer, deeper, wider your vision of the Divine Reality, the more rich, real, deeper and fruitful your work will be.’

Evelyn Underhill, 1927 addressing a conference of teachers

### Where does it fit with our Calling?

* Our primary calling is to discipleship.
* Our particular calling is to discern God’s unique purpose for our lives.

### Why is Discerning Personal Vision Important?

#### Consider…

* Identify the three or four things that matter most to you in life.

* Are these things really receiving the care, time and attention you want to give them?

‘Our task is not dream, up a vision for our life but to see Jesus’ vision, understand the Father’s strategy for our life, and live it.’

### What Can we Do?

If you were to fault yourself in one of these three areas which would it be?

* The ability to prioritise.

* The lack of desire to organise around these priorities.

* The lack of discipline to make these priorities happen.

### The Greatest Leadership Challenge

What opportunities have you been offered?

‘Everyone was saying that I was doing really well, but something inside me was telling me that my success was putting my own soul in danger.’

Henri Nouwen

### How We Can be Challenged

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A car is designed to function at a variety of revs, but constantly idling or constantly being in the red zone is not healthy for any car. Nor is it for a human being. Use the table below to assess where the rev gauges are for you in each of the five areas listed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Some Symptoms of Idling** | **Some Symptoms of Green Zone Living** | **Some Symptoms of Red Zone Living** |
| Spiritually  * Loss of expectancy that something might happen today which requires the agency of a supernatural God. * Intercessory prayers about maintaining the status quo rather than seeing new things come about. * Bored with worship services and with leading them. * Personal times with God become too routinised/carefully controlled. Hard to imagine God ‘breaking in’ with a fresh word. * Avoid situations which might challenge or discomfit. * Don’t readily share openly with any accountability partner. | Spiritually  * You make time for daily prayer and study of God’s Word. * Meet with a spiritual director or accountability partner. * Found a way to engage in public worship, even when leading it. * You’re aware of your vulnerabilities with regard to temptation, and have put in place things to help protect yourself from succumbing. * You take regular quiet days or an annual retreat. | Spiritually  * Prayer is reduced to cries for help. * Constantly distracted during public worship. * You no longer exercise spiritual disciplines. * You begin to rationalise misbehaviour. |
| Emotionally  * You rarely allow yourself to enter situations where your emotions might be stirred. * Your life is pretty well in control and you are rarely if ever surprised by anything. * Fear prevents you stretching yourself. * Easily distracted (box-sets?), quickly cynical (why bother?), defensive when others ask about what you do. | Emotionally  * You’re able to weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice. * Laughter features as part of your normal daily living, with a healthy ability to laugh at yourself. * Your emotional tank is filled through healthy relationships and fun things to do. | Emotionally  * You don't have time to pay attention to feelings. * You become strangely vulnerable to escapist sin as your soul cries out for emotional comfort. * You become dispassionate about the plight of suffering people. * You have escapist thoughts. |
| Relationally  * You rarely if ever take an initiative to show love and care for those with whom you are in closest relationship. * You spend disproportionately more time on solitary pursuits which energise you than in doing shared activities with family/friends etc. * Hobbies become idols. * You take others for granted. | Relationally  * Those closest to you receive love and care from you, and you get to spend quality time with them. * You don’t use work as a way of hiding from things that need to be addressed. * You meet with those who are friends, and have the capacity to care for them in the ups and downs of life. * You seek to bless every person you encounter. * You make time for those who don’t yet know Christ. | Relationally  * Your relationships become superficial. * You don't have time for friendships. * You notice yourself being more irritable than you would like. * If married, you spend more time with other people than with your partner. * If single, you promise to see friends but never seem to make it. * You are always apologising to your children for not being there. |
| Intellectually  * No new thinking or ideas, change of practice. * You don’t read anything stretching or challenging. * Micro-manage unimportant things, focus on trivia. * Bored, lethargic, focus on other people’s ministry rather than your own. * Focus on maintenance of what is rather than pioneering what might be. * Become bloated on training. | Intellectually  * You make time to read, watch, listen to books, podcasts, videos on a regular basis. * You seek out a training/development opportunity once a year (conference, training event etc). * You have others around you who disagree with your thoughts and ideas and you don’t become defensive or aggressive. | Intellectually  * You become stagnant, relying on past stimulation to resource present ministry. * Your bookshelf reflects when you left training. * You are less open to new ideas. * You become bored with your own preaching / teaching. |
| Physically  * You spend increasing amounts of time ‘lounging’, with little inclination to exercise. * You never attempt anything which might exert you or push you. You rarely let yourself get out of breath. * Your levels of fitness are declining. | Physically  * You take regular exercise (at least three times a week). * You eat a well balanced diet, rarely if ever skipping a meal. * You get between 7-8 hours of sleep a night. * A holiday provides sufficient relief from work to restore normal energy levels. | Physically  * You are physically drained, constantly weary, or lacking in energy * You have little time for exercise. * Stress targets a particular part of your body. * You become ill at the start of your holiday. |

### What Might Lead You into the Red Zone?



### What Might Lead You into Tick-over or blue zone?

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### Where are You on the Challenge Scale and Why?

**Over challenged**

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**Appropriately challenged**

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**Under challenged**

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### Living God’s vision

### How do we live a Godly life, living in God’s vision and journeying with God’s priorities?

### A Personal Vision Statement is...

* ‘A tool to help us identify God’s priorities for our lives.’

* Developing a personal vision statement is like a compass, it helps give direction.

### How does it Help?

* Brings direction.

* Clarifies priorities.

* Informs decisions.

* Fuels motivation.

* Strengthens perseverance.

* Guides evaluation.

‘The greatest incentive to saying “no” is having an even greater “yes” burning inside you.’

Stephen Covey

Disturb us, Lord

when we are too well pleased with ourselves,  
when our dreams have come true

because we have dreamed too little,

when we arrive safely because

we have sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord,

when with the abundance of things we possess,

we have lost our thirst for the waters of life;

when having fallen in love with life,

we have ceased to dream of eternity;

when in our effort to build a new earth,

we have allowed our vision of the new heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord,

to dare more boldly;

to venture on wider seas

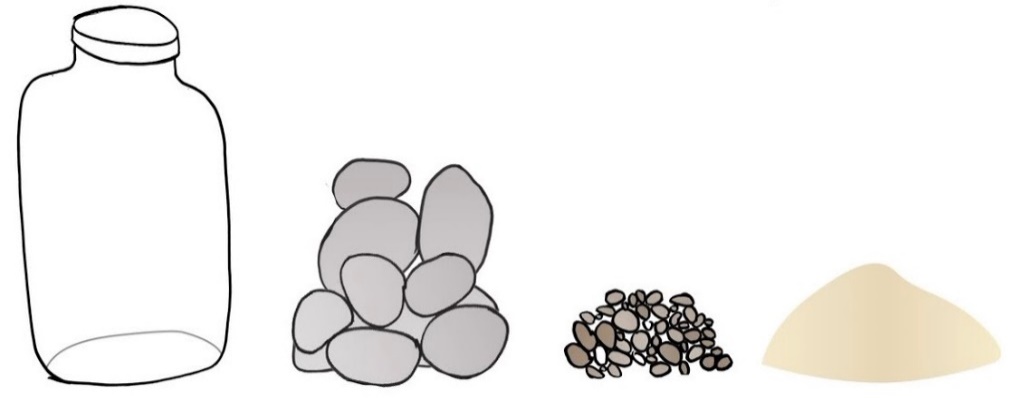
where storms will show your mastery,

where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars;

to push back the horizons of our hopes;

to push in the future in strength, courage, hope and love.

**A Personal Vision helps us focus on our calling…**



### Five Areas

* Spiritual: how is God calling me to grow in my relationship with him?

* Personal: what areas of my character does God want to develop in me?

* Relational: how does God want me to grow in my relationships?

* Professional: what does God want me to do in my work?

* Physical: how does God want me to take care of my body?



‘Beware of anything that competes with loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for him.’

Oswald Chambers

### Getting Started

Two problems:

* Getting started.

* Having an idea of the end product.

### An Exercise

Choose one of the two options (go with your instinct) and use the five areas listed below to inform the areas you reflect on.

* Personal: what areas of my character does God want to develop in me?
* Relational: how does God want me to grow in my relationships?
* Spiritual: how is God calling me to grow in my relationship with him?
* Professional: what does God want me to do in my work?
* Physical: how does God want me to take care of my body?

### A Process

Seek your personal vision through exercising spiritual disciplines.

Sharpen it by capturing it in detail.

Test it by submitting it to others.

Develop it through obedience.

Clarify it through reflection.



‘Experience is not what happens to you. It is what you do with what happens to you.’

Aldous Huxley

‘Vision for Jesus was seeing how the truth as his Father showed it, touched life as Jesus lived it.’

Leighton Ford

### Remember

* It comes from the heart.

* We, alone, can make this statement.

* It is radical and compelling.

### Common Blockages to Vision

* Too much activity.

* Pressure.

* Poor self concept.

* Fear of failure.

* Forgetting.

* Lack of focus.

* Imbalance.

* Tiredness.

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### Journal Time

You might find it helpful to reflect on this module using the following.

Write a letter to God about your understanding of his vision for your life. Talk about

* Your hopes.
* Your fears.
* Those things you want to do.
* Those things you want to leave behind.

Draw a picture/sketch.

Write a prayer of offering.