

Side Effects of Biblical Vision and Purpose (Part Two)

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”
(1 Corinthians 15:58).

In order to achieve a biblical vision and purpose you must be willing to submit to God’s will, in God’s way, and to obey His instructions. Submission and obedience are inseparable.

Submission

Mark portrays Jesus as the “Selfless Servant” who was immediately submissive to the will of God. The word “immediately” is recorded at least seventeen times in sixteen chapters of the Book of Mark.

Think of submission as bringing yourself under the protection of someone in authority. We must submit to our leaders if we expect our followers to submit to us.

At a wedding celebration, Mary told the servants, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5). We offer the same advice to you, preacher. Whatever, Jesus tells you to do; do it!

God’s Word often refers to submission in connection with:

- God
- Leadership and authority
- Society
- Other believers

“...They have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it” (1 Corinthians 16:15-16, *NIV*).

At times, we need to submit to others and help them accomplish their vision. Many times this also helps us accomplish our vision.

Service

Jesus set the example for all of us and came in the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7) He testified, “I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27, *NIV*). During the final night He had with His disciples He picked up a towel and basin and washed their feet. Why? He explained, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:15). Jesus is the real leader

of the church and its ministries. We are His servants and please Him when we help others in reaching their potential. We are called to “prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12, *NIV*).

Jesus taught James and John, the Sons of Thunder, a vital lesson. They came to Him with a request, “We want you to do for us whatever we ask.” This statement demonstrates not only ignorance but a selfish attitude. Leadership is not about being served (receiving) but serving others (giving). They went on to say, “Let one of us sit on your right and the other on your left in glory.” The world today would likely applaud James and John but Jesus corrected them. They mistakenly thought that the Lord’s kingdom was the same as all the others. Jesus explained His kingdom was not like those of this world that exercise authority over others, but that the greatest is the servant of all. (See Mark 10:35-37; 41-45).

We are servants to our:

- God
- Family
- People
- Vision

The Apostle Paul refers to himself as a servant of Jesus Christ. Additionally, he writes: “I became a servant of this gospel” (Ephesians 3:7, *NIV*). We have the privilege of proclaiming a life-transforming message.

“By God’s special favor and mighty power, I have been given the wonderful privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News. Just think! Though I did nothing to deserve it, and though I am the least deserving Christian there is, I was chosen for this special joy of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. 9 I was chosen to explain to everyone this plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning” (Ephesians 3:6-9, *NLT*).

Jim George in *God’s Man of Influence* offers nine insights on establishing a servant ministry. They include:

1. Serve for a higher purpose (1 Thessalonians 2:1).
2. Serve in spite of your situation (1 Thessalonians 2:2).
3. Serve with integrity (1 Thessalonians 2:3).
4. Serve to please God (1 Thessalonians 2:4).
5. Serve with pure motives (1 Thessalonians 2: 5-6).
6. Serve with love (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8).
7. Serve sacrificially (1 Thessalonians 2:9).
8. Serve blamelessly (1 Thessalonians 2:10).
9. Serve to nurture (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Understanding that we are servants is simple. To actually serve; that is a problem. It does not fit into the world's view of leadership nor does it please the desires of the flesh. We must constantly strive to be the servant that God wants us to be.

Stewardship

David J. Hesselgrove in *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* states that stewardship involves what a Christian possesses:

- His time
- His talents
- His treasures

Add to these:

- His tongue
- His testimony
- His temple

He notes seven basic principles (attributed to Ralph Martin, the author of *Worship in the Early Church*.)

1. The basis of stewardship is God has given abundantly to His children.
2. The most important offering is committing one's life to God.
3. All Christian giving should be voluntary and cheerful.
4. Stewardship is offered in accordance to one's ability and the needs of others.
5. God is no man's debtor.
6. Churches and people should be open in providing accountability in the area of finances.
7. Concern for the welfare of others creates a bond of love between the giver and the recipient.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" could be talking about more than giving of money (Acts 20:35). We also give our time and talents.

An African proverb states, "The hand that gives is always higher than the hand that receives."

Anthony Tamel in an article "Removing the Curse of Poverty" (as quoted in *Wisconsin District News*) states, "When we talk about the prosperity doctrine, we can go to the extreme and believe that God wants you to have plenty for any purpose you desire. The truth of the matter is that God wants us to have things in abundance to be used for His glory."

Tamel defines poverty as holding something in your hand for fear of letting it go. It is living in fear of not receiving. He says, "If you don't open your hand then you can never receive. You see, it is when I open my hand to let go of what is in it, that it is open for God to put something back."

God will not bless us financially if we are careless with finances, withhold it from accomplishing our vision, or hoard it.

Giving generously can break the spirit of poverty. It is through giving that we are able to prove God.

The only time we are told to prove God and to test Him is in the financial area (Malachi 3:10). What better way than to invest finances in a vision that outlasts a lifetime?

- “For the bishop (an overseer) as God's steward must be blameless...he must not be grasping and greedy for filthy lucre (financial gain)” (Titus 1:7, AMP).
- “SO THEN, let us [apostles] be looked upon as ministering servants of Christ and stewards (trustees) of the mysteries (the secret purposes) of God. Moreover, it is [essentially] required of stewards that a man should be found faithful [proving himself worthy of trust]” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, AMP).

We can also use spiritual gifts as good stewards of God's grace.

- “As each of you has received a gift (a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another as [befits] good trustees of God's many-sided grace [faithful stewards of the extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians by unmerited favor]” (1 Peter 4:10, AMP).

Ask yourself these questions taken from the *Daily Walk Study Bible*:

- Are you faithful in little things? Little responsibilities? Little promises? Small amounts of time, or talents? (Luke 16:10)
- Are you faithful with money (Luke 16:11)?
- Are you faithful with the associations of others (Luke 16:12)? Are you as careful of the properties and reputation of others as you are with your own?

Accomplishing a vision will require faithful stewardship of time, talents, and treasures. These are the prices on the road to success. Like the DaVinci Awards ad says, “Honoring those who have a will and have found a way.” There is a divine will to be accomplished in the right way, and that requires stewardship.

Sensitivity

God is leading us and expects us to be sensitive to His directives. In order for this to happen we must:

- Know God
- Know His Voice
- Know how to respond
- Know the needs of others

“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Steadfastness

Consider Daniel when he heard the decree that for thirty days no one could pray to any god or man except the king. What did he do?

- “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously” (Daniel 6:10, *AMP*).

Notice carefully these five words, “as he had done previously.”

Robert K. Hudnut in *Call Waiting* says, “Daniel makes the pages of history because he finds himself on his knees three times a day in good times and bad.”

- “Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, May your God, Whom you are serving continually, deliver you! [Psalms 34:7,19; 37:39,40; 50:15.]” (Daniel 6:16, *AMP*).

The king knew Daniel’s steadfastness, and identified his lifestyle these words, “whom you are serving continually.”

Daniel had formed a habit in his life. He adhered firmly and faithfully to what he believed. Once God has given us a vision, we must be firm, resolute, and unchanging. Our eyes are fixed on accomplishing that vision.

The early preachers “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). As a result, they turned the world upside down with their doctrine (Acts 17:6).

- “For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ” (Hebrews 3:14, *NLT*).
- “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The model of each of these side-effects of biblical vision and purpose is our Savior, Jesus Christ. His willingness to submit, surrender, suffer, sacrifice, and serve were according to the Father’s design.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Jesus was steadfast in fulfilling the reason He was born. He was an exceptional steward and always sensitive to the reason for existence. His motivation was: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12-14, *NIV*). Can we settle for any lesser guiding motivation in life?

Steadfastness requires discipline. It is astonishing how much of the Christian life boils down to discipline.

- “Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:7-11, *NIV*).

Theodore Roosevelt explained, “The one quality which sets one man apart from another—the key which lifts one to every aspiration while others are caught up in the mire of mediocrity is not talent, education, or educational brightness. It is self-discipline. With self-discipline, all things are possible. Without it, even the simplest goal can seem like the impossible dream.”

Jim Collins in *Good to Great* studies qualities that cause companies and leaders to excel to greatness. He found that one outstanding characteristic is a commitment to discipline.

Discipline involves things we need to do, and is also required to stay away from things we don't need to do. We must discipline ourselves to:

- Pray.
- Fast.
- Study God's Word.
- Witness.
- Live a holy and righteous life.
- Overcome sin.
- Memorize Bible verses.
- Prioritize.
- Manage our time.
- Exercise properly.
- Walk in the Spirit.
- Read the Bible.

Someone has said there are two types of pain in life:

- The pain of discipline.
- The pain of regret.

There is no gain without pain.

The choice is yours. Do you want to achieve your biblical vision? Get ready for the pain of discipline.

Paul Batura in *Gadzooks* says discipline in life is like oil in an engine. It keeps the motor running. It keeps the train on the tracks. It keeps a motorboat moving.

Perhaps, this closing quotation will provide a fitting conclusion. Bobby Knight (as quoted in *The Magic of Team Work*) gave this definition of “self-discipline”:

- Doing what needs to be done.
- Doing it when it needs to be done.
- Doing it the best it can be done.
- Doing it that way every time you do it.

Study Questions

1. How does Mark’s Gospel portray Jesus? _____

2. What is submission? _____

3. What are four areas that God’s Word usually connects with submission? _____

4. What is the minister’s purpose according to Ephesians 4:12? _____

5. Name four areas where we provide service.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

6. According to Hesselgrove, stewardship involves three areas. What are they? _____

7. List five of the nine insights on establishing a servant ministry. _____

8. What other types of stewardship does this lesson mention? _____

9. List three of the seven basic principles of stewardship.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

10. Quote and explain the African proverb given in this lesson. _____

11. What is poverty? _____

12. What does Anthony Tanel suggest we should do in response to poverty? _____

13. What can break the spirit of poverty? _____

14. What four things must we know to be sensitive to others?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

15. Why does Daniel make the pages of history? _____

16. What words did the King use to identify Daniel's steadfastness? _____

17. What habit did Daniel form in his life? _____

18. Quote Acts 2:42. _____

19. Who is the role model for each of the side effects of ministry? _____

20. According to Theodore Roosevelt, what is the one quality that sets one man apart from another? _____

21. What is the one outstanding quality or characteristic that causes companies and leaders to excel to greatness? _____

22. List five areas where one might discipline himself.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

23. Provide Bobby Knight's definition of discipline. _____

24. What are the two types of pain mentioned at the close of this lesson? _____

25. Compare discipline to the oil in an engine. _____