



I really believe this series of discussions has the potential to alter your future and impact the lives of those around you. God has recreated you in Christ so that He can do the good works through you He planned long ago (Eph 2:10). Many Christians have fallen short of their potential to shape the world around them because they have ignored the burdens on their hearts and their visions of how they could be used by God to build a better future. Many believers are bored and unmotivated because they have no vision worthy of their lives. It's time for that to change and by participating fully in these discussions you may find yourself becoming more than you ever knew you could be and accomplishing things you never thought possible. God bless you as you give yourself completely to the process of "Envisioning" a better tomorrow for the glory of God and the good of those around you!

-LK

Pray for God to give us hearts that can be moved with compassion by the brokenness we see around us.

Ask the following Thought & Discussion Questions giving plenty of time for discussion.

1. In last weeks message, **vision** was defined as: *A mental picture of what you want to see materialize over time.* We also read this quote, *Everything is created twice, first in the mind, then in reality.*

Can you think of some historical examples of this?

What benefits do you think you would experience from developing a clearer vision for the future?

2. (Read Neh. 1:1-4a) When Nehemiah heard the news about Jerusalem's shameful condition it broke his heart. Most great visions for the future begin with a heart broken over the way things are in the present. Name something you see that could be and should be better. How long has this been a burden for you?

3. (Read Neh. 1:4b-10) What three things did Nehemiah do to confirm that his burden was from the Lord? What happens to your burden/vision as you filter it through these three things?

4. How does Nehemiah's prayer help you better understand the place of prayer in developing a vision?

5. Nehemiah saw what *should* be long before he saw how it *could* be. Are you tempted to give up on your vision because you don't see how it could be fulfilled? Can you think of other times where God made a way when it seemed impossible?

This Week: Expose your burden/vision to the light of the *word*, and refine it in intensive *prayer*.

Close by singing I Am the Way

I am the Way.

I am the Truth.

I am the Life.

I am the Light.

I am the Son.

I am the Lord.

I am the King.

I am the Christ.

I am the Bread.

I am the Vine.

I am the First.

I am the Last.

Believe in Me.

Be not afraid.

Come unto Me.

I am the Way.

A Vision Confirmed

Nehemiah 1:4b-10

When God's people keep one eye on the *Word* and another on the *world*, it creates tension in our hearts. It's a tension between the way things should be and the way things are. If you spent this past week paying attention to that tension, then you have probably surfaced something that you believe you should do something about.

Here's the question we want to answer today. How do I know if the burden I feel in my heart is something from God or is it rising up from my own imagination or the world's influence? When it comes to your burden - it is not enough to *feel it*. We need to know *where* the feeling is coming from. Nehemiah's response to his burden for Jerusalem shows us three things we need to ask in order to confirm that our burden and the vision it inspires are from God.

1. Is my vision anchored to scripture?

Nehemiah's clearly was. Over a hundred years before Nehemiah the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel not only predicted Jerusalem's destruction and the deportation of its people but also of its rebuilding and the people's return (Jer. 29:10-11). Nehemiah's burden was a tension between what God said would happen and what Nehemiah was seeing on the ground.

Before we can say our burden/vision is of God we have to have a sure word in the Bible. God never contradicts His word, so any burden you feel must be consistent with the principles, promises, and purposes revealed in the Bible. Marinate your mind in the scriptures so you will be able to distinguish your Shepherd's voice from all other voices (Jn 10:4-5). Devote yourself to the consistent application of His word to develop the ability to discern good and evil (Heb 5:14).

So, ask yourself, *Is my vision of what could be, rooted in God's revelation of what should be?*

2. Is it Clarified in prayer?

As soon as Nehemiah felt the burden, he began praying and fasting (Neh. 1:4-10). Nehemiah prays twelve times in this book. God's people today lack power because we are deficient in prayer. I fear this is because we have very little burden on our hearts. We are not grieved over our own sins, the sins in the church, or the sins in the world that are at the root of all the shame, fear, and bondage. Also, our visions are small. We don't see clearly how things should be or how to repair the ruins and build a better future. We can't see it because the only place where we can get a clear picture of earth is from heaven. Only before our Father's throne will we gain clarity about what's wrong with the world and what we are meant to do about it. If you want to be a man or woman of significance, don't fool yourself into thinking it can happen without intense seeking after God. Only after He changes your perspective up there, you will know what you are to do down here.

3. Has it persisted over time?

The month Kislev (Neh. 1:1) to Nissan (Neh. 2:1) is 4 months! A vision of significance takes significant time to develop. Some people mistake every emotional appeal they hear as God's calling on their life. The problem is that it's something new every month. These people are big on beginnings, but small on follow through. The bigger your vision the more time you need, not to sit on it, but to kneel on it. Only time will tell if *this* burden is something big enough to give your heart, soul, mind, and strength to.

Most visions fail. They fail because people skip these steps. We lack the resolve and the clarity to see them through to fulfillment because we rush the process. We act on our visions out of compulsion rather than the conviction that only comes from God's confirmation.

Take your burden and set it before the light of God's word. Is your burden the result of the difference between what God says should be and the way things around you are? If the answer is yes, then seek Him continually in prayer until you discover the root causes of the problem, see the biblical solutions, and know the place you occupy in the plan to deal with it. Do this fervently, but patiently. There are times in life to hurry. This isn't one of them.