

STRONGER CHURCHES

MODULE 2

Clear and Inspiring Vision



FACILITATOR GUIDE

OBJECTIVE

At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

- Guide the church to discern God's vision in its own context and reality (analysis).
- Define God's vision in its own context and reality (knowledge).
- Communicate God's vision in its own context and reality (application).

TIME FOR SHARING & PRAYER

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
– Hebrews 11: 8-10 (NIV)

1. When Abraham left his home, did he know beforehand where he was going? Support or explain your answer.
2. As a foreigner, what allowed Abraham to feel comfortable in inhabiting the promised land?

TEACHER

DO: Praise the group for completing Module 1 and returning for Module 2.

SAY: In a few minutes we will take time to review your hard work, ask questions, and share with one another.

Today's module is called Clear and Inspiring Vision.

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Guide the church to discern God's vision in its own context and reality (analysis).
- Define God's vision in its own context and reality (knowledge).
- Communicate God's vision in its own context and reality (application).

TIME FOR SHARING & PRAYER

SAY: Before we get too far in the module, we would like to spend some time in God's Word and to give opportunities for testimonies and prayer. Let's begin.

ASK: Who has traveled to a foreign city or country and how did you feel?

ASK: Who would like to read Hebrews 11: 8-10?

ASK: (Allow time for responses before moving to the next question.)

1. When Abraham left his home, did he know beforehand where he was going? Support or explain your answer.
2. As a foreigner, what allowed Abraham to feel comfortable in inhabiting the promised land?
3. What does the text mean by "looking forward to a city with eternal foundations?" Did Abraham physically see this city or did he have a vision of its appearance?

SAY: According to these verses, it is noticeable that Abraham lived not by sight but by faith. He was guided in his pilgrimage by a vision of the future.

3. What does the text mean by "looking forward to a city with eternal foundations?" Did Abraham physically see this city or did he have a vision of its appearance?

Session 1: Biblical Foundation

1. WHAT IS VISION?

Read Proverbs 29:18

A vision is a clear mental picture of a preferred future.

It is NOT a pithy slogan or motto on a T-shirt or mug or a paragraph that is fitting for every other church in the community.

A vision is a congregation's answer to the question, "What is that preferred future God is leading us into?"

In this module we will observe the importance of a clear and defined vision for the leader in the local church.

Before we get to the process of learning how to write a vision, would anyone like to share a testimony of information on the report on how God has transformed you or another?

DO: Collect Healthy Church Reports and have participants report on implementing their action plans from the previous module.

DO: Pray.

Session 1: Biblical Foundation

1. WHAT IS VISION?

ASK: Will someone read Proverbs 29:18?

SAY: Vision allows the church to see clearly what God wants it to be and do, so that the Body of Christ may be unified as it gives witness to God's new creation in its community.

A vision is a clear mental picture of a preferred future. It is NOT a pithy slogan or motto on a T-shirt or mug or a paragraph that is fitting for every other church in the community.

A motto can be a great marketing tool, particularly if it distills the essence of your vision in a memorable fashion. It can serve as a shorthand descriptor of your vision but a great vision will be too rich and deep to summarize in a few words.

A vision for one congregation may overlap the visions of other churches in similar circumstances. After all, we serve one Savior and the same Scriptures shape our congregations. Yet God has a unique and special role for each body of believers.

A vision will ultimately work itself out into specific goals but instead of bogging down in the details, it holds out a dream of what could be as we join God in bearing witness to the full reality of God's Kingdom in our midst.

A vision is a congregation's answer to the question, "What is that preferred future God is leading us into? God has us here in this place, currently, with these particular people, gifts, and challenges. What is that clear mental picture of the place where God is taking us as a congregation?"

How did Jesus describe the condition of the church in that moment?

Matthew 9:36-38

2 Timothy 4:1-7 | Matthew 9:36-38

2. HOW CAN IT BE DEFINED?

"A vision looks into the future and sees what God wants to do through you to carry out His redemptive purposes."

1. Vision is the God-given ability to SEE those things that are not but could become REALITY.
2. The church's vision determines its direction and all its ministries. The process starts when you feel DISSATISFIED with the way things are. There must be some discomfort with the status quo. You see a better FUTURE, an attainable ideal toward which to work.
3. Having vision is also a matter of FAITH because you must deal with things that you can't see concretely. Without faith there can be no vision. And if there is no vision, then there is no mission.
4. A vision is a CHALLENGING and CLEAR picture of the future of the ministry.

VISION IN THE BIBLE

Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-18

2 Samuel 7:5, 8, 12-16

What was Jesus' vision?

2. HOW CAN IT BE DEFINED?

ASK: Would someone like to read the definition?

"A vision looks into the future and sees what God wants to do through you to carry out His redemptive purposes."

SAY: 1. Vision is the God-given ability to SEE those things that are not but could become REALITY.

DO: Provide an example.

SAY: 2. The church's vision determines its direction and all its ministries. The process starts when you feel DISSATISFIED with the way things are. There must be some discomfort with the status quo. You see a better FUTURE, an attainable ideal toward which to work.

DO: Provide an example.

SAY: 3. Having vision is also a matter of FAITH because you must deal with things that you can't see concretely. Without faith there can be no vision. And if there is no vision, then there is no mission.

ASK: Is anyone able to give an example?

SAY: 4. A vision is a CHALLENGING and CLEAR picture of the future of the ministry.

SAY: We are going to spend some time in small groups looking at visions in the Bible.

DO: Assign groups of 2-3 the passages and have them identify the vision revealed.

Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-18

2 Samuel 7:5, 8, 12-16

DO: Have groups report back.

VISION IN THE BIBLE

Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-18

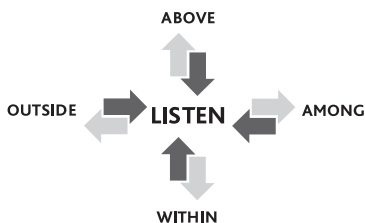
2 Samuel 7:5, 8, 12-16

What was Jesus' vision?

3. HOW IS THE VISION DISCERNED?

We have a visual that helps us see and understand how a vision is found.

- **From Above:** *What is God saying in His Word about His will and His way?*
- **From Within:** *What is the Holy Spirit saying about what we are uniquely to do?*
- **From Outside:** *What is our community/culture saying about needs and opportunities?*
- **From Among:** *What is our congregation saying about gifts & passions?*



Read Acts 26:19

Read Acts 16:6-10

Read Hebrews 10:24-25

DO: In the same small groups, look at the vision of Jesus. What is Jesus' vision? How did Jesus describe the condition of the church in that moment?

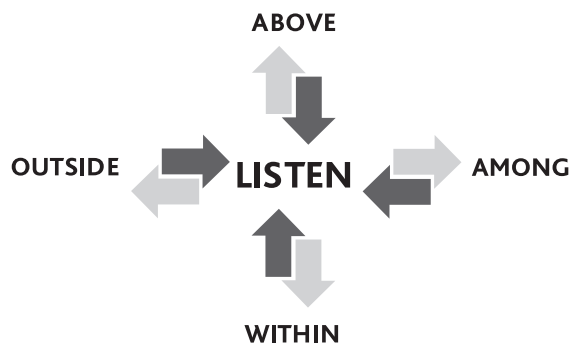
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- **From Outside:** *What is our community/culture saying about needs and opportunities?*
- **From Among:** *What is our congregation saying about gifts & passions?*



SAY: True biblical vision isn't created; it's captured. It isn't manufactured; it's revealed. For example, Paul said, "I wasn't disobedient to the vision from heaven" (Acts 26:19).

DO: Read Acts 16:6-10.

ASK: How does this passage illustrate the four-directional listening process?

ASK: Will someone read Hebrews 10:24-25?

SAY: The author of Hebrews shows us a vision of a church in community and in action. We must discern in community what kind of church we should be and the action(s) we should take.

Leadership, alongside the members, moves from this process of discernment to cooperative accomplishment of the vision God has for them.

4. HOW IS THE VISION COMMUNICATED?

- a. Clarity
- b. Kindness
- c. Sensitivity
- d. Coherence
- e. Optimism
- f. Conviction

4. HOW IS THE VISION COMMUNICATED?

SAY: It is important that the community discerns the vision and it must be communicated using the following 7 characteristics:

DO: As you go through the characteristics, provide examples or ask why the characteristic is important.

SAY:

a. Clarity – The desired objective must be easily understood.

b. Kindness – Vision should be communicated courteously.

c. Sensitivity – Communication of vision should be done with empathy, recognizing emotional involvement.

d. Coherence – There must be agreement between the vision and what the leaders say, think, feel, and do

e. Optimism – Communicating and dreaming together about vision must be positive; it should communicate a better future for all.

f. Conviction – The message must be capable of convincing the hearts and minds of the majority of those expected to help fulfill the vision.

SAY: A process that has worked for some is to gather the leaders of the congregation and invest a day discovering the hopes and dreams God has put in each of their hearts. Later, a similar but simplified process can be used to gain the widest contribution of the whole congregation. This provides everyone with the opportunity to contribute what God has laid on their heart.

DO: Divide into groups of 2-3 and have them answer the following question:

ASK: What would be a way of involving the congregation to clarify a vision?

DO: Ask the groups to report back.

Session 2: Tools

HOW TO WRITE A VISION STATEMENT

A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISION

1. **WRITE** out the vision. Use short, simple phrases that are easy to remember so you can memorize it and communicate it effectively.
 - List 5-7 words or short phrases to describe where your church is located.
 - Lists 5-7 words or short phrases that describe your church as it is.
 - List 5-7 words or short phrases that describe what your church could be.
 - What do the three ideas above suggest about a potential vision for the church? Do not worry about wordsmithing at this point.
 - Attempt to create a short phrase that captures the heart of this potential vision.
2. **THINK BIG!** The driving force is a vision that is clear, biblical, achievable, and challenging.
3. Be **CREATIVE**. Feel free to think in new or different ways.
 - Consider developing a word picture, such as a mirror, tree, strong tower, etc. to illustrate the vision
4. **ASSESS** the vision:
 - Is it clear?
 - Is it challenging?
 - Is it forward-looking?
 - Is it possible?
5. Share the vision with **CLARITY** and **CONVICTION**. A common vision, centered on the person of Jesus Christ, will be the unifying factor for the team.
 - Create an environment in which others can identify with the same vision.
 - Set up a team to work toward the reality of the chosen vision.
 - Create a vision broad enough to allow for experimentation and to deal with failure.
 - Look for new and fresh ways to keep the vision in everyone's sight.

Remember | A leader must share the vision with others to ensure confirmation by the greater faith community.

1. In groups or pairs, write a vision statement for your congregation, keeping in mind: what does God want the church to be like in 5 years?

God wants us to be _____

2. Share the vision ideas you wrote and discuss which of them best communicate how your church should be.

Write a concise and clear vision statement: _____

3. What biblical support does your vision have? _____

4. Now fine-tune the vision statement so that it is clear and simple. What are some ideas for communicating it to the church and inviting it to adopt it as its own? _____

Examples of vision statements of some local churches:

"Each member of the Woodville Church grows as a disciple of Jesus Christ through expository preaching and the teaching of the Word of God, and with praise that glorifies God, reaching the community through acts of service"

- Woodville Church, Michigan (USA)

"A community that walks according to the principles of the Kingdom, loving God and loving people."

- Roca Firme Christian Church, Quito - Ecuador

Evaluating Your Vision Statement

The following tool uses a 1-10 scoring system, in which 1 represents complete disagreement or the lowest score, and 10 represents excellence or strong agreement.

SAY: Let's review our Take Your Church's Pulse measurement result for this healthy characteristic. Was this an area of strength for our church or is this an area of weakness? Are there certain questions from the survey that we should pay special attention to as we prepare our action plan?

| CLEAR AND INSPIRING VISION STATEMENT | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. | The church leadership gathers every year to plan and evaluate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 2. | Our local church has a clear and defined vision statement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3. | The leadership of our church knows where we will be in two years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4. | The pastor and its leadership communicate clearly the vision of our church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 5. | I feel inspired by the vision of our church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 6. | I know the vision and the plans of our church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 7. | I feel motivated by the future of our church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Session 3: Action Plan and Goals

Based on what you learned in this module, create an action plan with clear goals for you and your local church.

For Pastors:

Have you identified a leader to mentor as a future church planter? Y or N

If yes, did you meet this month? Y or N

For Review:

Did you turn in a Healthy Church Report this month? Y or N

Look at the 7 Take Your Church's Pulse (TYCP) questions for this module (Session 2) and review your overall measurements.

What are your areas of strength (scores greater than 7)? _____

What are areas for growth (scores equal to or fewer than 7)? _____

Begin to develop an action plan. An action plan for implementing today's materials into your respective ministries is important and should be a habitual process for every step forward in your ministry. Based on what you learned in this module, create an action plan with clear goals for you and your local church.

An acronym that is helpful in planning is to develop **SMART** goals:

Specific: It describes specifically what I plan to do.

Measurable: I will be able to tell whether it was done or not.

Appropriate: Is it in line with God's will?

Realistic: It considers my limitations and availability.

Time-bound: It mentions an exact time period.

Example:

- By the end of the month, I will preach a sermon on integrated faith so that people will realize that God should be a part of every portion of life.
- By the end of the year, financial giving will increase by 5% from the previous year.
- In 6 months, 12 new believers will be saved.
- By next week, we will develop a plan for small groups that will start next fall.

Coming Up: Stronger Churches Module 3

You will help your church identify, train, and mentor emerging leaders for the growth and reproduction of the church.

| Healthy Church Report | MONTHLY GOAL | MONTHLY RESULT |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| SHARED THE VISION How many people inside and outside the church has the vision been shared with? | | |
| LEADERS How many leaders has the church trained for small groups and ministry? | | |
| SPIRITUAL GIFTS How many people has the church trained to use their spiritual gifts? | | |
| TITHE How many people has the church asked to tithe toward the mission of the church? | | |
| PRAYER How many people has your church prayed for in the community? | | |
| SHARE FAITH How many people has the church trained to share their faith? | | |
| SMALL GROUPS How many people has the church brought into small groups? | | |
| COMMUNITY MINISTRIES How many people has the church brought into ministries that serve the community? | | |
| NEW MEMBERS How many people has the church welcomed into relationships in the church? | | |
| WORSHIP How many people has the church invited to worship each week at your church? | | |

How to Use Reports

- 1. REPORTING** - Included in each module is a tabulation sheet with ten metrics for measuring entitled *Healthy Church Report*. As the participant progresses through the modular training a new measurement is revealed on the tabulation sheet for monthly reporting. Monthly reporting is a key part of the training. This provides accountability and focus on what matters most for the training participants. If the participants know ahead of time what will be asked of them at the next module, they are more likely to do those activities that lead to the results to be reviewed.
- 2. PASTOR TRACK MENTORING** - Pastors are encouraged during the training to identify and mentor a future leader to be a church planter. Each month of the modular training the pastor is asked if a leader has been identified and if they have met for mentoring (see www.multiplicationnetwork.org/resources/ministry-toolbox/203-mentoring-workshop-2 for mentor training material). At the end of the Stronger Churches modular training: Pastors are encouraged to turn in a church planter profile report (<https://www.multiplicationnetwork.org/resources/ministry-toolbox/159-church-planter-profile>) and churches are encouraged to plant a church by sending the new leader for More Churches Modular training.