



VISION, PASSION & ACTION

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Understanding Vision:

Vision, simply put is what you see ahead of you. When you think of the future say, the next one, two, five, ten, twenty years time or beyond, vision is what you can make of it or see yourself become. It is having a good idea or wise understanding of what tomorrow will be. The vision of a man represents his dreams and desires in life. Simply put, a man's vision is his future. Whatever we would achieve in life we must first imagine and whatever we can see or imagine vividly with our inner eyes we can realise in life. This is why the Bible says as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23: 7). Ultimately, every man is the product of his thoughts or vision. Vision is like a burst pipe of water underground. However deeply buried such pipe might be, the water eventually over time will drill its way out to the surface. God-given visions will always find expression and fulfilment.

Vision is very important as it gives us focus and direction in life. Vision helps us define our goals and map out our plans in life. Every man's vision would affect his behaviour and mould his character. No man grows beyond his vision. Great vision is necessary for great achievements in life. The vision of every man eventually makes him. A life without vision therefore would be without purpose and direction. This is why the Bible says,

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29: 18

To perish here does not necessarily mean to cease to exist but to become obsolete and irrelevant. History only remembers and documents for posterity the accounts of the lives and exploits of great men. These are successful people who, driven by their vision have achieved much in their lifetime. What that passage is saying therefore is that a man without vision would not have his name in the list or hall of fame of such great men. He would not be remembered beyond his lifetime. A man without vision would simply expire!

The Vision of Moses:

"Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."
Exodus 2: 11-12

Moses was born at a time when the children of Israel in distress in Egypt. The Egyptians felt threatened by their increasing number and so Pharaoh commanded that all Jewish baby boys born at that time should be killed. However, Moses' life was spared as God supernaturally rescued him. Originally born in obscurity by a slave couple from the tribe of Levi he was adopted later by the Pharaoh's daughter. It was that adoption that conferred on him the benefits of a prince in Pharaoh's palace. Moses therefore grew up in affluence and limelight with all the rights and privileges of a prince. As he grew Moses started to experience certain conflicts. Although he had a lowly background and came out of obscurity, he found himself in an overwhelming limelight. He was the son of one of the daughters of Levi yet, he was reckoned as the son of the daughter of Pharaoh at the same time. Moses had a dual nationality. He was both a Jew and an Egyptian at the same time. He was a prince and also a slave. Although from a poor and lowly Jewish background still he enjoyed the best of the wealth and affluence of the king of Egypt.

However, all these benefits by virtue of his link with Pharaoh notwithstanding, the yearnings and aspirations of Moses were not satisfied as he had a vision that transcends all that. I believe Moses' mother though employed by Pharaoh's daughter to nurse him, as an infant must have done a good job in letting him know his true identity that he was a Jew and not an Egyptian. This woman in obedience to the command of Scripture in Proverbs 22: 6 trained and taught her son the way he should go. Little wonder then that Moses grew up and chose to serve the Lord God of Israel, and not the god of Egypt.

There is a lesson in this for all Christian parents to learn. Many Christian parents in our generation are failing to raise their children according to sound Christian principles and ideals as commanded in Scripture. Many Christians now expose their children to all kinds of ungodly influence their peers, school and society in general. In the end, such parents either blame the children or even God for the misdeeds and vices of their children. According to the book of James 1: 17:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

God's good and perfect gifts definitely include children. Children as good and perfect gifts from God come into the world innocent and pure. Every baby then is only capable of speaking language he is taught. Babies eventually pick up and speak the language taught them by their mothers. That is why the language of every tribe or race is called mother tongue. Christian parents then must not blame God or their children for picking up wrong norms and values from the society as they grow. The mother of Moses proves quite vividly that such parents should blame themselves. If we set our priorities right and teach our children the right values and virtues in life, God is faithful and assures us that they will not depart from them when they grow up.

While Moses was being pampered as he grew as a prince in the palace in Egypt, he started to have internal conflicts. He became sorrowful each time he came face to face with the reality of the suffering of his people. He

started to nurse the vision of the liberation of his people some day. While still in bondage, Moses began to dream and desire freedom for his people. That vision continued to grow until it became overwhelming and Moses was completely sold to it. The Apostle Paul said, "This one thing I do..." A man of vision is one with focus – a man of one thing. Moses got to that point that the thought of the liberation of his people became his main and only focus. It was this vision in Moses' heart that helped him made the right choice that day. It was also what God saw in him and eventually led to his call and commission as a deliverer for His people, Israel.

Truly,

"The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him." 2Chronicles 16: 9

God knows our heart desires and vision for life. He always makes use of such vision to decide our placement and position in life. Oftentimes, our childhood desires, visions and aspirations always influence and reflect in our careers later in life. Many who are now Medical Doctors and Nurses have had their vision long ago when they were children. Their choice of career was influenced by the sufferings of sick people around them as growing children. Their decisions were borne out of a vision of ameliorating the suffering of their people. Many who have taken to the legal profession also did so in order to defend the cause of the defenceless and reduce the level of social injustice in the society. Like Moses, their decision to be a solution to the sufferings of their people is what God later used to decide their career choice in life.

Visionary Men In Scripture:

1. Noah
2. Joseph
3. David
4. Apostle Paul
5. Abraham

Vision & Leadership:

Understanding Passion:

The vision of a man feeds his passion. If a man must realise his God-given vision then, he must be passionate about it. We then need to understand very well what passion is. Passion is that strong, intense feeling we have for something or someone. This feeling could be that of love, hatred or anger that is, it be either positive or negative. However, when it comes to realising our visions, we are talking about positive passions. It is an overwhelming concern for others that make us shoulder responsibilities for them. To be passionate about a thing is to be overwhelmed, absorbed or consumed by that thing.

Usually, the passion of a man would occupy his thoughts and reflect in his speech and actions. Passion is like a driving force that cannot be stopped or fire that is difficult to quench. A passionate man is the one who says, "What is worth living for is worth dying for." Passion is 'dying' for something or somebody. Ultimately, we are all products of our passions. Our passions feed our actions just as our vision feeds our passion. When we are passionate about a thing, that passion beclouds or influences our perception and evaluation of every other thing as well as our attitudes and reactions to them.

The Passion Of Moses:

*"Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."
Exodus 2: 11-12*

Moses did not just have a vision he was passionate about it also. His vision grew until it completely enveloped his thoughts and overwhelmed him. Every day as he watched the sufferings of people, he became increasingly burdened for them. He increasingly became dissatisfied with himself and could no longer be indifferent to their plight. He could no longer maintain

the status quo. Moses, like every passionate man knew he just must do something about his passion. The opportunity came the day Moses stumbled on the scene of an Egyptian fighting with a Jew. I believe it might not be right in a sense to even claim that the Jew was fighting with the Egyptian. For, as at that time, The Jews were underdogs. They were slaves under the Egyptians! How then would a lord be fighting with his slave? The right perspective is to see the Egyptian as beating the Jew. The master was simply beating his defenceless slave. And so mercilessly did he go about the beating that the passion of Moses rose up.

At that point, Moses had to decide whether he was truly an Egyptian or a Jew? Really, Moses had several options. He could choose to support the Jewish slave or his Egyptian lord. He could decide to simply ignore them both and walk away but his passion was not going to allow that. Moses knew quite well what was involved that the stakes were high. He knew very well that choosing to take side with the Jew would mean forfeiting his position, status with all the attendant rights and privileges. Siding the Jew would mean leaving the certain riches, affluence and glamour of the palace of Pharaoh for an uncertain future of poverty and suffering as a vagabond in the wilderness. Surprisingly, Moses chose the latter. His passion influenced his choice. Every man of passion would the same. Joshua once challenged the children of Israel to choose whom they would serve God or Baal. Elijah also did the same before king Ahab and his false prophets of Baal at the great contest on mount Carmel. Again, the costs and conditions of discipleship are clearly spelt out by Lord Jesus Christ when He said,

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matthew 16: 24

Earlier on, He had said He did not come to set peace on earth but a man against his father, a daughter against her mother etc thus emphasizing the cost of our follower-ship and discipleship. He pointed out clear that,

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6: 24

Many Christians today are gambling with their faith either by being indifferent to situations around them or by trying to sit on the fence by belonging to two opposing camps at the same time. But we cannot really do that. Those who want to eat at the devil's table and the table of the Lord at the same time will lose out eventually. We should not be carnal Christians who want to belong to the church and the world at the same time. A good understanding of the Bible will point out clearly that such Christians are only gambling with their faith and would turn out as fools as they are put to shame and cast out of the kingdom of God in the end. Moses realised all this and so made up his mind. He put his faith and passion to work as he decided for God. The Bible says,

"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Hebrews 11: 24-26

Moses had to make up his mind that day as he got to the scene of the Egyptian taskmaster beating up his Jewish slave. That incident brought him into conflict – the conflict of choice between Egypt and Israel, between his adopted mother and his real mother, between riches and poverty, between a life of affluence and suffering, between living as a prince in limelight and living as a vagabond in obscurity. The passion of a man helps him sort out things and truly define his priority, vision and goals at such a time. What is your passion in life? What are those things or the one thing that you can boldly and confidently declare that you are given or sold to in life? Sometimes, God allow us to come into certain tight situations and conflicts so as to help us define our stand and passion at such times.

Some Other Passionate Men in Scripture:

1. Phinehas - Numbers 25: 7-19.
2. Ezra - Ezra 9 & 10.
3. David - 2Samuel 7: 2.
4. Nehemiah - Nehemiah 8.
5. Mordecai - Esther

Taking Action:

Men of vision are always men of passion and passionate men are men of action. Vision and passion spurs us into action and drives us to work. We cannot claim to be passionate about a thing and be indifferent to it. There is much pain and heartache in the world today because too many men are indifferent to life and men are indifferent because they lack passion. Usually, our actions are the products of our vision and passion. Every vision and passion would die in the heart except we act on it.

We must take corresponding action in line with our vision and passion because that action is the proof of our vision and passion. We all need to have godly vision and be passionate about it but much more we need to learn how to take action based on our convictions and passions as every great achievement in life always start first of all with a step. Action is taking steps! If we do not take such actions then it would not matter how good or great our vision may be or how passionate we are about it. Such vision and passion would die with nothing to show for it. Believers ought to know that it is not just required of us to have faith, it is required much more that we couple our faith with good works. This why it is repeatedly said in Scripture that faith without works is dead (James 2: 17, 20 & 26).

Moses: A Man Of Action: Exodus 2: 11-12; Exodus 14: 10-15.

We can now understand why Moses could not simply walk away when he saw the Egyptian beating his Jewish brother. He just must take action though he did it the wrong way. He committed murder! Moses did not appreciate the full import of his action until the next day when he saw two Hebrew brothers fighting and offered to help them settle their quarrel. But one of them replied,

"Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Exodus 2: 14

Moses reasoned that the news would get to Pharaoh and sure it did. Pharaoh sought to kill Moses but he fled into the wilderness of Midian where he was hired as a shepherd for Jethro's flock. Meanwhile, God took

notice of his vision and passion and later helped him to properly channel them by raising him as a deliverer for Israel. Moses eventually realised his vision of freedom for his people.

On several occasions, Moses ran errands for God in the cause of his duty. He stood for God before Pharaoh and took actions on His behalf. Moses before was no longer a just a man of vision or passionate leader, he was now a performer and man of action. He performed many miracles and plagued Egypt severally before Pharaoh could agree to let go of the Hebrews. And even after then, Pharaoh pursued them until he caught up with them by the brinks of the red sea.

Some Other Men of Action in Scripture:

1. Noah: Genesis 6: 1.
2. Joshua: Joshua 6:1-5.
3. Caleb: Joshua 14: 6-15.
4. David: 1Samuel 17: 21-54; 2Samuel 7: 2.
5. Elijah: 1Kings 18: 1.

However, we must be on guard at all times and be careful to ensure that our vision, passion and actions are right and in line with God's guidelines for life. Many have made costly mistakes, some destroyed and others made a shipwreck of their faith because of unguarded, overwhelming passion. Unguarded passion drive men into wrong actions. Uzzah and Peter are examples in Scripture of people whose passions drove them into wrong actions. Whereas God had instructed the people to the contrary, Uzzah because of his of love and passion for God stretched forth his hands to hold and prevent the Ark of the Covenant of God from falling at the threshing floor Araunah. But God smote him! Peter also in his zeal and passion to defend His Master drew out a sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, one of those who came to arrest Christ. His passion was misplaced as he was fighting a spiritual battle in a carnal way. Instead of being commended, he was rebuked by the Lord Jesus Christ whom he wanted to defend.

Our zeal for God and in life therefore must be guided by His word. Zeal or passion without knowledge is destructive. God says:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea 4: 6

Every good and godly vision, passion and action therefore must pass the following tests:

1. It must be Scriptural or Biblical – **Ps. 119: 11; Hosea 4: 6.**
2. It must proceed from sincere and pure motives – **Matt. 5: 8; Phil.4: 8.**
3. It must be inspired by faith – **Heb. 11: 6; Rom. 14: 23.**
4. It must be motivated by love – **1Cor. 13: 1-3.**
5. It must be done in humility – **Phil. 2: 5-11; Rom. 13: 1-7.**
6. It must be void of confusion – **1Cor. 14: 33; Eph. 4: 11-13.**
7. It must be done in cooperation with others – **1Cor. 12: 4-12.**