

DISCOVERING YOURSELF AS A YOUNG PERSON

One of the primary reasons why many young people roam about aimlessly, engage in useless or evil acts, and grow up to become unproductive adults is because they do not know who they really are. God wants every young person to grow up and develop into a form of leader and mentor who can also teach and guide others to develop into responsible and productive adults. When you don't really know who you are, you give yourself improper treatment without living with any purpose and focus in life. As a result you develop a careless and uncaring lifestyle that consequently (and ignorantly) causes you to mistreat others without any proper regard to their welfare or who they really are. Ultimately you do not discover yourself, and consequently do not discover your God-endowed potential. This is a major cause of several failed marriages, unproductive relationships, dysfunctional families, failed business ventures, bad leadership, corrupt governments, unfruitful ministries, perverted societies, etc. that result from lifestyles of adults who grew up as young people with no vision and purpose, acted primarily from emotional stirrings and wanton thought patterns, and entered into relationships or occupied important positions without proper preparation for any success.

Every young person must understand that almost all adult problems are fundamentally youth problems that become enlarged and entered into full bloom along with the growth of the individual. If the problems or bad habits are attended to and checked earlier, they can be eliminated or transformed into healthy and beneficial traits when the youth becomes an adult.

You can ignorantly sit on a rich gold deposit in a piece of land or rest on barrels of underground spring water and still die from poverty or thirst and dehydration without discovering that you had more than enough to meet all of your financial and water needs, and even share the resources with hundreds of other needy folk in your society.

We want to use a few series of articles to explore the concept of discovering yourself as a young person, and develop into an adult with insight and purpose, who knows the reason why you exist at this time in history, and what you can achieve in life to bless your family and your community, and ultimately bring much glory to God. We shall start with preparations for the discovery of your potential, and then get into some details of the discovery process.

A) HAVE A VISION

Vision is the central driving force in a person's life. Without vision you will always walk blindly and grope in darkness, as a person who depends on mere feelings and circumstances to make choices, and only lives by chance. Vision goes with knowledge, and gives purpose and meaning to things you do and to your life in general. God says clearly that: "Where there is no vision the people perish; but he that keeps the law, happy is he" (Proverbs 29:18). So we see that you need to live in obedience to God's word (after receiving Jesus as your Saviour and Lord), in order to develop and have a true vision. "My people are destroyed (perish) for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Here are a few principles you can live by, in order to have a vision:

1) **Be godly and principled**

To become a real future leader or an instrument of change in your community, you must be a man or woman of principle, who hold virtues like faith, humility, morality, holiness,

purity, love, wisdom, sincerity, truth, honesty, patience, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, gentleness, courage, perseverance, and diligence in high esteem.

2) **Develop sincere faith in God**

There cannot be a vision without faith; and faith has its roots in the knowledge of God's word. It is true faith in God that brings forth true, lasting dreams. Otherwise we entertain mere optimism without true faith that will ultimately convert the dream into to a vision, as we submit all the different ideas in our dreams to God in prayer, backed by meditation on His word and active obedience.

3) **Have a real dream**

A dream is a good idea imparted to your mind and heart as you train yourself to become useful in society, and develop an inner concern for the progress of people, especially your family, friends, group, community, or those you lead. Some dreams are mere fantasies. There are people who wish to become successful businessmen and women, and therefore spend their time wildly imagining great businesses and wealth for themselves, when they have not even learned how to make simple savings and manage the little money they get honestly and wisely. I have come across Christians, who wish to become great men and women of God, and therefore cut out the pictures of the big churches of other men and women, paste it on the wall, and "claim such churches for themselves". Is that how Jesus became the King of kings, and Lord of lords? No! The dream of Jesus was to humble himself to God the Father in obedience and die to shed his blood and save us. When He did that, God the father exalted him.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant, and coming in the likeness of a man. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2: 5-9).

Real dreams are the result of fellowship and association with God, and association other people who also dream. The importance and greatness of your dream depend largely on the depth of your relationship and interactions with the Lord, and the diligent plus sincere efforts you consistently make to promote the progress and welfare of others around you. Anyone desiring to see the glory of God on earth and the prosperity of his or her neighbors, will conceive great and passionate ideas, and entertain wishes that are reasonable and progressive. His or her heart and mind will be bubbling with plans, possibilities, proposals, and expectations for genuine productivity, profitable expansion, and maximum fruitfulness.

4) **Develop a clear vision and share your vision**

Faith is the primary factor that converts your dream into a vision. A dream says God can do it. A vision says God will do it. Your vision should not be fuzzy and diffuse. A vision should be sharp, and must be consequently pursued persistently until the goals are achieved. You must spend time before the Lord in meditation and prayer, for the Holy Spirit to refine and sharpen your vision. You must share your vision after you are sure of what you want to (and should) pursue; but be very careful never to share a dream with people who do not dream! They can discourage, betray, confuse, or frustrate you. They can even become enemies who later fight against the fulfillment of your dreams. Sometimes more than one vision is borne out of a big dream that might consist of several aspects and components.

You may for example, conceive a dream of desiring your wife or husband and children to become prosperous and influential in the society at the time of your death, or may wish the same for the people you lead in an organization or ministry to be very successful, godly, powerful, and prosperous. This broad and huge dream can finally bring forth a vision of good education, training, and skill development; another vision of financial management and investment; and a third vision of spiritual development. All these three visions, if properly pursued with the right strategies, will together produce the ultimate results of the original dream you had.

5) **Set goals to fulfill your vision**

A goal is the purpose or objective of your vision. Goals are usually activities you can engage in to fulfill your aims and objectives. An objective could be general (what everyone believes), but a goal is what you personally believe and do to pursue your vision and fulfill your specific dream. Have an action plan for each dream or vision: what you are practically going to put into operation and drive the machine of your plans until you arrive at your intended destination. Design a strategy or method of operation that is **suitable, doable, and appropriate** for the vision. You need to formulate short term, mid-term, and long-term goals that takes the vision along in bite-size pieces for consolidated series of small successes that accumulate into an overall complete success. Seek for expert advice as necessary for your plans and their implementations.

6) **Share your vision with trusted wise and mature people**

One person alone cannot execute and accomplish a vision successfully, no matter the faith the one possesses. That is why as a young person, you must learn to submit to the authority of your parents, guardians, elders, and other designated authorities (boss, director, teacher etc.). If you fall into the temptation of believing in yourself so much that you begin to think that you don't need any one's help or any form of adult supervision, and therefore cut yourself off from people who can help you, then you set yourself up for delinquency, development of arrogance and selfishness, imminent danger, and possible failure in life. By conducting his affairs wisely and prayerfully, Nehemiah shared his vision of building the walls of Jerusalem with trusted individuals in touch with the realities of the situation, and made them catch his vision (Nehemiah chapters 1-2). Nehemiah consequently built the walls of Jerusalem with faith, courage, prayer, diligence, and teamwork, which we all need to emulate (Nehemiah chapters 3-6).

We see the classic example in the life of the Lord himself, where the Bible clearly states that: “*Jesus went down with His parents to Nazareth, and was subject (obedient) to them*” (Luke 2:51).

True faith knows how to respect the value of unity and do team work. Any faith that ignores the valuable contribution of neighbors, or despises the work of unity, is not the kind of faith God honors, and will not be the kind of faith that will become a blessing to society.

You must share your vision after you become sure of what you want to (and should) pursue, and processes that you are definitely going to become actively engaged in. But be very careful never to share a dream with people who do not dream! They can discourage, betray, confuse, or frustrate you. They can even become enemies who later fight against the fulfillment of your dreams.

Any young person with the desire to develop a true vision that is embedded in the fear of God and the burning desire to engage in honest un-selfish labor, will discover his or her talents and purpose in life, know who he or she really is, and become a sure candidate for success in all aspects life.

In fact, this outline for self-discovery and vision development is not only for young people, but the truths are for all adults who are reading this material.

Be encouraged to apply the principles to your own life, in order to become a godly, productive, and resourceful person in your generation, and have the opportunity to leave a rich legacy for posterity after your departure from this world.

TO BE CONTINUED

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