

Straight Street for Church Planters
Unit 3 - Vision

Scripture Helps:

Desired outcome from this unit: For participants to identify key Scriptures that pertain to the kingdom of God and the vision that God has given them for the church plant.

Desired outcome from the Basic Training unit on Vision: For the planting team to develop a rough draft of a vision statement.

I. What is God saying to me in His Word?

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint” (Prov. 29:18, NIV).

“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained” (Prov. 29:18, NASB) [“perish” in KJV].

“I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:17, NASB).

Reflection and Thoughts

In Proverbs 29:18 the word translated “*vision*” in several translations is translated “*revelation*” in the NIV. The emphasis here is that the vision or revelation does not come from man. It does not well up from within the planter but it is God’s revelation about His church. Note, the emphasis is on God, not man.

Read Acts 9:1-9 from the *New American Standard Version* of the Bible.

Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,
2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
3 As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;
4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”
5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,
6 but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.”

7 The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

11 And the Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying,

12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.”

13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;

14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”

15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized

19 and he took food and was strengthened.

Did you take note of the number of times that God speaks of Himself or His purpose (me, mine, my)? Now read Psalm 100.

Again, take note of how many times the personal pronoun *he*, *his*, or the word the *Lord* is used. Do you see that it is all about God?

Through this study you will discover how you can get God’s vision for your new church plant by focusing on Him and what he has to say about His kingdom, His church, and you personally.

With that in mind, let us begin.

A. What is God saying to you about His kingdom?

Read the Scripture below and Appendix A – “The Kingdom of Heaven” then continue with this study.

1. The kingdom is about *power*—For the kingdom of God is

Now, go back through these Scriptures and circle key words that help you to see a picture of God's kingdom or His church. Write those key words in the margin to the left; again, you will come back to them later in this study.

Activity: Study and reflect upon the chart found on page 12 of this unit called *Envisioning an Uplifting and Ennobling Future*.

B. What is God saying to you about His church?

In Basic Training, you will learn that vision focuses the church on the critical issues. It answers the question, "Do I believe this MUST be?" with a resounding "Yes!"

What do you think are the critical issues that the church should truly focus on?

What do you believe the church must be?

Which passages of Scriptures do you think best describes what the church should be? Write them in the space provided. *Note, do not list Scriptures that tell what the church should do, only what the church should be.*

II. What is God saying to me through others?

Read the following verses from Acts 9:10-16, NIV

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord,” he answered. The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.” But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

God spoke to Ananias in a vision and told him to go to a man named Saul of Tarsus. From the text we can gather that Ananias had never personally met Saul, yet he had heard things about him—negative things. Perhaps you have heard God’s call to be involved in a church plant in a specific area or with people that you are not personally familiar with. Often, all that you have to go on is in terms of what others have said about the location you will be planting in or the people whom you will minister. Sometimes, those reports from others might be positive, negative, exaggerated, overemphasized or lack accurate details.

What have you heard God say to you about church planting in general?

What have you heard other Christians say to you about church planting in general?

What have you heard people in the community say to you about church planting in general?

What have you heard God say to you about church planting in a specific area and/or to a specific focus group?

What have you heard other Christians say to you about church planting in a specific area and/or to a specific focus group?

What have you heard people in the community say to you about church planting in a specific area and/or to a specific focus group?

III. What is it that I am supposed to be doing?

Read the following verses:

Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working” (John 5:17-18, NIV).

As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world (John 9:4-5, NIV).

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do (John 17:4-5, NIV).

These verses remind us that Jesus was always about the Father’s business. He only did what the Father asked him to do.

Questions to think about:

What business are you about?

What do you need to be doing at this point in your life in light of what the Father has asked you to do?

Take a moment and think about the vision that God has given you for church planting. Next, put into words the vision that God has given you for church planting using all that you have learned in this study along with any key words and/or pictures that you identified from Scriptures.

Envisioning an Uplifting and Ennobling Future

Listening to God	Listening to Life's Experience	Listening to Those Around You
<p>Verses related to kingdom of God:</p> <p>What verses related to the kingdom of God have spoken to me?</p> <p>What key ideas related to the kingdom impact ministry?</p>	<p>Life Past</p> <p>Review life and identify the peaks and valleys of life. Are there any themes or patterns to these highs and lows?</p> <p>What strengths and characteristics were revealed in these experiences?</p>	<p>Hearing people in community</p> <p>How does the community need to be different because of the church's ministry?</p> <p>What role will the church play in the community?</p>
<p>Verses related to church/church pictures</p> <p>What pictures of the church are most attractive to you?</p> <p>What are the implications of those pictures for the church's life?</p>	<p>Life Present</p>	<p>Hearing from pastors in community</p> <p>How will this new church complement other churches in the community?</p> <p>How will this new church be differentiated from other churches in the community?</p>
<p>Verses related to functions of church</p> <p>In thinking about the functions, what verses direct the church in each function?</p>	<p>Life Future</p>	<p>Hearing denominational and political leaders on community</p>

