

5 Stages of Discerning Vision

I. TIMES AND SEASONS OF GOD:

- A. As we are seeking the will of God, we can easily become frustrated if we don't understand that just as there are times and seasons in nature, there are also times and seasons in our lives and in the process of fulfilling God's will. This is what Paul was referring to when he said, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9 - NKJV).
- B. Years ago a group of senior missionaries came together in a conference **to discuss life principles they had discovered from several centuries of combined ministry experience.** Their purpose was to be able to share this wealth of experience with succeeding generations. As these seasoned leaders shared their life stories, a familiar pattern began to emerge. They realized they had all experienced several common stages in their ministries, and they identified a fascinating five-step cyclical process that God had taken them all through.

II. STAGE ONE: THE BIRTH OF THE VISION:

- A. Before anything tangible will come into existence, people get a vision imparted from the Holy Spirit. You see something that is in the heart and mind of God. In its infancy the vision might be very general with few obvious details about how it will actually be accomplished. But the vision is very real nonetheless and brings with it both a sense of excitement and an abiding awareness that it is from the Lord.

III. STAGE TWO: THE PLACE OF PREPARATION.

- A. Following the impartation of a vision into the hearts, there comes a time of preparation for the pursuit of the vision. Sometimes this season lasts for weeks. Sometimes this foundation-laying season lasted for months, or perhaps even years. This is also the stage when most of God's dreams are never brought into reality because people give up and quit.
- B. Many have a vision given to them by the Lord. But a vision that is not embraced and nurtured through the appropriate season of preparation will invariably die. When God gives a vision, we must take some kind of action, or that vision will never become anything more than a fantasy.
- C. The preparation always involves seasons of prayer, investment of time, money, training, and study. It may involve a time of serving someone else's vision or working for someone else to gain the benefit of experience. Not preparing yourself properly is a sure prescription of failure at some point in the future.

IV. STAGE THREE: THE PLACE OF THE WILDERNESS AND STRUGGLE.

- A. One of the biggest misconceptions about discovering the will of God is that if something is truly part of God's plan for you, there will be no struggle involved in accomplishing it. **If God has called you to do something, you will almost certainly encounter a significant amount of struggle.** God may actually even allow failures along the way, because He is more interested in the worker than He is the work. Sometimes God will even sacrifice a work to perfect a worker. This stage of struggle is the proving ground of faithfulness, and there is no substitute for it.

V. STAGE FOUR: THE PLACE OF THE REALIZATION OF THE VISION:

- A. The fourth step in the process is **the place of realization or the attainment of the vision.** This is the place we all looking forward to, where we can finally enjoy the fruits of our prayerful, diligent preparation and God's faithfulness.

VI. STAGE FIVE: THE PLACE OF NEW BEGINNINGS AND VISION.

- A. This fifth stage is perhaps the most surprising discovery, because it is here many find themselves being challenged once more with fresh vision from the Holy Spirit. For some, the vision was brand-new. For others, it was to expand and enlarge the very thing God had originally given to them to do.
- B. **The attainment of the dream is not a destination, but only another step in the cycle that continues to repeat itself throughout your live.** God will bring you back to the first stage of new vision, which requires more preparation and more struggle before the next level of realization is attained.

VII. ARE YOU READY FOR THE ADVENTURE?