

“Where There Is No Vision, the People Perish”

By Dr. Craig L. Loving

There are at least two ways that we fail to fulfill God’s vision: Complacency and substituting someone else’s agenda for God’s vision

God warned Israel against being “stagnant in spirit” (Zeph. 1:12 NAS). Solomon, too, saw the danger of complacency (Prov. 1:32). Yet, tragically in his later years, he himself succumbed to it (1 Kings 11:4). His complacency resulted in the division of the kingdom and the opening of the door to engulf the northern kingdom. The legacy of his spiritual complacency was passed to his own descendants, ultimately resulting in the loss of the southern kingdom as well.

The second danger is mistaking someone else’s agenda as being God’s vision for our lives. 1 Samuel 17 recounts the story of David and Goliath. After David convinced Saul that God had called him to fight and defeat Goliath, Saul attempted to arm David with his own armor. David tried Saul’s armor on, but quickly realized he couldn’t fulfill God’s vision and Saul’s at the same time. Had he not rejected Saul’s agenda for God’s vision, David would have forfeited more than his life: Israel would not have been delivered from the Philistine oppression.

I’m always struck by Jesus’ autonomy. Mark tells us that following a very successful ministry tour through Capernaum, Jesus deliberately disappointed the expectations of the people who were searching for Him. Had He not told Peter, “Let us go . . . to the nearby villages so I can preach there also” (Mark 1:38)? Jesus would have allowed Himself to be beholden to the expectations of the people of Capernaum. While He was responsive to people’s needs, His ministry was never constrained by anyone’s agenda other than His Father’s.

Is it possible that these are the types of concerns that Paul had in mind when he urged Archippus to be diligent in fulfilling the ministry which he had received from the Lord (Col. 4:17)?

Take a moment to reflect on what you believe to be God’s vision for your life. What aspects of that vision might you need to give more attention to? How will others around you know you are following God’s vision for your life rather than someone else’s plan? What positive results might others experience as a result of your pursuit of God’s vision?

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