

The Productive Leader by Jonathan Shibley

The Harvest demands **LEADERS**

Leadership demands **VISION**

Vision demands **FOCUS**

Focus demands **GOALS**

Goals demand **PLANS**

Plans demand **DISCIPLINE**

Leaders for the Harvest

Luke 10:2

God is bringing in a harvest of souls throughout the nations in unprecedented ways. There must be capable leaders to manage the harvest and disciple the nations. God is looking for leaders to step out in obedience and faith to be used by God for His purposes.

Vision

Leaders must have a compelling vision that attracts others to follow. That vision must flow from the mind of God through the heart of the leader and be presented in a way that is clear for people to join in the vision.

People perish for lack of vision.

Vision is the desired picture before it exists in reality.

Vision *Unites*

Vision *Inspires*

Vision *Produces Passion*

Vision *Gives Energy*

You need a vision for *your personal life*

A vision for *your family*

A vision for *your business*

A vision for *your role in God's Kingdom*

*(*Read the book of Nehemiah as a classic case of visionary leadership.)*

Three Truths about Godly Vision:

1. God-sized vision propels us *beyond our own human abilities*
2. God-sized vision *endures adversity*
3. God-sized vision *reaches beyond our life capacity*

In the case of Nehemiah, the vision to rebuild the walls was a task beyond his natural abilities. He needed supernatural assistance. The vision enabled Nehemiah to withstand the threats of his enemies, the threats of attack, insults, and the people's complaints and fatigue.

Nehemiah's vision and assignment from God would impact future generations.

Focus

“If you don't live by priorities, you'll live by pressure. Either you determine what's important in life or other people will determine it for you.” – Rick Warren

The next natural process to pursuing a vision is to focus on that vision. Many good things can tug at us from various directions. The productive leader filters all opportunities by focusing on the vision he's called to.

It seems that God works His wonders in the world through patterns. Universal principles such as sowing and reaping and seedtime and harvest are applicable to various jurisdictions of life. Remember when Jesus gave the parable of the seeds. Only one out of four seeds produced fruit.[1] That is a relatively universal principle that can be applied to marketing, sales, forecasting and so on.

In management theory many have come to learn the “Pareto Principle” or the “80 – 20” principle. The principle's premise is that 20% of the people create 80% of overall productivity. Or 20% of people generate 80% of the profits. This can also be applied to our focus of effort. We

should pour our energy and time into the 20% of activities that will make an 80% difference in overall operations.

The bottom line is this: *What's important?* If you can answer the simple question of what's important, from big picture to daily tasks, you will live a focused life. Great leaders are able to identify and focus on the right things and somehow follow through on that which is of most importance. Focus applies to your calling, your motivation, your family, and work life.

A Focusing Exercise: [2]

Take some time to answer these questions:

If I could do just 3 things that would make a significant impact in (fill in the blank), what would those three things be? Fill in the blank as it relates to your family, relationships, business, and so on.

- **In the next 90 days**, what 3 things could I do that would make a significant impact in my family, personal life and business?
- **In the next year**, what 3 things could I do that would make a significant impact in my family, personal life and business?
- **In the next 3 years**, what 3 things could I do that would make a significant impact in my family, personal life and business?
- **In my lifetime**, what 3 things could I do that would make a significant impact in my family, personal life and business?

This exercise will help you pinpoint the crucial things that you should be focusing on. Once you have answered this question in each category of time, then you can begin to structure your daily, weekly and monthly tasks and priorities to reflect your focused goals.

Goals

With clarity of vision and focus, you must set goals that will move you into the vision.

Two things about Goals:

Goals Must be Measurable

Goals Must be Realistic

Example: The marathon runner

Planning

As you have set focusing goals in line with your vision, it is now time to make plans on how you will reach those goals.

God is a planner.

He makes plans for each person (Jeremiah 29:11)

He planned all of creation (Isaiah 37:26)

Plans help set our course.

Plans can and should be changed and modified based on situations and unexpected new realities.

Planning helps us structure our lives and work to be productive for Christ.

Luke 14:28-30 “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays a foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him saying, saying ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’”

Nobody respects a job half-completed. Jesus is saying to all of us to carefully plan our actions and follow through. It will take focus and determination to be a finisher.

Discipline

It takes a disciplined leader to diligently follow this pattern of vision, focus, goal setting and planning.

The Disciplined Leader:

Reviews- Plans, Goals, and his focus to be sure he's in line and on track

Modifies- Adjusts based on circumstance, progress or lack of progress, new realities, unexpected set backs or new opportunities

Stewards- Uses all of his or her resources to effectively produce fruit for God's glory

Application Questions:

- What vision has God given me for my life? My family? My work or business? My role in the Kingdom?
- Go through the Focusing exercise. How will you apply this to your life? To work?
- How does the 80-20 Principle apply to you?

[1] Mark 4:3-9 NIV

[2] Excerpts from Growing Servant Leader, by Bobb Biehl and David Shibley. Published by Global Advance