

What Is the Vision for Your Ministry?

Ever since I was 12, many years ago, I had a vision for ministry and the harvest field. Years later that vision began to include Israel, particularly Jerusalem.

God was so wonderful to give my husband and me the opportunity to share the love of Yeshua with those living in Israel. We served there for three years and returned home. After a length of time, we were able to go back but this time we served just three months before having to come home.

Both times when we left I felt a sense of loss, frustration and failure in having to return home from the city that had consumed our hearts and lives for so long. After leaving Jerusalem I asked the Lord: "Now what? Am I supposed to just sit back and retire?" I could not shake the restlessness. I felt unfulfilled and useless and went through a deep mourning thinking my "vision" had died.

I am an ordained minister with a master's degree in theology. I have served on the mission field and given everything up—not once, but twice—to do so. I have served on a pastoral staff, preached, taught, organized and coordinated nationwide conferences, and have done almost everything there is to do in the church at one time or another. But now, I felt a sense of rejection by God and was just wallowing in outright discouragement.

Then one evening a friend asked me to pronounce YHWH. This led me to the book *The Names of God* by Lester Sumrall. As I read and meditated on the names of God I received a vision of myself. Although I had told my pastor that I was "hungry for God" the reality was that I was really hungry to be important again, and hungry to be making an impact on the kingdom. I

came face to face with the truth about myself!

I discovered that I loved Jerusalem, the mission field, teaching and ministry in general *more* than I really loved God. What a revelation! I don't know about anyone else, but for me the desire for ministry had swallowed up and clouded my desire for God.

In the book I read, "To take the Lord's name in vain, means to use His Name for your own selfish purposes." That hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, I haven't done that as the world does, but I had to ask myself if I had used His name in vain to achieve ministry that pleased me.

Sumrall also writes, "When self keeps God off the throne of your life, you are bound to have a discouraging worship experience because you are really worshipping yourself instead of God."

A.W. Tozer puts it this way: "Nothing that comes from God will minister to my pride of self-congratulation. If I am tempted to be complacent and to feel superior because I have had a remarkable vision or an advanced spiritual experience, I should go at once to my knees and repent of the whole thing. I have fallen victim to the enemy."

So now I have a new vision. My new vision is not a goal, a mission field, a ministry or anything like that, as wonderful as these may be. My first and foremost vision is God Himself. I want to be the friend of God like Abraham; I want to know the God of the burning bush of Moses; and I want to have a heart for God like David.

I want to know the God of Peter who called him to walk on water; I want to hear the heartbeat of Jesus like John did lying on His chest; and I want to be able to hear the risen Lord speak my name like He did to Mary Magdalene on that resurrection morning.

I want to know the Lord of the apostle Paul who met him on the road to Damascus, and I want to see and know the God who walked among the seven golden candlesticks when John saw Him on the Isle of Patmos. Yes, I want to know the God who walked through torture chambers and fires with the martyrs of past and present. I want to be so close to Him. I want to know Him in ways that I cannot even begin to imagine!

It will take the rest of my life here on earth to even begin fulfilling only a small portion of this vision. But I am on a quest to know God and be known by God, so that in everything I do, I say and I even think will bring glory only to Him.

It's not the end of His ministry, just mine. It's not the end of my serving Him, just the end of my serving Him to please me. It's not the end of my serving others; it's just the end of my serving others for my glory. And it is the new beginning of the rest of my life. For I am now on my final quest to see and touch the face of God!

What is your vision?

Prayer Power for the Week of April 13, 2015

This week ask the Lord to help you examine your heart to see if anything has crept in that should not be there. Surrender all to Him once again and ask Him to "create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit" within you. Ask Him to help you empty yourself of your own agenda and ambitions in favor of embracing His. Seek Him first in worship and adoration so that service will be a joy and not an obligation. Continue to pray for what matters most to God: saving the lost, sharing His love and provision, a righteous nation and the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 51:10).