

Vision Must Be Birthed in the Heart Before It Is Grasped in the Hand

Antione de Saint-Exupery, the French aristocrat, writer, poet, and pioneering aviator, once said, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

So true. This quote reminds us of **the importance of vision**, that we all need something big and grand birthed in our hearts. In fact, we actually need it more than we need to grasp all the specific processes to get there. It's true in building ships, and it's true in discipleship.

Use the Right Tools

But often in our churches as we seek to lead people in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ, growing further up and further in, **we tend to jump past vision and into process**. The exhortations abound, and so do the systems that go along with them. We inundate people with Bible reading plans, Scripture memorization tools, helpful hints to deal with the bad breath and moody attitudes that come with fasting, and nice moleskin journals to record our deep and profound thoughts.

These are all good tools. In fact, they're more than good; they're essential (though the moleskin might be debatable.) We need processes whether in building boats or in making disciples. There's no doubt, in the case of building ships that people do indeed need to collect wood. They need to shape hulls and fashion masts. They need to process the right formulas to know about things like buoyancy and weight limits, wind patterns and ocean currents.

But they also need to breathe the sea air. They need to feel the freedom of the wind in their hair and get a sense of the adventure that lies on the other side of the ocean. **That wind and smell is what fuels the processes that must be in place in order to actually get the work done.**

Don't Skip the Vision

In the church, **the strategy of discipleship can never trump the vision behind discipleship.**

Think about what the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:12: "So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

This is process. It's work. It's a continuous, strenuous effort employed one decision at a time by which we work out our salvation. But notice too that Paul didn't jump there immediately. Instead, he helped the Philippians "breathe the air of the sea" in the first 11 verses:

"Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a

man in His external form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:1-11).

Smell that? That’s the salt in the air. That’s the vision for the wide-open sea. That’s **the imagination arresting vision before us as disciples of Jesus**. We are following this One who is above every other, and as we are, we are being made like Him in our obedience.

This week, don’t be too quick to gather the wood. Maybe it’s time to help them feel the wind.

>> [Read more from Michael here.](#)

Do you need help with casting a vision for your church? [Connect with an Auxano Navigator and start a conversation with our team.](#)