

HOMework

Take some time this week to meditate on the following passages of Scripture: Psalm 119:103, Psalm 16:11, and Psalm 37:4.

RAISE THE QUESTION

“Vim” is a derivative of the Latin term “vis,” meaning direction, strength, force, vigor, power, energy, or virtue; and sometimes meaning sense, import, nature, or essence. Spiritual formation in Christlikeness is all of this to human existence. It is the path by which we can truly, as Paul told the Ephesians, “be empowered in the Lord and in the energy of his might” (Ephesians 6:10, PAR) and “become mighty with his energy through his Spirit entering into the inward person” (3:16, PAR).

If we are to be spiritually formed in Christ, we must have and must implement the appropriate *vision*, *intention*, and *means*. Not just any path we take will do. If this VIM pattern is not put in place properly and held there, Christ simply will not be formed in us.

—Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*

What is something that you wanted really badly as a kid?

Last week, in our series “Get a Life” we focused on a proper view of who we are in relation to God. This week, we are asking the question, “Where is God in my life?” What we will find is that for God to occupy the correct place in our lives, we must have the right *vision*, *intention*, and *method* with regard to the way we live.

SEEK THE ANSWER

Read Matthew 13:44-45

1. The merchant gladly gave up all of his earthly possessions because he knew that he had found something of significantly greater value. Jesus’ point here can’t be missed. The Kingdom of God is that hidden treasure; it is that pearl of great price. Once we grasp this *vision* (the true reality of the Kingdom), giving all we have and all we are for that Kingdom is understandable, because it is infinitely more valuable than our sacrifice. **If you were being forced to move to another country, and you only had a short time to gather what you could, what would you do?**

2. Another aspect of these two short parables is the joyfulness with which both characters give up all their possessions. In each case, the person who finds the valuable item gladly sacrifices all of their wealth for thing of greater value. **Talk about a time when you gladly made a great monetary sacrifice for something valuable?**

LIVE THE TRUTH

3. Even if we have the correct *vision* of the Kingdom, we must still have the correct *intention*. The right *intention* for the Christian is the desire to pursue a relationship with Jesus. **How can your community group help grow your desire to pursue a closer relationship with Jesus this week?**

Read Galatians 5:13-26

4. In this passage, Paul is exhorting the Galatians to live by the Spirit. In this way, he says, they will eliminate the works of the flesh. The order here is crucial. It is not about stopping the desires of the flesh to live by the Spirit; it is about living by the Spirit as the *means* to eliminate the desires of the flesh. **Outside of practices like reading the Bible and prayer, how can someone “live by the Spirit” to produce the fruit of the Spirit? (v. 25)**

5. As we continue in our series, “Get a Life,” we will be looking more closely at the *means* part of the VIM pattern that we have been discussing. One important thing to remember is that we must have the correct *vision* to have the correct *intention*, and we must have the correct *intention* to have the correct *means*. Otherwise, the *means* will become an exercise in rules-oriented salvation: something which Christ spoke strongly against. **Discuss ways we can avoid legalism in our walk with Christ.**