

Values Matter Discovery Starters

We Are Visionary

5. BE VISIONARY

YWAM is called to be visionary, continually receiving, nurturing and releasing fresh vision from God. We support the pioneering of new ministries and methods, always willing to be radical in order to be relevant to every generation, people group, and sphere of society. We believe that the apostolic call of YWAM requires the integration of spiritual eldership, freedom in the Spirit and relationship, centered on the Word of God.

[Num 12:6](#); [1Sa 12:16](#); [Pro 29:18](#); [Eze 1:1](#); [Hab 2:2-3](#);
[Mar 1:35-39](#); [Luk 9:1-6](#); [Act 16:9-10](#); [Act 26:19](#); [2Pe 3:9-13](#)

Value #5 – Be Visionary: Do the Right Things Right

Biblical Foundation:

Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed" (Hab 2:2-3).

Discovery Starter:

What is vision? It is – as Habakkuk states – that which “describes the end,” the grand goal, the ultimate target. Without vision we are directionless. We flounder. We are purposeless. We are lost. Unless you have a vision of your future, you cannot live your today well. A God-inspired vision is essential to live a fruitful and fulfilled life. It enables you to know what is the right thing to do.

But it is not enough to know simply “what” to do; we must also know “how” to do it. We must understand the right way to get the right thing done. It is important to get both the end (the “what”) and the means (the “how”) right. Doing one without the other always results in destructive foolishness. We see this in the story of Saul’s failed battle against the Philistines (1Sa 13:1-14). He got the “what” right – he knew victory was possible if he sought God’s favor. But he got the “how” wrong – he took matters into his own hand and foolishly killed the sacrifice lamb himself instead of waiting patiently for the prophet, violating God’s commands. As a result, his dynasty came to a premature end. How unnecessarily tragic! Had he proceeded with obedient integrity,

history would have been different. But Saul's life unfortunately illustrated the proverb: "As dead flies cause even a bottle of perfume to stink, so a little foolishness spoils great wisdom and honor" (Ecc 10:1).

Jesus sets out the ultimate vision when he teaches us to pray, "May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:10). This is the grandest of all grand goals. The question each person must ask is, "What is my part in this God-inspired vision?" We should not expect to get a blueprint for our future so that we can take off in our own strength, hoping to meet God at the destination. No – how we get there is vitally important. We are to pursue the vision relationally with God; engaging with Emmanuel continuously as we travel from its inspired inception to its fruitful completion.

Keep Going:

As you seek to understand God's vision for your life, consider the following. Like Habbakuk, look at a given situation around you and ask God for spiritual insight, to discern if it brings joy to God's heart or if it breaks God's heart. If the former, ask Holy Spirit what you can do to cooperate with and strengthen that situation. If the later, ask the Lord to show you how to collaborate with him to change that situation. Commit yourself to listen carefully, get God's vision and obey God's instructions without ever giving up.

Value #5 – Be Visionary: The Purpose of Jesus' Advent

Biblical Foundation:

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. Later Simon and the others went out to find him. When they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you." But Jesus replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came." So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons. (Mar 1:35-39)

Discovery Starter:

According to Mark's account, this passage describes Jesus' second full day of public ministry. The gospel begins with Jesus' baptism (Mar 1:1-8), temptation (Mar 1:9-13), early gospel proclamation and selection of disciples (Mar 1:14-20). On the Sabbath it really took off in Capernaum: demons were cast out, many sick were healed, and "amazement gripped the audience" (Mar 1:21-34). Up to then Jesus had been a "nobody," but now he was the buzz of the town! How exciting for those early disciples!

They had attached their wagon to the right horse, and now were thrust into the limelight! Who could have imagined such a thing?

They must have fallen into bed exhausted that night. When they awoke the next morning, the crowds were already gathering around the door. What might this day bring? What amazing stuff would Jesus do now? The crowds were crying out for Jesus. The disciples went to look for him, but he was not in bed. They searched the whole house, but he was no where to be found. Panic began to set in. The crowd was getting restless, but without Jesus what could they do? The search became frantic. Where could he be? Had anyone seen him leave? They looked further afield and finally – there he was! Alone. Praying. They must have reported to him the crowd's gathering excitement. They would be able to build on yesterday's success. Imagine what might happen today? It was going to be great!

Then he shocked them. He informed them that the "Capernaum Campaign" was over! They were to pack their bags and get ready to travel. Just when it looked so promising here! He said he wanted to preach to those who had not yet heard, because – in his words – "That is why I came." What a clear sense of mission. His vision was not swayed by the crowd's reaction. He had been given a mandate from heaven and he was determined to fulfill it. He had heard. He would obey. And he would not give up. Together with his disciples he would go to the least, the last and the lost! And he's still doing the same today.

Keep Going:

Time and again, the New Testament writers carefully detail in various ways the purpose of Jesus' advent. Consider these passages which tell us why Jesus came to earth:

- Mat 1:21; 5:17-18; 9:13; 10:34-38; 18:10-11; 20:26-28;
- Mar 1:23-24,38; 2:17; 10:45;
- Luk 1:68-75; 2:30-35; 4:18-19,34,43; 5:32; 9:51-56; 12:49-52;
- Joh 3:14-17; 6:38-40; 9:39; 12:27,47-48; 14:2-3; 18:37;
- Act 3:26; 5:31; 26:22-23;
- Rom 3:22-26; 4:23-25; 8:3-4; 14:9; 15:8-9;
- 1Co 15:3-5;
- 2Co 5:14-15,21; 8:9;
- Gal 3:13-14; 4:4-5;
- Eph 2:14-16; 5:25-27;
- Php 2:5-11;
- Col 1:17-23;
- 1Th 5:9-10;
- 1Ti 1:15;
- Heb 2:9,14-18; 7:23-25; 9:13-15;
- 1Jo 3:5,8; 4:10; 5:20;
- 1Pe 1:3-5,18-21; 2:21-24; 3:18-22;

- Jud 14-15;
- Rev 1:4-6; 5:5,9-10.

As you consider these passages, meditate on how you can participate with Jesus in seeing his vision fulfilled.

6. CHAMPION YOUNG PEOPLE

YWAM is called to champion youth. We believe God has gifted and called young people to spearhead vision and ministry. We are committed to value, trust, train, support, make space and release them. They are not only the Church of the future; they are the Church of today. We commit to follow where they lead, in the will of God.

[1Sa 17:32-50](#); [Ecc 4:13-14](#); [Ecc 12:1-7](#); [Jer 1:5-10](#); [Dan 1:17-20](#);
[Joe 2:28](#); [Joh 6:9](#); [Act 16:1-5](#); [1Ti 4:12-16](#); [1Jo 2:12-14](#)

Value #6 – Champion Young People: Four Impressive Young Leaders

Biblical Foundation:

God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom. (Dan 1:17-20)

Discovery Starter:

Three times the Babylonian armies would overrun Jerusalem: in 605 (2Ki 24:1-2), 597 (2Ki 24:8-17), and finally 586 BC (2Ki 25:1-21). In 605, Nebuchadnezzar took a select number of prominent citizens, including Daniel and his three friends, captive to Babylon. Taking well-connected prisoners was a typical way to compel political submission from those left behind. Any act of treason in Jerusalem would be met with the execution of the hostages being held in Babylon.

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were teenagers caught up in the midst of the tumultuous military-political events of the day. All of their youthful dreams were shattered. Upon arrival in Babylon they would have been castrated in order to serve as eunuchs in the pagan king's court. This wiped out any hope of getting married, having a family and living a normal life. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed their future. How would these young men respond? Remarkably, with no sign of self-pity, bitterness, or

rebellion. Instead, they learned, served and entered into leadership roles because of their impressive abilities and their impeccable character.

The story goes on. In chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue and ordered all government leaders to worship it on pain of death. Daniel's three friends repeatedly refused to do so. Facing capital punishment they declared, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up" (Dan 3:16-18). In this inspiring proclamation they displayed total trust in and total commitment to their God. So what happened? When they were thrown into the intense, super-charged fire, Jesus rushed to their side. He was the fourth man in the furnace. Why? Because he was so deeply moved by their willingness to lay down their lives. He longed to be by their side. Jesus affirmed and championed the remarkable lives of Daniel's young friends. Shouldn't we?

Keep Going:

God ran to identify himself with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar was so moved by what he observed, that he declared, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! ... There is no other god who can rescue like this!" (Dan 3:28-29). In the whole Bible there are only fifteen individuals whose names are used to fill in the blank in the phrase, "the God of _____." They include the names of biblical greats like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. What an honor to have God commend you by aligning his name with yours! These three young leaders are among the few so honored by God. With this in mind, read through Daniel chapter 3 and consider the impressive way these young leaders followed their God. What do you learn about God? What do you learn from the lives of these three young leaders? What do you believe is the take-away for your own life?

Value #6 – Champion Young People: Despise Not Youth

Biblical Foundation:

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them. Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. Keep a close watch on how you live and on your

teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you (1Ti 4:12-16).

Discovery Starter:

As Paul writes to his "true son in the faith" (1Ti 1:2) , two things are of paramount concern to the apostle:

- the well-being of Timothy, and
- the well-being of the Church.

This dual concern is reflected in the very structure of the letter. Paul goes back and forth between these two topics. At times he instructs Timothy about his life as a minister of the Gospel. At other times he focuses on the nature of the ministry in the church. This literary "interchange" can be portrayed as follows:



A ₁	1:1-4	Charge to Timothy
B ₁	1:5-17	Focus on the Church
A ₂	1:18-20	Charge to Timothy
B ₂	2:1-4:5	Focus on the Church
A ₃	4:6-5:2	Charge to Timothy
B ₃	5:3-20	Focus on the Church
A ₄	5:21-23	Charge to Timothy
B ₄	5:24-6:10	Focus on the Church
A ₅	6:11-16	Charge to Timothy
B ₅	6:17-19	Focus on the Church
A ₆	6:20-21	Charge to Timothy

Everything he writes in this letter reflects his love for and his trust in Timothy to act as an anointed minister of the Gospel. Timothy is a young leader who is being mentored by Paul and who in turn is mentoring other emerging young leaders. In our foundational passage, part of the longest of the six “Charge to Timothy” segments, Paul gives eight imperatives to Timothy: two regarding what he should not do; six about the priority items for a young leader:

- 12a *despise not* youth
- 12b *set* an example
- 13 *pay attention* to the public reading of Scripture, preaching and teaching
- 14 *neglect not* God’s gift
- 15a *devote* yourself to these things
- 15b *immerse* yourself in these things
- 16a *keep a close watch* on yourself and on your teaching
- 16b *persevere* in these things

The instructions that Paul gives to a younger leader underscore his confidence in Timothy’s ability to be able to make spiritually mature choices. You entrust a charge to someone who is trustworthy, and that is a character issue; not an age issue. Paul confidently delegates to Timothy a leadership role in the church. These are encouraging words of endorsement.

Keep Going:

Meditate on the eight commands/instructions Paul gives to Timothy. What do you like about them? What do you find challenging? On which of them do you feel like God would want you to focus? How can you cultivate more the spiritual gift not only in yourself, but also in those around you? Are there any younger leaders near you that you can encourage like Paul did with Timothy? How can you endorse them in their ministry contribution?

2. MAKE GOD KNOWN

YWAM is called to make God known throughout the whole world, and into every arena of society through evangelism, training and mercy ministries. We believe that salvation of souls should result in transformation of societies thus obeying Jesus’ command to make disciples of all nations.

[1Ch 16:24-27](#); [Psa 68:11](#); [Psa 71:15-16](#); [Psa 145:4-7](#); [Mat 28:18-20](#);
[Mar 16:15](#); [Act 1:8](#); [Act 13:1-4a](#); [Rom 10:8-15](#); [Rom 15:18-21](#)

**Value #2 – Make God Known:
Tell Everyone**

Biblical Foundation:

*"Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does.
Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise!
He is to be feared above all gods.
The gods of other nations are mere idols,
but the LORD made the heavens!
Honor and majesty surround him;
strength and joy fill his dwelling"* (1Ch 16:24-27).

Discovery Starter:

Tell everyone! God does not want anyone to be left out. He tells Abraham that he wants to bless every family across the face of the earth (Gen 12:1-3). David confirms that it is God's intent that "the whole earth will acknowledge the LORD and return to him. All the families of the nations will bow down before him" (Psa 22:27). God wants "to save all the oppressed of the earth" (Psa 76:9). Indeed, God "desires all persons to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2:3-4). He does not want "anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). Everyone. All. Every. This has always been God's desire.

So how is God's forever dream to be accomplished? Through us. As Abraham was blessed to be a blessing, so also it is to be with us. Jesus says, "Give as freely as you have received!" (Mat 10:8). So all of us who have come to know God by his gracious acts in our lives are called to make God known. All of us. Not just some of us. To everyone. We must tell of God's redemptive deeds to everyone who has not yet experienced the amazing love and transforming grace of God.

Remember, we are exhorted to "tell everyone about the amazing things he does." The focus is to be on God's actions. His deeds are to be the centerpiece of our proclamation. It is for this reason that the psalmist tells us, "How amazing are the deeds of the LORD! All who delight in him should ponder them. Everything he does reveals his glory and majesty" (Psa 111:2-3). We are to share what he has done with everyone. Why? So they too can come to know this awesome God. For, "how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?" (Rom 10:14). Because God has redeemed you, you are to "... show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light" (1Pe 2:9b).

Keep Going:

Keep growing in your intimacy with God by intentional meditation in the Word of God. The Bible is a treasure trove of revelation, telling us what God has done so that we can

tell everyone. In the Bible there are over 1200 distinct verbs which describe God's amazing actions, his wonderful works. Some are just used once or twice, some many hundreds of times. Pick one of the following Psalms: 4, 18, 25, 68, 103, 118, 139, 145. As you read it, highlight every verb or phrase which describes an action of God. Ponder on these passages and worship God for his wonderful works in the Scriptures and in your life. Then commit yourself to tell someone this week about what God has done. Are there more people you could tell about God's awesome deeds?

Value #2 – Make God Known: Proclaim God's Many Excellencies

Biblical Foundation:

*Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts;
let them proclaim your power.
I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor
and your wonderful miracles.
Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue;
I will proclaim your greatness.
Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness;
they will sing with joy about your righteousness (Psa 145:4-7).*

Discovery Starter:

The evangelistic outreach had been meticulously prepared. The program included great music, compelling dramas, inspiring testimonies and a powerful message. The location seemed ideal. Myriads of young people were present in this beach resort at the peak of the summer tourist season. Certainly many would give their lives to the Lord that evening. We had high hopes. But to our dismay, no one responded to the proclamation of the gospel. Not a single person. What had gone wrong? We went to prayer. As we prostrated ourselves before the Lord, he spoke to us. We repented of relying on our presentation rather than on Holy Spirit's presence to woo the hearts of the lost. We felt him graciously calling us to himself.

The next evening we humbly gathered in a deserted park with the intent to spend an evening far from the crowds in worship, refocusing our hearts on God. We set our sights on heaven and adored our glorious God. To our surprise, people emerged from nowhere and gathered around as we worshiped on and on. As we closed the worship time, I simply said to the crowd that had gathered, "If you want to know more about this God we are worshiping, feel free to talk to us." There were no dramas; no testimonies, no message. Nevertheless, eager people entered into conversations, hungry to know this God. That night a couple dozen people became citizens of God's glorious kingdom.

Reflecting later on the contrast between these two evenings, I was reminded that we are called to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1Pe 2:9 *ESV*). There is actually very little difference between true worship and true evangelism. Both “proclaim the excellencies of him” – one upward, the other outward. David captures this so clearly in our foundational passage. He speaks admiringly of God’s “acts ... power ... splendor ... miracles ... deeds ... greatness ... goodness ... righteousness.” He declares that God’s redemptive acts are “mighty ... majestic ... glorious... awe-inspiring ... wonderful.” As I listen to the psalmist’s words, I understand that without an awe-filled, worshipful attitude we cannot rightly tell the wondrous story of our God and his extraordinary redemption.

Keep Going:

In our foundational psalm, David says, “I *will meditate* on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles” (Psa 145:5). It is only after this time of meditation that he declares, “I *will proclaim* your greatness” (Psa 145:6). According to this psalm, meditation precedes proclamation. A fresh, living, dynamic, growing encounter with God is the foundation for a compelling evangelistic proclamation. If our hearts are not overflowing with an ever-expanding, awe-filled love for God and a deep-seated gratitude for his work in our lives, our words about the gospel will never land with a transformative impact. But if our passion for him is alive and growing, our words about him will reproduce a compelling desire in others to follow after this amazing God.

For that reason, I encourage you to take time today to meditate on “the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1Pe 2:9 *ESV*). Let your love for him overflow, so that (among other things) you may be re-energized to invite others to join you in this journey out of darkness into light. As you enter God’s presence and meditate on his wondrous character, remember that we are all wired differently. You may do this best by reflecting on Scripture, or by listening to worshipful music, or by writing in your journal about God’s redemptive acts in your life, or by any other means.

No matter what approach best fits you ...
Run into his presence.
Meditate on his glorious splendor and then ...
Go, and wherever you go ...
Proclaim God’s many excellencies.

Value #2 – Make God Known: Come and Go

Biblical Foundation:

And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mar 16:15).

Discovery Starter:

According to Mark, Jesus' first words to his would-be disciples included a proclamation, three commands and a promise. The proclamation is: "The Kingdom of God is near!" The three commands are: "repent... believe... come" (Mar 1:15,17). He then promises transformation. He says, if you do these things, then he "will make you become fishers of men" (Mar 1:17 NASB). At the time of their encounter with Jesus, Simon and Andrew were not fishers of men. Jesus promised that if they followed him he would make them into something they were not. Jesus is in the transformation business. His gospel promise was different from what we often hear today. He did not promise health and wealth. He did however promise to those who came that they would be discipled, molded, shaped, changed, made different, so that they could participate with him in his kingdom purposes. He promised that he'd turn them into his partner in spreading the good news of the kingdom.

Mark tells us that Jesus' last words to his disciples also included a proclamation, commands and promises. He proclaims that "anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved." For that reason he commanded them to "go" and "preach." He promises miraculous signs will accompany those who obey these commands (Mar 16:15-18).

Jesus' opening and closing commands are: repent, believe, come, go, preach. These themes are underscored when Mark states the reasons behind Jesus' choice of the original twelve disciples: he says "he appointed twelve ... to be with him" – it was first of all an invitation to friendship, an invitation to live life with him day in and day out. Amazing, but there was more! Mark goes on to explain the second reason for discipleship: "and to be sent out to proclaim the message" (Mar 3:14). Having been invited into relationship with God we – like them – are to go out in his name to invite others into that same relationship. The purpose of discipleship can thus be summed up by these two words: come and go! Come, having repented and believed. Go, so that others may hear that they too are being called into fellowship with God.

Keep Going:

You may want to consider these passages in which Jesus commands his listeners to "come" –

- Mat 4:19; 11:28; 22:4; 25:34;
- Mar 1:17; 6:31;
- Joh 21:12.

Here are some passages in which he tells them to "go" –

- Mat 9:13; 10:6,7; 11:4; 22:9;

- Mar 16:15;
- Luk 7:22; 10:37; 13:31;
- Joh 8:11; 20:17.

As you ponder on these passages, how can you come closer to him today? And to whom can you go today, inviting them to accept Christ's call to repent and believe and walk with him from this day forward? Keep coming and keep going!

12. DO FIRST, THEN TEACH

YWAM is committed to doing first, then teaching. We believe that firsthand experience gives authority to our words. Godly character and a call from God are more important than an individual's gifts, abilities and expertise.

[Deu 4:5-8](#); [Ezr 7:10](#); [Psa 51:12-13](#); [Psa 119:17-18](#); [Pro 1:1-4](#);
[Mat 7:28-29](#); [Act 1:1-2](#); [Col 3:12-17](#); [2Ti 4:1-5](#); [2Pe 1:5-10](#)

Value #12 – Do First, Then Teach: A Three Step Approach

Biblical Foundation:

This was because Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the LORD and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel (Ezr 7:10).

Discovery Starter:

When Ezra enters the story (Ezr 7:1-10), it twice states that "the gracious hand of his God was on him" (7:6,9). Why? It was not accidental. It was because (as various translations say ...) "Ezra had determined to ... had prepared his heart to ... had devoted himself to ... had set his heart to ... had committed himself to ... had resolved to ... had directed his heart to ... had devoted his life to ..." do three things:

- Study
- Obey
- Teach

The focused passion and intentional commitment displayed by Ezra is inspirational. Ezra modeled something that is worthy of imitation. His intense hunger for God shaped his priorities, and calls us to do likewise.

Luke says that the Gospel he wrote was “about everything Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). Do and teach. Jesus’ actions fully embodied his teaching. He walked the talk and that is why his words rang so true! We should model ourselves after his example. When our words are a confirming echo to our deeds, then our teaching has a deep and lasting, transformative impact. But lofty words fall lifeless from the lips of those who do not practice what they preach. We are told that Jesus “was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (Luk 24:19 ^{ESV}) and he’s at work to establish in us “every good work and word” (2Th 2:16-17 ^{ESV}). Our doing and our teaching are to go hand in hand.

Back to Ezra. He obeyed and taught, but those actions were preceded by study. The same Hebrew word, *darash*, is also used in these passages:

1. David said to Asaph, “Search for the LORD and for his strength; continually seek him” (1Ch 16:11).
2. Josiah instructed Shaphan, “Inquire about the words written in the scroll that has been found” (2Ch 34:21).
3. Isaiah exhorts his readers, “Search the book of the LORD, and see what he will do” (Isa 34:16), and “Seek the LORD while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near” (Isa 55:6).

Study, search, inquire, seek. This is just a sampling of *darash*. It’s a call to set your heart to the thoughtful and passionate pursuit of God.

Keep Going:

Ezra’s intense pursuit of God led him to a place of intimacy with God. What he knew about God was not second-hand knowledge, but resulted from a rich relational encounter with the living God. The record of his devotional life reflects this intimacy. For him God was not a distant divinity but – in his words – “my God.” He tells us, “I fell to my knees and lifted my hands to the LORD my God. I prayed, ‘O my God ...’” (Ezr 9:5-6). When God becomes “my God” through pursuing passion and relational obedience, we like Ezra will have transformative teaching to share with those around us.

The Hebrew phrase translated “my God” is used not only by Ezra, but by other Biblical notables like: Asaph, Caleb, Daniel, David, Elijah, Ethan the Ezrahite, Habakkuk, Hosea, Isaiah, Jacob, Jonah, Joshua, Micah, Moses, Nehemiah, Ruth, Solomon, and Zechariah. But of all of them, David is the one who utters “my God” more frequently than anyone else. Take time to read through these passages in which David speaks of “my God” –

- 2Sa 22:7,22,30; 24:24;
- 1Ch 11:19; 17:25; 21:17; 22:7; 28:20; 29:2,3a,3b,17;

- Psa 3:7; 5:2; 7:1,3; 13:3; 18:2,6,21,28,29; 22:1a,1b,2,10; 25:2; 30:2,12; 31:14; 35:23,24; 38:15,21; 40:5,8,17; 59:1; 63:1; 68:24; 69:3; 86:2,12; 109:26; 140:6; 143:10; 145:1.

As you reflect on these passages, I encourage you to pray and set your heart to seek God, so you too can join the list of those who know him as “my God.” May you keep discovering more and more about this amazing God in deeply personal ways. And may your hunger for him lead you continuously to study, obey and teach about your God.

Value 12 – Do First Then Teach: The Amazing How

Biblical Foundation:

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law (Mat 7:28-29).

Discovery Starter:

The word used to describe the crowds response to Jesus is *ekplesso*. It is translated as: amazed, astonished, or astounded. The word *ekplesso* is used twelve times in the gospels (Mat 7:28; 13:54; 19:25; 22:33; Mar 1:22; 6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18; Luk 2:48; 4:32; 9:43) and in each and every instance it describes the reaction of either the crowd, the disciples, the religious leaders, or even Jesus’ family, to Jesus’ words and actions. What he said and did certainly evoked a strong reaction among all – they were struck with amazement.

Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5:1-7:27) is what amazed the crowd. The sermon contains about 2400 words, which take only about 16 minutes to read out loud. But the crowds reaction of amazement was not just because of **what** Jesus said, but **how** he said it. The **how** went far deeper than his skillful oratory or anointed delivery. It had to do with the fact that his words sounded genuine. Jesus was credible. He called people to a new way of living and he did so with “great authority” because his life matched the message. They could tell that he practiced what he preached. This is what set his teaching apart from that of their religious leaders. Jesus’ words were backed up by his life. In fact, his words echoed his life. We often say, “actions speak louder than words.” Well, in Jesus’ case, his actions added thunderous volume to his words. There was no dissonance between actions and words; and that is indeed astonishing!

The concluding point of Jesus’ great sermon is a parable about two home builders (Mat 7:24-26). One’s efforts were successful even amidst great difficulties; while the other’s were not. Both had heard the word, but the former obeyed (resulting in blessings) while the later did not (and met with disaster). Clearly, it is not enough to know the right words. You have to apply them. Habituated obedience, the diligent commitment to do

God's will day in and day out, is what set the wise man apart from the foolish man in the parable – and Jesus from the religious leaders in real life! Stunning!

Keep Going:

Today is a good day to go before God and ask him to show you areas where your actions don't rightly match your words. Reread the story of the wise and foolish builders and then enter into God's presence with confidence, asking him to reveal to you areas in your life that need adjusting. Listen to the gracious correction of Holy Spirit and be sensitive to his promptings so that you can walk in fellowship with him as together you align your life with his. Ask God where he would like to bring change into your life and commit yourself to cooperate with his grace to see new habits formed.

Be open to ask him for forgiveness if you have acted at times like the foolish man in the parable; listening to but not applying the word. Receive his forgiveness and thank him as you prepare to walk with him into new lifestyle disciplines that reflect his character. Set your heart to obey the word he has spoken to you. Remember, "don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it" (Jam 1:22-25).

11. EXHIBIT SERVANT LEADERSHIP

YWAM is called to servant leadership as a lifestyle, rather than a leadership hierarchy. A servant leader is one who honors the gifts and callings of those under his/her care and guards their rights and privileges. Just as Jesus served His disciples, we stress the importance of those with leadership responsibilities serving those whom they lead.

[Deu 10:12-13](#); [Psa 84:10](#); [Isa 42:1-4](#); [Mic 6:8](#); [Mar 10:42-45](#);
[Joh 13:3-17](#); [Rom 16:1-2](#); [Gal 5:13-14](#); [Php 2:3-11](#); [1Pe 4:10-11](#)

Value #11 – Exhibit Servant Leadership: Justice, Mercy, Humility

Biblical Foundation:

O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (Mic 6:8).

Discovery Starter:

God is our ultimate model for leadership. Ethan the Ezrahite declares to God, "Righteousness and **mishpat** are the foundation of your throne; **hesed** and faithfulness go before you" (Psa 89:14). The two words transliterated from Hebrew describing God's rule are the same words that Micah uses in our foundational passage. **Mishpat** is the word we commonly translate as justice, and speaks of the governance of a judge who equitably executes the law and its consequences. **Hesed** is translated as mercy or loving-kindness or compassion. It is used to describe the quality of heart that maintains an enduring, covenantal relationship of love.

When it comes to justice and mercy, how can we be imitators of God? In the Ten Commandments, God makes it clear that the law carries consequences. He states, "I do not leave unpunished the sins of those who hate me, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations. But I lavish my love on those who love me and obey my commands, even for a thousand generations" (Exo 20:5b-6; Deu 5:9b-10). To get the full impact of these words, we have to do a little math. Whereas justice reaches to 3 or 4 generations, mercy extends to 1000 generations! In other words, though God will always be just, he's about 250 to 333 times more desirous displaying mercy! God does justice, but he **LOVES** mercy. What a contrast that is with the way I often respond. When someone has done me wrong, my natural inclination is to exact justice, not extend mercy – certainly I don't wish for mercy over justice to the tune of 250+ times!

If we are going to be servant leaders who imitate God in doing justice and loving mercy, the third quality listed by Micah is absolutely vital! We will only have grace to walk in a servant-hearted manner if we "walk humbly with God." We can't do it on our own. We can do it with God. It is in the context of relational intimacy with God, that we find the grace to relinquish our rights and serve others in a Christ-like manner.

Keep Going:

The following seven passages from Psalms all contain the Hebrew words **mishpat** (justice) and **hesed** (mercy). Read through them and ponder the extraordinary character of God who blends them so artfully, indeed beautifully, in his every action.

- Psa 25:8-10
- Psa 33:5
- Psa 36:5-7
- Psa 48:9-11
- Psa 101:1
- Psa 103:6-12
- Psa 119:41-43

In your time of meditation, reflect on what steps you can take to grow in *mishpat* (justice) and *hesed* (mercy) as you “walk humbly with God.” As you finish, invite God to work in your life in these areas so you can better reflect his servant heart to those around you.

Value 11 – Exhibit Servant Leadership: The Foot-washing Redeemer

Biblical Foundation:

Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me." Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them" (Joh 13:3-17).

Discovery Starter:

Jesus didn't just talk about servanthood, he walked the talk. As Jesus was “going up to Jerusalem” he spoke of his imminent sacrificial suffering (Mar 10:32-34). Immediately, two of his disciples asked him if he could guarantee them a special place in his coming kingdom (Mar 10:35-37). Had they even been listening? Their hunger for position, status, prestige, power sounded so dissonant to what Jesus had just said. Jesus continued, “Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mar 10:42-45).

A few days later, on his last evening with the twelve, Jesus washed their feet. His servant-hearted actions turned the world's messed-up value systems right-side up. As he washed the disciples' feet, something happened. He refocused our understanding of success. He redefined what is desirable and praiseworthy. From that moment on, the highest goal for anyone is to be a foot-washer. This seems totally crazy to the world; but absolutely sane to all who have had their feet washed by Jesus.

Reading an excerpt from the well-known children's story, *The Little Prince*, may shed fresh light on Jesus' foot-washing. Because of the unique, laughter-filled relationship the little prince had with the aviator, his death and return to his planet gave the aviator a new perspective on the stars. Because he knew that the little prince would be laughing on one of them, all the stars would now seem to ring out in laughter for him. From that moment on the aviator would laugh as he gazed into the star-lit sky, a seemingly insane action to all those who had not known the little prince. The same is true for us. As we walk in relationship with Jesus, we will seek to imitate his counter-cultural servant-hearted values. How could it be otherwise? The world might think us crazy, but after being touched by his transformative servanthood, we can only aspire to serve others like Jesus served us.

Keep Going:

Reread Jesus' words which he spoke after washing his disciples' feet. He begins with a question, "Do you understand what I was doing?" (Joh 13:12). He wanted to make sure that they understood that through his actions he had done more than give them clean feet. He had given them a new value system for life. He concluded this encounter, "Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them" (Joh 13:17). The blessing lies not just understanding, but in applying the insights from this study. Consider how you might better serve those around you in a very practical way. Make a list of actions you can undertake to serve those you will encounter in the next few days. Make a plan to walk the talk.

© 2020 David Joel Hamilton: "YWAM Beliefs & Values Discovery Starters." Used by permission.