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### Insight #3: MISSION/VISION/PURPOSE

Driving in fog<sup>1</sup>

Imagine you are driving at night in the middle of winter. You're going down a freeway at 65 miles an hour when all of a sudden you drive into a thick fog.

How do you feel the minute you realize you can't see more than 15 or 20 feet in front of you? Your initial response is probably a bit of panic. Most likely your foot immediately moved to the brake, and you slowed down.

You drive slowly as you don't want to run into someone who has stopped or is going slower than you are. You are worried about someone running into you.

Then all of a sudden, the fog gets much thicker. Now you can only see 5 feet in front of you. You probably roll down the window and try to follow the lines on the highway. You are afraid to stop for fear someone will hit you, but it is impossible to go faster and not run off the road or into another vehicle. You can barely move forward – it is like you are driving with a blindfold over your eyes.

Then you start to emerge from the fog. Now you can see four, then six then ten lines in front of you. Now you can see the next turn in the road and then you break totally out of the fog and can see 200 yards in front and behind you.

What is your emotional response when you can clearly see?

You probably have a great sigh of relief and an easing of your muscles. Your foot moves off the brake and back onto the gas pedal. You pick up speed. Your hands stop sweating, you put your arm back on the armrest, you turn the radio back on and find yourself relaxing again.

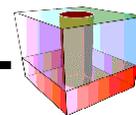
The only thing that changed was your vision. To live your life without a mission/vision is like going through life in a fog.

“The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight but no vision.” –  
Helen Keller

A personal mission statement is “a brief written expression of your overall purpose in life.”

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *What Matters Most: The Power of Living Your Values*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. Page 106-107



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“He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.” – Nietzsche

For this exercise we will use the words mission and vision and purpose as synonyms. Use whichever word is most comfortable to you,

Discovering your personal mission/vision/purpose takes time. It is hard work. But it can be one of the most helpful tools in guiding your life. I encourage you to start by taking a day, or at least a block of time, to begin answering these questions. Do this for several sessions over several weeks. Then look over your answers and see what God is saying to you. You will find taking the time to do this is worth the effort.

Some of these ideas were adapted from Robert J. Lee and Sara N. King, ***Discovering the Leader in You***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001. pages 33-48.

### **Tell Your Story**

- *If you wrote the story of your life as a series of headlines, what would they be?*
- *What events in your life have inspired your passion?*
- *Where have your main ideas come from?*
- *What are some major themes of your story?*
- *Do you like where your life is taking you?*
- *Is leadership a part of your life story?*

### **Reflect on your Daydreams**

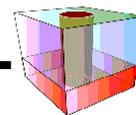
- *Into what kind of future do you project yourself?*
- *What daydreams attract you the most?*
- *Who's with you in your daydreams?*
- *What kind of person are you becoming in your daydreams? What are you doing?*
- *What are you accomplishing in your daydreams?*
- *What impact do you have?*
- *Do your daydreams include glimpses of leadership?*

### **Reflect on Scripture and Ministry**

- *What scriptural images and concepts really stand out to you?*
- *Do you have any verses that are “life” verses to you?*
- *Do you feel any mandates for your life from scripture?*
- *What “calling” do you sense or feel from God?*
- *What roles in ministry has God opened up for you in the past?*
- *What roles do you feel He might be leading you toward?*

### **Look for Patterns in Events, Behaviors, Focus, and Energy**

- *When you are happiest or most successful? When least?*
- *When do you feel most focused?*
- *What captures your attention?*
- *What situations energize you?*



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- *What kinds of situations get you to drop everything else?*
  - *Does leadership energize or drain you?*
  - *What roles do you play in groups?*
  - *What feedback have you received about your roles with other people?*
  - *What other patterns do you see?*

### **Take lessons from Role Models**

- *Who are your role models?*
- *Why are they models for you?*
- *Are their personal characteristics similar to yours, or do you admire these people because they are so different from you?*
- *In what ways have your role models exhibited leadership?*

### **Assess How you feel About Power**

- *Do you enjoy power?*
- *When and where do you feel powerful?*
- *What kind of power most excites you?*
- *Do you admire others who exhibit power?*
- *What do you do with your power? Does it work?*
- *How do you feel and act when you don't have a feeling of power?*

### **Assess Your Response to Conflict**

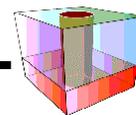
- *What ideas or goals have you fought for in recent years?*
- *What have you "gone to the mat" about?*
- *What tends to be at stake when you find yourself in conflict with others?*
- *What do some past experiences of conflict suggest about your personal vision and yourself as a leader?*

### **Consider Your Creative Involvement**

- *When do you feel most creative?*
- *When do you feel loose and flowing? Do these feelings result from being creative in your job?*
- *Do you think of leadership as creative? How so? How not?*
- *Does your organization encourage your creativity?*
- *How do you use your creativity outside your ministry, job or leadership role?*

### **Follow Your Discernment and Intuition**

- *Do you value and trust your discernment and intuition?*
- *What has happened when you have acted on discernment and intuition?*
- *In what situations has it seemed most reliable and perceptive?*
- *Has it played a role in your leadership work to date?*
- *What does discernment and intuition tell you about whether you should be a leader?*



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### Leadership impact

- *What in ministry or work are you passionate about?*
- *What are your dreams?*
- *Where do you want to be in five years? Ten Years?*
- *If you live your life to its fullest, what will you have accomplished?*
- *What impact do you want to make?*

Steven Covey states that one of the habits of highly effective people is that they begin with the end in mind.

If you have a personal mission statement, please write it in the space below.

*If you wrote your mission statement in the space, use the following steps to review your statement, asking:*

- Is it still relevant?
- Do you still believe it reflects God's direction for your life?
- Do you live your mission?

If you do not already have a mission statement that guides you in life, you may find the following steps help you discover yours:

**Pray.** You are not looking for a human mission but God's mission for your life.

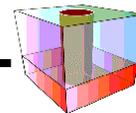
**Study the Bible.** What examples and direction does God give you in His Word?

**Reflect on the past.** How has God used and directed you? When have you had the joy of knowing you were doing just what pleased Him?

**Get wise input.** Ask godly family members, friends and mentors for their thoughts and evaluation.

**Brainstorm words and ideas.** Verbalize aspects of your personal gifts, abilities, experiences, desires and sense of call.

**Begin writing.** Start with a phrase such as, "My mission is to..." or "I exist to..." and prayerfully fill in the blank.



**Test your mission statement.** Is your statement brief, clear, vivid, active and compelling? Is it consistent with scripture and God-glorifying? Does it fit your talents and abilities? Does it fit your primary roles? Does it fit the needs of those who depend on you? Do you have peace of mind about it?

**Embrace your mission.** When you have written a personal mission statement that you believe reflects God's purpose for your life, Live It. Ask God daily to empower you to live that mission. Use it for a compass as you make choices and decisions about your budget, your calendar, your ministry and your free time.

### **What Is My Personal MISSION?**

*Pray first: Lord, help me to discover and embrace your mission for my life and to be obedient to you daily.*

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