

## **Study Guide – The Vision, *from 1-21-2018***

### **Warming Up – Personal Vision**

As Pastor Bobby pointed out, the vision for us who attend Life Church is to present Jesus to every person – from the womb to the tomb, with a focus on the Unchurched and the Dechurched. Paul said that we are also to edify (build up) the brethren. (Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 14:12, 26-27, 2 Corinthians 12:19)

So, whether it's evangelism or the building up of the church, how would you describe your personal vision in the Kingdom of God? What are you aiming to accomplish for Jesus, as part of our church or as an individual? How will you participate in Life Church's vision?

### **Takeaway # 1 - Unity**

Genesis 11:5-6 refers to a people unified against God's will at the Tower of Babel. Even so, God said that because of their unity and same language "nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them." Can you think of movements today that are successful because of their unity, even though they are opposed to God's Word and His will? Share.

The early church was extremely unified. As Pastor Bobby pointed out in the first five chapters of Acts, the church was described in "one accord" at least five times. Yet, within 60 years, Paul was criticizing the churches for practicing discord. Just like in marriage, when a relationship is new, it's easy to be unified in nearly everything. What happens in time to cause unity to seem less important? What can be done to rekindle God-endorsed unity?

Perhaps 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 can be applied to churches today. "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

What are some ways churches are divided by doctrine or preferences? What would Paul say to the churches today about these divisions - denominations?

Proverbs 6:16-19 says that God hates, "one who sows discord among brethren", and Proverbs 133:1-3 shows how God loves unity among the brethren, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!" Have you ever known someone in church who was constantly trying to divide the members of the congregation? Does it surprise you to know that God hates that? (Proverbs 6:16, 19) Do you think that these people would continue that practice if they knew that the Bible clearly states that God hates it?

## **Takeaway # 2 - The Mouth**

1 Corinthians 1:10 reads, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” What are some things that all Christians could say as we “speak the same thing”? What same things do all Christians have in common?

Remember, at the Tower of Babel, their ungodly power was in speaking of the same language. Even as the tower of Babel opposed God, are there some examples today of a group all speaking the same language in opposition to God? What “fake news” philosophies about God and His Word are being expressed and practiced today?

## **Takeaway # 3 - Unified Like God**

With God’s person, Three equals One. (1 John 5:7, “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”) God Himself has such high regard for unity that He designed His very godhead as a perfect unity of three. Do you know of anyone who just doesn’t like people, and tries to stay to themselves as much as possible? How would they answer the challenge that God wants His people to be unified? Discuss the pros and cons of being a loner.

Perhaps the most important wording in the Bible about God’s desire that His people be unified is clearly stated by Jesus Himself just before His earthly ministry was ended at the cross. He prayed to the Father in John 17:20-23. “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

If Jesus prayed that we would be one as He and the Father are one, isn’t it possible that our unity could be greatly improved from what it is now? What would it take for the church to buy in to what Jesus is asking for in this prayer? Share about a time in your life when Satan was successful in dividing you from a friend or loved one.

Pastor Bobby pointed out that Jesus preferred us above Himself by leaving his place of glory to give life to us. Philippians 2:1-2, Romans 12:9-10, and 1 Corinthians 13:3-5 all call for followers of Jesus to give preference to one another. Discuss ways that individuals can “die to self” in order to be more tolerant towards others concerning issues such as style of music played in church. What can be done to take focus off of self and on to another for the sake of unity?

What can you do to become more mindful of the importance of unity with the brethren?