



Are We There Yet

Adapted from “Where is He Leading You” series by Jimmy White

As a follower, a clear compelling direction from my leader helps me to engage in the journey. During long trips, knowing the destination helps me to endure the hours of riding in the same position. This story from Leneita Fix provides a classic example leading with the end in mind.

Recently, I took a long car ride with my children that involved driving several days through many States. As we went they knew to keep asking, “Are we there yet?” was futile. However, to make the time go faster, they decided to focus on “markers” in our trip. How long would it take to get out of the State we were driving through? When would we get to the next rest stop? There was one thing that was abundantly clear to them: our final destination. No matter the number of bathroom stops or hours in the car a point would come when we “arrived.”

This got me thinking about ministry. When we look at the scope of our students do we know where the endpoint is? In other words, when a student graduates out of our youth group who has been produced? We might say phrases like, “A fully devoted follower of Christ.” However, what does that really mean?

This is one of our first steps in leading our team or even our students. **We must be clear about where we are going.** In a world that often uses the phrase “casting vision,” this is vital. **Anything can be conquered when we know WHERE we are going.** We might have a “mission statement” for our ministry. However, if it is longer than one sentence, if everyone in our ministry can’t easily recite it, and if no one really understands its meaning, it is useless. If your people don’t know where the journey ends, then they feel like all is purposeless. This one line sums up the target.

Once you and your team decide the “end student” you are hoping the Lord will produce through your ministry, **talk about it, ALL THE TIME.** When we got stuck in traffic on our trip it was supremely frustrating for all of us. No one wants to feel stagnant. However, the knowledge that the highway was not goal kept us all in check. We refocused on the excitement of where we were headed, and what it would look like when we got there.

Secondly, everyone wants to know, “**How will we get there?**” and “**How do we know we are headed in the right direction?**” Figure out the **core values** you are looking for in your team and ministry. Put these clearly in place. At our ministry they are to be Christ-Centered, Relationally Driven, Servant-Leaders and to have Integrity in everything. We explain what these mean, and how they relate to where we are going. This is one way we know HOW we are headed in that right direction. Secondly, we **plan** in a myriad of ways. There is a five-year strategic plan that is broken into increments.

We know where we are looking to get to at the end of the five years, but also in 2, 1, 6 months and even a month from now. Then we hold everyone accountable to these. This lets everyone see those mile markers to know how we are going, and how to know when we have arrived.

The trip can be really long when it comes to working with youth, especially those stuck in survival mode. We can wonder some days if we are moving at all. However, when we are clear about where we are headed and how we will get there, everyone hangs in for the ride.¹

¹ Leneita Fix, “Part 2: Are We There Yet? (Is your vision clear in leadership.)” Group Youth Ministry, April 4, 2013, <https://youthministry.com/part-2-are-we-there-yet-is-your-vision-clear-in-leadership/> (accessed August 2, 2017).

COURAGE

C1: We are told the vision of hindsight is 20/20. If you have hindsight, you know what happened in days' past. The vision of foresight gives one understanding in all the things that are to come. The vision of insight gives one understanding regarding today.

- Which do you believe is most important: hindsight, foresight, or insight?

1 Chronicles 12:32 (NLT) From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take.

- Do you believe these leaders had hindsight, foresight, or insight? Why?

C2: If insight is important:

- How do you think one strengthens their insight?
- Do you have a plan to develop and strengthen your insight? Write it down. If you do not have a plan to sharpen your insight, take an hour to begin to develop a plan. Now, share your plan with someone. What were their thoughts? How did you feel as you shared your plan?

C3: This week (Monday – Friday), find a quiet place during your lunch and ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight regarding your:

- Life
- Family
- Relationship with God

- Church
- Work
- School

Write down your thoughts. Date them and begin to pray and ask God to fulfill these insights.

STRENGTH

S1: It has been said that prayer is the birth means by which divine life is introduced.

Isaiah 66:8 (NLT)

Amos 6:1 (NLT)

- On a scale from 1-4, with 1 being least and 4 being most, how important is prayer to you?
- Now, on a scale from 1-4, with 1 being the least and 4 being the most, how well do you practice the discipline of prayer?
- In the next ninety days, write out a plan on how you can improve your prayer life. Include who will hold you accountable.

S2: Prayer alone is not enough. Every person must be resolved to be involved in ministry. In the Wesleyan revival of England in the 1700's, John Wesley introduced the concept that God can use ordinary persons as ministers of the gospel.

- What comes to your mind when you hear the word "ministry"?
- Do you believe God has gifted everyone and called everyone to ministry? Why or why not?
- What is the difference between vocation and ministry?



S3: Write down what your ministry is. Commit to yourself that over the next ninety days that you will develop, employ, and strengthen your ministry and involvement. Write down your commitment plan and include the step of accountability in your plan.

ENDURANCE

E1: We grow in relevancy and authenticity as we seek the face of God. Throughout scripture, God never allowed His people to get into a rut. Read the following verses and answer the questions.

Joshua 3:5–8 (NLT)

Exodus 14:21–22 (NLT)

- List some differences between the two river-crossing events.
- What do these differences speak to you regarding God’s methodology?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being the least and 4 the most, how comfortable are you with change?
- Write out a plan that will help you accept change more readily.

E2: Spiritual unity is a necessity for vision. When you hear the word “unity” what comes to mind?

- What is the difference between spiritual unity and doctrinal uniformity?
- Which one do you lean towards?

1 John 3:16 (NLT)

1 John 4:7 (NLT)

- What is the test for spiritual unity?
- What do these verses speak to you regarding spiritual unity?
- How do these verses fit into your theology concerning spiritual unity and doctrinal uniformity?

E3: Many have written off America as a post-Christian nation. More accurately, it could be said that Christianity is post-American.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NLT)

- What four things must happen in order for America to be redefined as a Christian nation?
- Write down what each of these four things means to you?
- On a scale from 1-4, with 1 being the least and 4 being the best, how well do you practice each of these four disciplines?
- Write out your plan to improve each of these four disciplines in your life.