

Encouragement through *vision*

By Sandi Michon

It can be so unsettling when the calendar flips to August. It seemed the summer loomed so long, yet now there's only four weeks until school starts. Whether you're a beginner or a veteran homeschooler, a new school year can feel daunting. Every year, God desires to do a "new thing". Based on principles from biblical characters that faced God's call on their lives. God's call is always into the unknown – but sometimes even what we know causes us to tremble. We need courage. How do we get it?

VISION

I find it interesting that many Bible characters saw a vision of God just before they were commissioned to a great work. Moses sees God in the burning bush, Jacob wrestles with an angel of the Lord, Ezekial sees a vision of God, Isaiah sees God high and lifted up with His train filling the temple in Isaiah 6. Peter and John join Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, and Saul becomes Paul the apostle after seeing the risen Lord on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. The effect of their heavenly vision is similar in all cases. They are in awe. They are undone. In the majestic vision, they see themselves as small and unworthy, but God uses the vision to show His "hugeness" as the Ultimate Resource to their smallness. They needed to see how ill equipped they really were so they would allow God to be their strength in the call.



As we homeschool, our vision of God should remind us of our inadequacy in ourselves, but bring great encouragement that we have a Resource that is more vast than anything our imaginations could create. In reading the various accounts of God, showing Himself, to man, the words "like unto" are often used because there are no finite words to accurately describe an Infinite God. As God's servants fall to their faces in His presence, He encourages them. He says He goes with them. After that, He says to be strong and of good courage.

When Jesus tells His disciples to teach all the nations (wow!), He tells them that He will be with them unto the ends of the earth.

The second aspect of vision regards seeing a specific vision for our call. Proverbs 29:18 says that without a vision the people perish. When God calls us to a task, He will give us definition. When called to build an ark, Noah received very specific instructions. We need to ask God to define our vision clearly. Often, when we first sense a call from God, it appears hazy. It takes spending time with God to get the specifics.



If Noah had been preoccupied with what everyone else was doing, he surely would not have built an ark. It had never rained prior to the flood, so it appeared ridiculous to build an ark. It may seem ridiculous to others if your call to homeschool seems different than how others do it. How foolish did Joshua feel as they arched



around Jericho for seven days, blowing trumpets? Yet, that was God's way to victory. Anything less and the walls would still be standing. Take the time to quiet all the other voices so you can hear God's still small voice give you the definition you need.

The last aspect of vision has to do with what is unseen. In Hebrews 11:1, we are told that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. We can so easily get discouraged by what we see. Faith vision sees what is invisible. In II Kings 6, the king of Syria sends hosts of armies to hunt down Elisha. As Elisha and his servant emerged from their tent one morning, the servant was struck with fear at the armies arrayed all around the city. Elisha prayed that God would open the servant's eyes, and with spiritual vision, the servant sees horses rimming the mountains and chariots of fire! Moses is listed in the "Hebrews Hall of Fame of Faith". In verse 27, it says he endured, "as seeing him who is invisible."

When you don't see instant results in your homeschool, press on. Abraham is praised in Romans 4:20- 21. While his wife Sarah was still barren, it says, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." God rewards obedience through faith. In fact, Hebrews 11:6 says it's impossible to

please God without faith, and he that comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

It's not always easy. When God led his people into the Promised Land, it was through the wilderness. When Moses sent the 12 spies into the Promised Land to see what they were up against, 10 returned with fearful and discouraging reports. There were giants in the land! Only two saw more than the giants. They saw a land flowing with milk and honey – and believed the God that promised them the land – giants or not! The two visionary spies were Joshua and Caleb – and they were the only two of all original people that entered into the Promised Land. Fear and discouragement are contagious. Most of the people listened to the 10 negative spies and even wanted to return to Egypt – which God had delivered them from great bondage! But, faith can be contagious also – if anyone listens.

When I need courage – send me a Joshua – send me a Caleb. As you homeschool, find a Joshua or a Caleb. Hopefully, the monthly support group meetings will encourage you in a “faith report.”

Lots of Bible characters needed the same type of faith friends. David had Jonathan, Moses had Aaron, Nehemiah had Ezra, Timothy had Paul...



Use the month of August to clarify your vision. Pray to see God high and lifted up – and receive His power. Pray for clarity in your homeschool vision. We have a personal God who deals with us on an extremely personal level. He will show each family what is right for them — after all, He knows the beginning from the end!

Learn to expect the invisible. Things are often not what they seem. Ignore the negativity — and find a Joshua for encouragement.