

A MAN OF VISIONS

Acts 2:17

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“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”

Part One: Directionless and Miserable

I was born on October 24, 1978 and I grew up in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago as the one and only son of my father. Amazingly, where I was raised for about the first seven years of my life, I was no further than a half a mile away from where my future wife grew up. I guess God is funny that way. God brings together some people who are a world apart and others God brings together who are so close. I believe that God is sovereign in that way. My childhood was happy, safe, and secure. In a world where divorce seems to break so many families apart, my family was one of the blessed ones. So, as a child I was rather happy and carefree. I could enjoy my parents' love and attention without too many worries. Basically my family was a middle class Midwestern family. They were not rich by any stretch of the imagination. But I was always provided for and was never in need.

Growing up in suburban America with a nice neighborhood and good schools and good friends left me with nothing to complain about. When I go back and think about it, indeed there was nothing to complain about. Throughout my life I did not really cause my parents any grief. I was a good son and was rarely in any trouble. I did well in school and participated in Boy Scouts and played baseball and the trombone.

Throughout my life, I did not date. Mostly it was because I was shy and kind of nerdy and a momma's boy. Yet I did have a sense of piety and purity in my heart. But, despite of this, this inner goodness was attacked again and again with the power of lust and coveting. I felt like St. Paul who cried out deeply about his sin of coveting in the book of Romans.

Religiously speaking, I grew up in a Catholic family and learned Biblical standards and good morals and ethics when I was younger. But as I became older, my family did not attend Catholic Mass regularly. Simply speaking, we only attended it twice a year: Christmas and Easter. But not before long, we simply stopped it altogether. In my heart, though, I felt like I had a good sense of right from wrong. So, I did well to do what I felt was right. I should not take drugs or drink. I should honor my father and mother. I should study well in order to get a good job for the future. Honestly, I felt that I knew my clear life direction and attitude on life. My direction was to do well in school, go to college, get a good job and maybe get married and have a family. This is the American dream and I was living it. I had all the opportunities to do well in the world. I seemed like I was set for life. Yet, all this came to nothing because I did not have God in the center of my heart. Though I thought that I had great direction for my life, I really

did not have any at all. Instead the weakness of my inner man kept me from direction and vision.

Finally, by the time I graduated from high school, the meaninglessness of the world began to catch up with me. I lost all desire to work hard for the sake of my American dream. I went to UIC with a sense of meaninglessness and boredom. I did not really care about what my future held. I did not want to study, though I knew I should. I just wanted to get by with as little effort as possible. Man was made to work hard, yet without a sense of direction, I felt like a cursed man in a cursed world. At that time, I went to UIC, went to work and then came home. The great dream in my mind was replaced by the reality of the world. My heart was empty. The world let me down and I became directionless and miserable. I was happy to just live at my parent's house for the rest of my life. Yet, God had mercy on me and began to intervene in my life through his word and his Spirit.

Part Two: A Young Man with Great Visions

During the first week of college at UIC, I was approached by a short Korea lady with a precious invitation. She asked me if I would like to study the Bible. I said, "No, that's okay." She misunderstood me and thought I said, "Okay." Sometimes misunderstandings are good. Thank God that she misunderstood me. If not, I may not have ever come to Bible study in order to find the grace of Jesus.

Through Genesis Bible study, I learned that God called me as he had called Abraham to be a blessing for the whole world. Maybe at that time, I really did not know exactly what that actually entailed. But it was nice words to hear. I felt a great sense of purpose to be used by God for the sake of the whole world. Yet, when summer rolled around, was still very weak and enjoyed the summer, sleeping in till past noon. So, I blew off Bible study. But God had mercy on me through his sacrificial servants. For my sake, Msn. David Kim began to drive out to my house in Hoffman Estates in order to teach me the Bible every Tuesday. He was very faithful. And because it was at my house, I too had to be faithful. It was a great blessing to finish Genesis Bible study with him. Bible study planted in my heart knowledge of God's living presence both in history and in my life. How could God work in someone like me who did not really even know him? But God was indeed at work in me and guiding my life for his purpose.

Later, I was invited to go to the 1999 Easter Bible Conference. At that time, I was pretty scared to go because I did not know what to expect. We went to Manville, IL, which seemed to be basically in the middle of nowhere. Yet, in my heart, it was somewhere. It was the place in which I accepted Jesus Christ for the first time. During that conference, John 3:16 spoke to my heart: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." It was the love of God that sent his one and only Son to die on the cross for my forgiveness and my justification. I should have perished in my sins and in my sense of fatalism about my life. But God saw me in my sins and sent his one and only Son in order to rescue me from the power of sin. For my whole life I did not think that I was a

sinner. But at that moment, I found myself as a sinner before God. All of my goodness could not save me. Rather, only simply believing in Jesus Christ gave me the assurance of salvation. At that moment, I could lay my sins at the feet of Jesus and enter into eternal life with Christ. At that moment, I came to realize that I was God's precious son for whom he sent his one and only Son into the world to die. God personally saw me and died in order to save me.

More than that, Jesus began to give me a new life and desire to be used for the sake of world mission. That summer, I went to the 1999 MSU International Summer Bible Conference and listened to the word of God. I could see the whole world sitting in the theater chairs at the conference site. I heard beautiful life testimonies and amazing mission reports of our coworkers throughout the world. At that moment, God began to open my eyes to see the world and understand God's promise to Abraham that I remembered from the first year of Bible study. I realize that God can use me and give me direction and purpose for my life. Then, one time through the study of the book of Acts, God's word gave me spiritual direction and inspiration. Acts 2:17 says, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." Through my shepherd's prayer and heart, I began to pray to be a messenger at an International Summer Bible Conference. That is an amazing prayer topic considering that I am a quiet person who likes to keep to myself. Yet, in order to struggle with this prayer topic, God gave me many kinds of training. I was privileged to share basically every Friday night as a testimony sharer at the main center. I shared my life testimony in Germany and in South Korea. I became a messenger at our fellowship by fellowship conferences. Only by God's grace, I am slowly growing as his instrument. I began to learn how to work hard for God's glory and finish school in only eight years. Thank God for his grace and mercy.

After graduating, God gave me the opportunity to receive intern shepherd training. I had to sweat a lot every Sunday in order to serve God and prepare for to recite the Bible passage and write testimony. Through this, I could struggle to find a clear direction for my future family and myself. After that year of training, God blessed me to establish one of ten thousand house churches for American mission on May 6, 2006 with the most beautiful shepherdess, Cheryl. She is actually more passionate for God's mission than I am. God is blessing our prayer to raise disciples of Jesus at UIC and one day to be a pioneering shepherd family for broken and lost young people in America. Under our care, God is raising several students including Ray, Mary, and Sarah. God is also using our family to encourage and support coworkers. Pray for us to be influential at UIC and carry out God's work wholeheartedly, raising 12 disciples of Jesus at UIC and working together to advance the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, pray for us to have children who we can also raise up in faith. May God use us as a family full of vision and useful to God and his work.

One Word: In God, I am full of direction and vision.