



1. Two weeks ago, Pastor Rick spoke about our need to have a vision of what God can do through us. What is the importance of knowing and believing that you have a fresh start to the idea of having a vision?

*Answer— If you do not know or believe that when you trust Christ as Savior you have a clean slate with God, or that you can have a fresh start with God every single day, then you will always be hounded by your past and the guilt that comes from doing the wrong thing. This will prevent you from looking forward and believing that you can accomplish great things for God (vision) in the future.*

2. Do you have a dream of how God could use you in a great way? Have you made a plan on how to begin to accomplish this dream? Share with the group some of the things that are part of your plan to begin down the road of allowing God to work through you. Or perhaps, you have not started yet, why not? Pastor Rick said that there are four excuses that will keep you from achieving what God wants to do through you, what are they? Talk about what you think each one means. We all struggle with these, which one do you think you struggle with the most?

*Answer— The four excuses that we use are: 1. I don't have what it takes to reach my dreams, 2. I am a failure from my past, 3. I cannot control everything, so I will not do anything, and 4. I do not know if I will be successful in the future, so I do nothing until I can be sure I will be successful.*

3. Read Hebrews 11:1 and 6. According to this passage, what is faith? Give an example of what it means to have faith by this definition. Why do you think it is impossible to please God without faith? According to Pastor Rick's sermon, how do you know when you have acted in faith? Can you give an example from your own life of when you have acted on faith? In his message, Pastor Rick said that we should set spiritual goals for ourselves. What would be a spiritual goal for you in 2023 that would be based on faith?

*Answer—Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is being certain of something even if you cannot see it or sense it. A great example of this is having confidence that you will be in heaven one day. It is impossible to please God without faith because if you do not rely and trust in God for everything you do, then you are only doing what you can do in your own strength. Pastor Rick said you can know you have acted in faith when you have done something that you do not*

*have the strength or ability to do in your own strength or power.*

4. Pastor Rick said that in order to have faith in God, we need to refocus our minds. Read Ephesians 4:22-24 and Romans 12:1,2. Based on what these verses say, how could you tell if **you have not** refocused your mind? What is the result, according to these verses, of having a renewed mind? Why is refocusing your mind so important and what do you think is the main way that you can do this?

*Answer—You can tell that you have not refocused your mind if you are still doing the things you did before you became a Christian, if your sinful nature is still in control of you and you are doing what our world says you should do instead of what Christ says you should do. If you have a renewed mind, then you will be obedient to the commands of Christ and you will think the way that Christ would think. The way we renew or refocus our minds is to permeate our minds with the Word of God and see things the way God sees them. This is important because without doing this we will not have faith and we will not have vision of how God can use us.*

5. Read Proverbs 3:5. What is this verse telling us to do? Do you trust that God knows what he is doing? How do you respond when the Bible tells you to do something that you do not understand why, or it actually tells you to do something that seems to be the opposite of what you think you should do? Have you ever experienced this? How?

6. Read Jeremiah 18:1-6. If we apply this passage to ourselves, what would it mean that we are not the potter, we are the clay?

*Answer—Ultimately, we are not in control of what will happen in the future, God is. If we cooperate with God, then he will make something beautiful of us. We may begin as a marred pot, but he can reshape our lives, give us the fresh start that we want and need.*

