

Holding On Too Tightly insights from Phil Vischer, VeggieTales' Creator

Video Notes

Watch the video from the beginning to 4:51.

1. What are your takeaways from this video? What impacted you the most?

2. Like Phil, was there ever a time you felt you had to be a missionary or pastor to be important to God?

- a. What caused you to realize that was not the case? How did it make you feel?

3. Read Ephesians 2:10; The Greek word for work used in this passage is “ergon.” Ergon, according to Strong’s Concordance means, “toil (as an effort or occupation)”. **What good “work” do you believe God has called you to perform?**

Restart the video at 4:51 and watch to the end.

1. Phil’s dreams, which he believed were from God, imploded. Have you ever had a dream that did not work out? What happened?

2. Read Luke 9:23. How would you feel about denying your desires and laying your dreams at the cross?

3. How do you try to discern God’s dreams from your dreams?

a. What do you think about Phil’s thoughts on differentiating a dream from an idea?

b. How does Phil’s concept of “following the bubbles” resonate with you?

4. What impacted you the most from this video? What will you do in response to today’s lesson?

Going Deeper

This section is an extension of the above materials and is designed to give you a deeper study/devotion on your own. You will notice examples from the lives of the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul are used in this short study because they had differing circumstances and outcomes. As you walk through these short studies in the coming days, examine your life, look deeply, and determine if any of these examples describe you.

Read the following scripture and answer the questions listed below.

The Transfiguration

Mat 17:1 *And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. (2) And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. (3) And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. (4) And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." (5) He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him (ESV)."*

1. **Here we see that Peter is reacting to a “circumstance” of something that was amazing, holy, and earth shattering for him, Peter, and James. Without praying to God about the “circumstance” Peter is ready to take an idea and put it into action.**
 - a. Have you ever just reacted to a “sure thing” or a “circumstance” and when you got to the other side it was probably not what God desired for you or your business?

Please read:

Eliot Crowther, the founder of the church giving app Pushpay, tells the story of how within their first year that sales had stalled, and cash was dwindling. The seriousness of the situation led to them discussing how to call their customers, tell them they would need to find another vendor, and lay-off their employees just before Christmas.

Shortly thereafter a group of investors visited them, loved their product, “got” their vision, and offered to invest \$600,000 to get them moving forward again. After some thought and prayer Crowther’s partner, who was the CEO, declined the offer and explained that while these investors were not the “wrong people”, they were not the “right people” either.

Three days later another investor came into the picture, who Crowther and his partner prayerfully determined to be the “right” fit, and wrote a check for a couple of million dollars. This investor went on to work with them and raised an additional \$150 mil to build the infrastructure of Pushpay. Now, six years later, Pushpay has over \$300m in annual sales, services \$3b in giving per year, is valued at over \$1b, and serves over 7000 churches.

- b. If an investor offered to help you as you are staring at bankruptcy, would you be able to pray about the situation and turn them down if you felt God told you to do so?

Or..., would you be more inclined to react like Peter in Matthew 17? Would you assume that God orchestrated the “circumstances” of the first investor and accept it without praying over the situation?

Read the following scripture and answer the questions listed below.

The Macedonian Call

Act 16:6 *And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. (7) And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. (8) So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. (9) And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” (10) And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them (ESV).*

- 2. Here we find Paul on his second missionary journey that started in Jerusalem, went to Antioch, and then traveled into Asia. But it was in Asia that the Holy Spirit changed Paul’s “proven” method of ministry that was an integral part of his makeup. He was not allowed by the Holy Spirit to speak the “Word” (MKJV) of God in Asia! In addition, once he traveled several hundred miles through Asia without telling anyone about Jesus, Paul was then stopped at the border of Mysia and the Holy Spirit again changed his plans of entering there and ministering.**

- a. What part of Vischer’s video spoke about how Paul handled this situation?

b. Surely it would have been a “good thing” to speak the Word of God in Asia and Mysia, but it was not God’s will. Obviously, for reasons we can only guess, God wanted Paul to move into Macedonia thus introducing the Gospel into Europe. What are the similarities in the Pushpay story of saying no to a “good thing”?

c. Have you taken a “good opportunity” in your business or personal life that in retrospect was not the “right” decision?

d. Are you able to “hold on loosely to your dreams” or be “open-handed,” giving them to God even if looking at potential bankruptcy? How do you accomplish that?

e. Phil Vischer says that when he is “holding on tight” to his dreams that “stress is the canary in the coal mine” for him. What might be the warning signs you experience when you are “holding on tight to your dreams”?

f. Vischer reminds us that people are more important than any dreams. Have you harmed any relationships for your dreams? How are your family relationships?

g. Vischer also admitted that he finally had to come to the point of being okay just resting in Christ. Where are you with this thought?
