

**Title:** WestPark Values: Part 1

**Speaker:** Charles Stone

**Passage:** Multiple

**Big idea:** Vision clarity requires clear answers to four questions.



10 years ago, in Jan 2013, when we lived in the states, I saw a posting online for a church needing a pastor. At the time I had served in several churches and was doing consultant work, writing, coaching, getting another degree, and believed I had another decade of full-time lead pastor left in me.

We were living in the Chicagoland at the time and as I read the posting it really looked like an exciting church. Multi-staff, in a growing area, a vision to reach the community, a great facility. I just knew it was in some great beach area with warm weather like Myrtle Beach or Tampa Florida.

After reading further down the ad, it gave the location, London, Ontario, Canada. I thought, oh no. I wanted to move where it was warm not where polar bears roamed and people had to ride a snow mobile to work. I thought, no way, that is not for me. So, I ignored it.

A few months later, I happened upon it again online and at that point, God would not let me push it away, notwithstanding the polar bear issue.



Well, that was 9.5 years ago, and the rest is history. We moved to Canada later that year and began to serve with you guys here at WestPark. My time here is coming to a close at the end of March as I move, not into retirement, but into re-purposing, as I will focus on writing, coaching, consulting, and teaching, and in general slowing down a bit. We will be moving to Mississippi sometime in April to Laurel, where Sherryl grew up. We will move when our house sells.

It has been a wonderful ministry experience, our best in our 43 years of vocational ministry. We love you guys so much and will miss you much, but we have a great board and a great staff and the church won't miss a beat under their leadership.

One of my ministry values and strengths is vision clarity. The clearer a church is about its mission, vision, and strategy, the more effective it will be.

As the board leads out in the new lead pastor search process, one of their expectations is that the new lead pastor will embrace the DNA, the culture, the values, the philosophy that currently is WestPark.

Now he will bring fresh eyes, new ideas and strategies, and different plans, and he will have that prerogative as he leads the church.

But a key qualifier that the board will expect from the new lead pastor is that he must agree with and embrace who WestPark is, our fundamental philosophy, vision, and values. He won't come in and try to make WestPark something it is not. But he will seek to build upon who we are and bring WestPark to new heights and even greater ministry effectiveness.

That brings us to this series, as we take a short break from our series on Mark. For the next six weeks we are going to bring a refresher sermon series on who WestPark is, our vision, our DNA, what makes us who we are.

You see, WestPark is here because almost 60 years ago a group of people had a vision for a church in this part of London and for decades those people sacrificed to help make WestPark what it is today. You who consider WestPark your church home, continue to build upon that rich history and legacy through your time, talents, and tithes.

# BIG IDEA

Vision clarity requires clear answers to **four questions**.



I am going to use icons to visualize these four questions.

## The Four Questions:



What? (Mission)



When? (Measures)



Why? (Values)



How? (Strategy)

So, let us look at the reasoning behind each of these and then I will share WestPark's answer.

### Question 1: What? Mission

This is the 'why we exist' that we derive from the Great Commission, the command Jesus gave us that we see in Acts 1 and Matthew 28.

Acts 1.8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Matthew 28.19-20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

A mission statement must reflect what we fundamentally do and what we are. It's like our organizational compass, true north, the golden thread that weaves its way through everything we do.

It's not meant to be simply a catchy tagline to lure people in, but more of an internal expression that rallies the body of Christ here at WesPark. It is our articulation of the Great Commission reflected in these verses.

### Question 2: Why? Values

This question answers why we do what we do.

Like an internal flame, it gives us drive and energy and passion. Values are shared convictions that guide our actions and reveal our strengths. They serve as filters for decision making, distinguish our philosophy of ministry. They reflect what people sense and feel when they come here. They form our DNA.

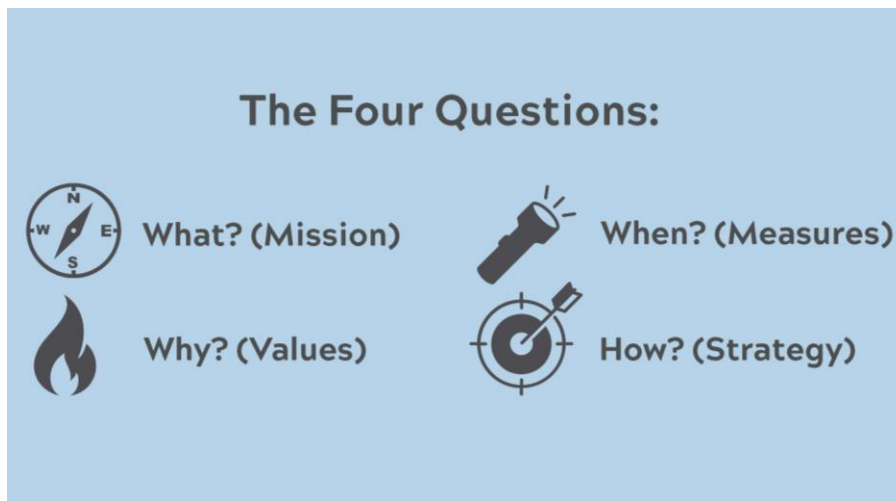
### Question 3: How? Strategy

A strategy answers the question how we do what we do to.

Like a flashlight guides you in the dark, a strategy is a guide that illumines our organizational path. It shows us where to go. Strategy helps tie all the pieces together and provides a pattern of participation. It gives us clarity on places and rhythms of being involved.

### Question 4: When? Measures

A bullseye shows you when you hit the mark. Measures let you know when we are accomplishing the mission. It's getting the hockey puck in the net, the ball in the basket, crossing the goal line.



Mission and values are stable over time whereas strategy and measures change over time depending on current church needs, the community, the cultural climate, strengths of leaders, resource availability, etc.

Let's look at where WestPark stands on these.

Our mission statement is a distinctly Christian one. It captures the message that we are normal folks, thus everyday people, yet we share this coming pursuit of Jesus. A tagline is part of the mission statement focused outward toward those outside the church: Everyday people.



The logo by itself communicates the same thing in all our languages, without the use of words.

Kids can even look at it and intuitively understand this path to the cross.

Here is what it looks like with all four of the languages of our congregations.

If you call WestPark your church home, I hope you will memorize this mission statement.

Everyday people on a journey together pursuing Christ.

Question 2: Why?

During the next few weeks, we are going to unpack these values in more detail because our values truly reflect WestPark's DNA.

Again, they reflect what we hope people will experience, see, and feel when they are here and participate in WestPark's ministries. Each value is tied to specific scriptures that we will explain in the weeks ahead.



What do each of these mean? For each of these values, we have created an explanation to describe what that value looks like when it is lived out.

### Active Faith

Demonstrated by...engaging in evangelism, discipleship, worship, and biblical community.

We are serious about our faith being more than just cerebral but lived out in our lives, in our families, and in our communities in these ways.

### Servant Leadership

Demonstrated by... developing healthy servant-leaders.

We are serious about training up leaders and leading well, especially the rising generation who will be responsible for leading the church into the future.

### Cultural Diversity

Demonstrated by...embracing multiple cultures and generations.

We have a unique church in that we have a wide span of generations (from young to old) and cultures. We are 4 different language congregations (English, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic) and over 50 nations are represented here at WestPark. It is a unique and really cool quality of WestPark so we made it into a specific value.

## Next Generation

Demonstrated by... reaching children, students, and young adults, empowering them to lead. We must reach the rising generations and give the ministry to them. We are serious about that. Notice that last part of the statement, 'empowering them to lead.'

## Missional Engagement

Demonstrated by...investing in hands on presence in local and global missions. We captured both our financial commitment to missional efforts with 'investing' and our time with 'hands on.' If we include our language ministries, we invest almost over 24% of our budget in missionary type support, denominational support, local ministries, and in our language congregations.

So, these are our values.

What about our strategy?

We created an acronym easy to remember what we do and where we go, it is called the PATH. This is what we do or where we go, the steps for engagement.



### Prioritize relationships.

Both inside the church (being in community, a life group for example) and outside (building relationships with people who are not followers of Jesus).

### Attend church.

Weekly corporate worship is very important and fundamental for your growth. This is the one thing that the most people are involved in. In this category are also other age groups and felt need gatherings that meet (i.e. kids, students, men's and women's ministries)

### Take time to serve and give.

This step means we invest in the life of WP with our time, talents, and tithes. We encourage tithing and serving on a ministry team.

### Hunger to know Christ.

This means taking initiative to grow spiritually through personal spiritual development, classes, seminars, and leadership development courses that we offer.



We want this to be so simple, you could explain it in 30 seconds to someone. Sometimes this is called the elevator speech, a synopsis or summary you could share with someone in the time it takes to go from the first floor in a building to the fifth.

So, you are waiting at an elevator and strike up a conversation with someone and you talk about church. You tell them you go to WestPark in Hyde Park and they ask you about what and who WestPark is.

“We’ll, we have this little saying that describes what we’re all about...everyday people on a journey together pursuing Christ. We’re just normal folks in a life journey learning about how best to follow Jesus. We have this little PATH we call it. Prioritize relationships, attend church, take time to serve and give and we hunger to grow in our relationship with God.”

That’s who we are and what we do.

I hope you’ll memorize our mission statement and our strategy. And practice your 30 second summary.

I want to revisit an illustration with marbles that I used when I came over 9 years ago.

As a reminder to be faithful and to keep things in perspective, I bought two jars and filled one of them with the number of marbles that would represent each week I believed God wanted me to be there. There were 500 marbles, give or take.

So, these marbles represented the 9 - 10 year range I felt that God wanted me to give. Now I had no guarantee I would be here that long. I could have really performed poorly and needed to leave. I could have died. But, neither of those things happened.

Here is what I’ve done each Sunday I come into my office. I move one marble from the full jar to the other jar.

This simple visual reminded me to stay grateful, hopeful, and positive....

It is a great habit to use something tangible, maybe marbles, to remind you to approach the coming week and evaluate the past week with these ideas in mind. This habit will help keep life in perspective, don’t let a bad week spoil all the good ones. It will remind us to do our best and be good stewards of the opportunities God has given each of us and that during this time on this earth our ultimate goal is to follow Him fully. This habit also reminds us that each day is a gift from God.

Psalm 90.12, “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Just as we must be good stewards of the opportunities God has given WestPark, we must be good stewards of the time God has given each of us.

Are you numbering your days right?