

*The Monday Memo*  
*from the desk of*  
*Dr. John W. Stanko*  
*Issue One*

Hello and welcome to this first edition of the Monday Memo. My objective in writing is to help you focus this week on an issue that makes you more productive and fulfilled in your walk with the Lord. I am writing to you this week from Birmingham, England where I have been speaking on purpose and then conducting one-on-one interviews with people who are seeking to know who they are.

I have been reminded this past week of what Laurence Boldt wrote, which is also mentioned in my book, "I Wrote This Book on Purpose,"

We make some attempt to answer them [the questions "who am I?" and "why am I here?"]. We ask our parents and teachers and it seems they do not know. They refer us to political and religious institutions, which often crank out canned answers devoid of personal meaning. Some even tell us that life has no meaning, save for eating and breeding. Most of us are smart enough to recognize that canned answers or begging the question will not do. We must find real answers for ourselves. But that takes more heart and effort than we are often willing to give.

How much are you willing to "give" this week to define who you are and who you are not. Can you spend 15 minutes a day? Can you ask those closest to you how they see you and what they think your strengths are?

If you are willing to spend the time, prayerfully and diligently pursue the answers to these questions:

1. What situations seem to seek you out that you don't have to go looking for? Is there a problem that always finds its way to you to be solved? A certain type of person to which you find yourself drawn and effective? What kinds of jobs or ministries have given you the most joy?

2. What have people given you compliments about over the years that you don't think are very spiritual or special? Very often those hold clues to your purpose.

3. Is there a passage of Scripture that is especially meaningful to you because it summarizes who you are and what you do best?

May I suggest a purpose journal where you can record the answers to these questions over time. I leave you with some verses from the book of Proverbs:

My son [or daughter], if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God (Proverbs 2:2-4).

Seek and keep on seeking your purpose. Don't give up and the Lord will reward you with clarity and direction.

Yours on purpose,

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*Issue Two*

This week I am writing to you from Johannesburg, South Africa. I am here with a team of 12 people, who will be joined by others this week to conduct our ministry's fourth annual leadership development conference here in South Africa. More than 500 leaders will gather this week to be mentored and trained in leadership skills.

The twelve of us came here early and went to Kruger Game Reserve for two days of watching animals and living a life of luxury in the "bush." We stayed at a wonderful camp (air conditioned rooms, no less) that served great food. We went out for drives twice a day and saw the "big five" -- rhinoceros, elephant, lion, leopard, and buffalo -- up close and personal. I have done this on numerous occasions and it is still exciting to see those animals in their natural habitat. But what was more thrilling was to watch the team that I brought.

This team was made of people just like you. No one had the money or time to come to South Africa. But they had this desire in their heart, had faith that it was from God, and began to take steps of faith to make the trip happen. And happen it did. One woman told the Lord that she wouldn't come unless she could bring her 14-year-old son with her. The Lord provided \$6,000 for that to happen. Another man borrowed the money and has already seen much of it come back to him to repay the loan. And every other person had a similar story.

Planes fly every day to Africa with empty seats, yet I have a lot of people tell me that they would love to come "one day." Have you said that? Do you have something, the equivalent of your own Africa trip, that you have said you will do one day. Well, THIS is the day that the Lord has made. You should rejoice and be glad in it -- and do something about your dream.

Is there something you can do RIGHT NOW that would bring you closer to your dream, the dream that you know is from the Lord? Can you read a book, study a language, write a letter, attend a planning meeting, or write the first

pages of the introduction of your book? What is stopping you from taking one step closer to reaching your goal?

The team with me got to fulfill their dream this week and they are flying high in the Lord. I get to fulfill my dream by instructing 500 leaders with a great team of teachers and friends. I want YOU to feel that same exhilaration when you are doing something that you had to trust the Lord to do and He helped you DO IT.

I leave you with this verse for this week:

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead -- James 2:17.

We started to reconstruct my website, [www.purposequest.com](http://www.purposequest.com). We hope to have it ready by the end of April at the very latest. Watch for the announcement of its "grand opening." I don't have the money, I'm not sure anyone will check it out, but it's something I can do with my dream -- TODAY. How about you?

Your friend,

John Stanko  
Hebrews 11:6

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Issue Three*

I am writing you this week from Cape Town, a beautiful city on the southeast coast of South Africa. This past week I had the privilege of participating in a leadership development conference with 550 leaders from southern Africa. Of course, South Africa is the setting for one of the world's great leaders, Nelson Mandela. Tomorrow I am going to visit Robben Island where Mr. Mandela was a political prisoner for 27 years. As I taught this week at the conference, I thought of a quote from Mr. Mandela's inauguration speech when he was elected president of South Africa in 1994. The quote is actually from a book by Marianne Williamson. It goes like this:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within you. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone, and as we let our own light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

I am not sure of Ms. Williamson's spiritual orientation. I don't believe everyone can be "fabulous," but I think that you can be everything that God wants you to be. And that is probably accomplishing more than you are at present.

As you enter this week, what can you do to stop "playing small?" What great thing can you believe the Lord to accomplish in and through you? Remember what Paul wrote to the Ephesian church:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ACCORDING TO HIS POWER THAT IS AT WORK WITHIN US (Ephesians 3:20 emphasis added).

Whatever you think you can do or be, God can help you do more than you thought you could, IF there is power at work in you. If there is no power to ask or imagine, there is no "immeasurably more." It's that simple.

Determine this week to release your potential in a greater way than you have to date, and see how much you can accomplish in and through Him.

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Issue Four*

As you begin a new week, I want to ask you a question that I found in the *USA Today* newspaper this past Thursday, March 29.

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The Gallup Poll posed the following question to 1,016 adults: ""Which would help you be more successful in life: knowing what your weaknesses are and attempting to improve them or knowing what your strengths are and attempting to build on them?"

The responses:

Knowing your weaknesses 52%

Knowing your strengths 45%

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How about you? Which would you choose?

I would vote with the minority. I would rather build on my strength than try to improve my weakness. You can spend a lot of energy trying to improve a weakness and get a little improvement, or you can work to improve a strength and become even more productive. If you know your purpose in life, you are better served to work in your purpose than to try and be something you are not and never will be.

In their book *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*, Mark Buckingham and Curt Coffman of the Gallup Organization report the following:

They [great managers] recognize that each person is motivated differently, that each person has his own way of thinking and his own style of relating to others. They know that there is a limit to how much remodeling they can do to someone. But they don't bemoan these differences and try to grind them down. Instead they capitalize on them. They try to help each person become more and more of what he [or she] already is.

Simply put, this is one insight we heard echoed by tens of thousands of great managers:

People don't change that much.  
Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out.  
Try to draw out what was left in.  
That is hard enough.

As you seek to manage yourself this week, apply this insight. Don't spend time trying to improve what you're not. Instead, be the best you can be in your areas of strength. Of course, that presumes that you know who you are and aren't. If you aren't sure, then

spend some time this week reflecting on what you do best and what situation brings out your best. From that knowledge, seek to work from your strengths.

Have a great week

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This week I want to begin with three separate quotes to encourage you to act on your goals and dreams:

1. To achieve greatness:  
start where you are,  
use what you have,  
do what you can. -- Arthur Ashe
2. Do what you can, with what you have, where you are. -- Teddy Roosevelt
3. Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do. -- John Wooden.

I have found that often I won't do what I *can* do because it isn't all that I *want* or *need* to do. I won't give a little money because I want to give more; I won't write my book because I don't know who is going to publish it; or I won't visit and encourage one person because I feel I should be doing more. Today's quotes all say the same thing: do something today even though it may seem to be only a fraction of what needs to be done. Start with what you have, where you are, even though it seems to insignificant.

For instance, I wrote my Proverbs book by devoting 20 minutes a day for 15 months. I did what I could every day even though it was only one page at a time. I didn't have any more time than that to devote to that book project. And one step at a time, I reached my destination, my goal. What can you do *today* that will help you accomplish some long-term goal?

- You don't have the time to learn a lot of Spanish, but can you learn one word every day this week?
  - You don't have the money to go on your missions trip or vacation, but can you put something aside today and every day this week, even if it's only a coin?
- Your business may be small, but can you make one sale today or make one call that could lead to future business?

**What can you do every day this week that, even though small, will add up toward the accomplishing of your goal?**

I am committed this week to

- make one call every day that may lead to a ministry or business opportunity

- write one page every day of a paper entitled "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry Leader" I will post this paper on my new website when it is finished or send you a copy by email. Let me know if you'd like to receive a copy.
- develop a new message by Easter Sunday on some new insight on purpose that I have been studying for several weeks.

How about you? Maybe you can't think of three things like I did, but how about one thing? If it will help, write it out and send it to me. There is something powerful when you share your commitments with someone else.

This week is traditionally one in which believers remember the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. It can also be a busy week with church meetings and family commitments. Don't let this special week get away without doing something that will pay dividends down the road.

I hope that you will have a productive and happy week leading to Resurrection Sunday.