

**The Monday Memo
From the desk of
Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 131**

I had a purpose-full week and trust you have as well. I've had many inquiries about my upcoming visits to Dallas and Singapore. I will have some time in my Dallas schedule next week, so if you would like to set up an appointment for a purpose assessment, please let me know. The schedule is not finalized for my time in Singapore, so if you would like to meet with me, or have me speak at your business, organization or church, write and let me know.

Last week we talked about doing what we enjoy, for doing what we enjoy is the only way to bring glory to God and to produce excellence. We saw that Solomon summarized his search for wisdom when he wrote:

So I conclude that, first, there is nothing better for a man than to be happy and to enjoy himself as long as he can; and second, that he should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of his labors, for these are gifts from God" (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 TLB).

Solomon practiced what he preached. Here is a report from the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon's court:

When the queen of Sheba heard how wonderfully the Lord had blessed Solomon with wisdom, she decided to test him with some hard questions. She arrived in Jerusalem with a long train of camels carrying spices, gold, and jewels; and she told him all her problems. Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too difficult for him, for the Lord gave him the right answers every time. She soon realized that everything she had ever heard about his great wisdom was true. She also saw the beautiful palace he had built, and when she saw the wonderful foods on his table, the great number of servants and aides who stood around in splendid uniforms, his cupbearers, and the many offerings he sacrificed by fire to the Lord-well, there was no more spirit in her!

She exclaimed to him, "Everything I heard in my own country about your wisdom and about the wonderful things going on here is all true. I didn't believe it until I came, but now I have seen it for myself! And really! The half had not been told me! Your wisdom and prosperity are far greater than anything I've ever heard of! Your people are happy and your palace aides are content-but how could it be otherwise, for they stand here day after day listening to your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God who chose you and set you on the throne of Israel. How the Lord must love Israel-for he gave you to them as their king! And you give your people a just, good government!" (1 Kings 10:1-9 TLB).

This story intrigues me because of the queen's summary of her visit. Solomon was functioning in his purpose (wisdom) and consequently she saw that the people around him were happy! And what she saw led her to break out in praise, praise to a God whom she did not serve. When was the last time someone broke into worship because of the job they saw you doing? When was the last time someone was impressed with the joy and contentment they saw in you and the people around you?

You cannot get innovative, creative and exceptional results unless you and the people around you are doing what you love. Why don't we think we are entitled to that kind of joyful work? Why don't we take the time to find out why we aren't happy, so we can produce extraordinary work and bring glory to God even among those who don't know Him?

Are you producing excellence or are you just getting by? Are you doing what you love and loving what you do? This kind of enjoyment isn't for the talented few; it's for everyone, including you. I urge you this week to be courageous and face reality. Then begin a PurposeQuest that will eventually lead you to a place of fulfillment. What's more, others will be able to celebrate who you are and what you were created to do. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
Written in Dallas, Texas
By Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 132

A friend of mine got me thinking this week. Paul Mancini writes an email newsletter called "Life Song Libretto," in which he talks about purpose issues from his own musical perspective. This past week, Paul wrote: "Scripture talks about letting our light shine before men. I believe that our purpose, our life song is that light. I conclude that if God wanted us to go about our purpose just laying low, quietly fulfilling His plan for our lives, He would've said, 'Let your light be dimly lit so as not to hurt anyone's eyes.' But He did not say that."

That made me think of Paul's description of what happened to Him on the Damascus road: "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, . . ." (Acts 26:12-14).

What kind of light do you need to find your purpose? You need light "brighter than the noonday sun." I've been to Israel and the noonday sun is bright and hot, but something brighter and hotter than that appeared to Saul on his journey. This light was so bright that Saul was blinded. Yet without his natural sight he began to see the light of God's purpose for him with spiritual eyes, a purpose that would take him to the Gentile people on faraway shores.

In addition, purpose isn't something you can figure out by completing a survey or questionnaire. You need light from heaven, light that is brighter than any natural source. It is only in God's light that the truth of Psalm 39:9 can be yours: "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light." Your purpose rests in God's insight and your success depends on walking in that insight. Paul said, "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to **the heavenly vision** . . ." (Acts 26:19 NASU emphasis added).

But then as you walk in the light of God's purpose for you, you become the light that you are following. Jesus radiated God's glory at His transfiguration. Moses had to veil his face after his encounters with God, for his face shone so brightly that the people were

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afraid. There is a verse in Proverbs that says: “The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out” (Proverbs 13:9). When you function in your purpose, you stand out from the crowd. I am not comparing the glory of my purpose with the glory that Jesus or Moses had. I know, however, that people notice me when I function in my purpose. They notice you, too.

With that in mind, let’s make every effort this week to be people of the light. Let this light not be a holy light only, but also a purpose light as well. Thanks, Paul, for your thoughts on purpose and light and thanks for being a man of purpose. Let’s all join with Paul this week as we let the light of our purpose shine before men, so that they may glorify our God. Have a great week!

**The Monday Memo
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Issue 133**

Two weeks ago we looked at Solomon and the excellence that his rule produced. I have been thinking about excellence this past week and how it can be defined. In the past, I defined excellence as perfection and consequently found myself frustrated most of the time, because perfection is seldom achieved. But I have come a long way in my thinking on this subject and I no longer equate excellence with perfection.

So how do I define excellence now? To answer that, I think it best if I tell you a true story, something amazing that happened to me that still shapes my life and thinking. Our family was on vacation a few years ago in the San Francisco area. On New Year’s Eve, we went shopping at a local mall and went to Nordstrom’s, a department store famous for its service. I bought four dress shirts there and then my family split up to do some more shopping; my wife and daughter went one way, my son and I the other.

When we met again, the first thing my wife asked me was, “Where are your shirts?” I realized then that I had put the bag down somewhere in the mall and had forgotten to pick it up. We quickly retraced my steps, which eventually led us back to the counter where I had purchased the shirts. I explained my dilemma to the sales people and they were very empathetic. One of them said, “Why don’t you pick out four more shirts?” I explained that I could not afford four more shirts, but she insisted that I identify the shirts I had lost. Two other sales assistants joined us as we found the four shirts in my size.

Then the sales person put those shirts in a bag and said, “Happy New Year from Nordstrom’s. There’s no additional charge!” I was astounded! They had replaced my shirts free of charge. I went on to write an article about that experience for a magazine and I entitled the article, “A Shirt Tale.” In that article, I explained that what happened to me was a good summary of what the mission of the church should be: to replace what was lost and stolen without assigning blame or guilt.

That story is the best definition of excellence I have experienced. It taught me that excellence is an attitude that goes beyond the call of duty. It also taught me that excellence is not defined by the doer, but by the receiver. I doubt if the sales people who gave me my shirts remember what they did, but I will never forget it. It literally took my breath away.

Are you a person of excellence? If so, when was the last time you took someone's breath away when they encountered your commitment to go beyond the ordinary? This kind of excellence can't be learned; it can only come from doing what you love while serving others. I hope that this week you can impact someone's life as they encounter your purposeful excellence. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
From San Diego, California
Written by Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 134

I am in southern California where the terrible wildfires have finally subsided. I am here talking about purpose and in two weeks I will be in Singapore. I will conduct a Seven Steps to a Purpose-Driven Life on Saturday, November 22 in addition to numerous speaking and teaching sessions in the days prior to the 22nd. If you live in Singapore and would like to have me speak at your church or business, please contact me directly or Mr. Alan Chew, the local coordinator.

This week I was reflecting on a passage in Luke's gospel. Luke's gospel and his account in Acts are full of purpose lessons, even more than the writings of the other gospel writers. Luke wrote:

At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea (Luke 4:42-44).

There are several points in the passage that you and I can apply to our own PurposeQuest.

1. 1. Jesus spent time by himself. Jesus needed solitary time to clarify His purpose and to maintain it. You need it too.
2. 2. The people tried to keep Jesus where He was. The people obviously enjoyed Jesus and His ministry. They tried to keep Him for themselves. Other people will try to influence and even control you. But Jesus knew who He was and what He was supposed to do. That enabled Jesus to say "no" to their well-meaning request.
3. 3. Jesus knew who He was and what He was to do. You cannot blame the people for trying to keep Jesus with them. And it can be flattering or even distracting to be popular, to be doing a good job, or to have someone make you an offer to stay put. Jesus resisted their attempts to contain Him by simply saying no. He knew He had to move on.

The same thing happened in Paul's ministry.

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then

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Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done" (Acts 21:10-14).

Paul had a prophetic warning that he was about to face danger and imprisonment. All the people begged Paul not to go but to stay in the safety of where he was. Paul refused for the same reasons that Jesus did; He knew from the Damascus-road experience that he was to go to the Gentiles and to Caesar. Others could not appreciate or understand this, but Paul was responsible to carry out what he knew. That is what we all must do in the context of our own PurposeQuest. Sometimes you must resist the well-meaning intentions of those who don't understand your purpose.

Perhaps you need to spend some solitary time this week, seeking or refocusing on who you are. Or maybe you are facing a tempting offer that would be a good thing, but not the best thing you could do. Perhaps this week you will need to say "no" like Jesus and Paul did, resisting the pressure to be whom others want or think you need to be. Whatever the case, your purpose should serve as your "due north compass point." It should serve to keep you on course. But no one can do this for you; I urge you this week to be the captain and overseer of the purpose that God has given you. Have a great week!

**The Monday Memo
From Honolulu, Hawaii
Written by Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 135**

Aloha from Hawaii! I am here visiting my son and also to conduct some purpose seminars and meetings. On Tuesday I depart for Singapore where I will be until November 24. If you live in Singapore, be watching this week for an email with my speaking schedule. If you would like to schedule a meeting with me to assist you or your church with your PurposeQuest, please write and let me know.

This week I was thinking about how God uses people. Very often God is more comfortable with our humanity, with all its frailties and weaknesses, than we are. I have found that many are waiting to be more spiritual, smarter, to know more Bible or to be better equipped before they attempt to fulfill their purpose. I have found that most are equipped to do something right now if only they will try.

I talk to many people that have an idea, but they are not sure whether or not that idea is a good thing or a "God" thing. Consequently they are waiting for some confirmation or sign that will enable them to know for sure and to proceed. They really don't trust what is in them; they are waiting for some external confirmation. This confirmation seldom comes.

I like what Luke wrote at the beginning of his gospel. Luke was a doctor, a scientist and researcher. He wrote with the best Greek in the New Testament. Having researched Jesus' life and ministry, the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write an account of his research. Yet look at how Luke describes his decision to write this account:

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However, **it occurred to me** that it would be well to recheck all these accounts from first to last and **after thorough investigation** to pass this summary on to you, to reassure you of the truth of all you were taught (Luke 1:3-4 TLB emphasis added).

The New Living Translation of those two verses states:

Having carefully investigated all of these accounts from the beginning, **I have decided** to write a careful summary for you, to reassure you of the truth of all you were taught.

It is interesting to note that Luke didn't describe the fact that he was writing his gospel. He didn't say, "The Lord is leading me to write." He didn't write, "It has been confirmed that it is God's will for me to write." His decision to write was just that: a decision. He said, "It occurred to me" to write. He didn't over-spiritualize the process. I have found that many people are using their desire for "confirmation" as a delay tactic. I have also found that people who say, "I'm praying about doing that" aren't praying; they are delaying. What has occurred to you to do? Why aren't you doing it?

God used Luke's love for investigation and order to write His word. God also wants to use you just as you are to produce things for Him that are consistent with who He created you to be. So let's get going! Do you have any good ideas? What are you waiting for? In the next seven days, what can you do to act on an idea that you have? Stop waiting and start painting, writing, singing, building or dancing to the glory of God. While perhaps God hasn't directed you to do these things, He probably hasn't told you **not** to do them. And with that awareness, make an effort to do something that God can then take and use. I can't promise you will write a book like Luke that will impact the world, but you may just be surprised how God uses something that just seemed like just a good idea to you. Have a great week!