

The Monday Memo
From Harare, Zimbabwe
Written by Dr. John Stanko
Issue 146

Greetings once again from Harare! I have had a wonderful (and busy) visit the last two weeks but it is time to go home. Next week I **promise** to have my new **PurposeCoach** program in place on my website for your review. I was too busy to coordinate things with my Webmaster and I want everything to be clear before I tell you about it. Please be looking for that announcement next week along with a letter explaining how you can support what I do financially and in prayer.

Last year I read a great book entitled **Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen** by William Ramsey. I love to read anything about the Apostle Paul because he was such a man of purpose. Far from perfect, Paul was difficult to work with and had little patience for underachievers. Next to Jesus, however, no one played a greater role in the development of the early church than Paul. He was able to do that not because he was smart (although he was) or aggressive (although he was), but because he was a man of purpose. When he went to the Gentiles, God went with him and the results were spectacular.

I was reading about Paul's first missionary journey to Cyprus and the Galatian region in Acts 13. When Paul confronted a magician who was trying to hinder his work, Luke (the writer of Acts) stated, "Then Saul, who was also called Paul . . ." (Acts 13:9). What a simple but powerful statement! It was 14 years since Saul had his dramatic encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road and now he stepped forward on the mission field and said, "My name is no longer Saul but Paul." It took Paul 14 years to realize who he was and what he was created to do, and when he did, he changed his name to Paul.

Think about it. Saul was a Roman citizen from the cross-cultural city of Tarsus. He knew four languages. Saul understood the Roman/Greek world of his day, and he was in some ways more comfortable in the Gentile world than he was in Jerusalem. Saul had legal rights as a Roman citizen, rights that Jesus did not have when he faced his crucifixion. Saul was a Roman! In Cyprus, Saul stepped forward into his purpose and from that point, he was known and is still known today as Paul. What a difference a one-letter change made in world history!

That is the power of purpose. Nothing changed in Saul's life except how he saw himself. The only thing that changed was his mind. But that was enough to have him boldly step forward and in essence say, "This is who I am. This is what I was created to do and be." From that point, his travels, his letters and his legacy have impacted the world for 2,000 years.

Who are you? What is your "name?" Are you ready to step forward and acknowledge who you are and what your past has shaped and prepared you to be today? Are you prepared to stop identifying with what others call you and make a statement of purpose for yourself? This could be the week when you have your debut out of the shadows of who you have been into the light of who God wants you to be. The world is waiting for the real you to emerge. As you do, I hope you have a great week!

The Monday Memo
From the desk of
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Issue 147

It is good to be back home. I want to thank everyone in Zimbabwe for their encouragement and hospitality. I will return in May, so until then, please take care of my second home. And I am pleased to announce a new program called **PurposeCoach** (see below) along with a chance for you to sign up to receive my monthly prayer update.

You may know the story of how I found my purpose after a failed business opportunity. After that failure, I was praying in my office one morning, but I wasn't really praying. I was involved in something I now call "Godspeak." I hear Godspeak all the time as I travel and I am still guilty of it from time to time. You may be asking, "What is Godspeak?" I'm glad you asked.

Godspeak is one of three things. If you say God's name (Lord, Father God, or Father) every third word when you pray, then you are involved in GodSpeak. If you are telling the Lord what you **think** He wants to hear and not what is truly on your heart, then you are engaging in GodSpeak. If you are praying and pretending to be the person that God wants you to be, then you are guilty of GodSpeak.

One of the keys to finding your purpose is to ask the Lord, but your prayer must be based in reality and not religiosity. When you pray using King James' English or try to match someone else's eloquence, you are often using your energy to impress God. God isn't impressed. There is only one thing that impresses God: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

The morning I found my purpose, I started out in Godspeak. I was asking God to save my business for His glory. The problem was that I wasn't interested in God's glory. I was in trouble, but I didn't think I could tell God the truth. Consequently I fabricated a prayer that sounded good, but was based in unreality. I was using Godspeak. But when I saw what I was doing, eventually I slammed my fist on the desk and yelled, "But God, if you didn't create me to start this business, what did You create me to do?" To my surprise, God answered me and my life has never been the same.

A man named David M'Intyre wrote:

We like to speak to Him as we think we ought to speak, and there are times when our words far outrun our feelings. But it is best that we should be perfectly frank before Him. He will allow us to say anything we will, so long as it is to Himself, "I will say until God my rock," says the psalmist, "why has thou forgotten me?" If he had said, "Lord, thou canst not forget. Thou hast graven my name on the palms of thy hands," he would have spoken more worthily, but less truthfully.

On one occasion Jeremiah failed to interpret God aright. He cried as if in anger, "O Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived." These are terrible words to utter before Him who is changeless truth. But the prophet spoke as he felt, and the Lord not only pardoned him, but met him and blessed him there.

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As you seek your purpose this week, I urge you to pray in honesty and integrity. If you are frustrated or confused, tell God; He already knows. If you are tired or overwhelmed, tell God; He already knows. If you have been searching and feel like giving up, tell God; He already knows. And when you get honest with God, your honesty frees God to be honest with you. You need God to speak the truth to you if you are going to know your purpose. For that to happen, you must first speak the truth to Him. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
From Bentonville, Arkansas
Written by Dr. John Stanko
Issue 148

What an exciting week I had. I have talked to someone about purpose every day this week. But as many people as I talk to, I know there are many more who need to hear the purpose message. That is why I have launched a new program called PurposeCoach, designed to help all people— young and old, male and female—to clarify their purpose and help others do the same. To subscribe, go to the end of this Memo.

This week I am in Bentonville with my good friends, James and Georgia Longmate, and the First Assembly of God family. I first came to First Assembly about five years ago. As soon as I walked into the building, I noticed the decorations, which were not like any I had seen in other churches (and I've seen a lot of churches). When I mentioned to some members about the decor, I was told that Georgia, the pastor's wife, had done them. Little did I know that this was about to begin Georgia's PurposeQuest.

When I met Georgia, I complimented her on a job well done. She immediately said to me, "I just love to help people use what they already have to beautify their world." When I said, "That sounds like a worthy purpose," Georgia responded, "Well, it doesn't sound very spiritual to me." I assured her that it was and urged her to give God a chance to prove that this was her purpose and it was indeed spiritual. That is what she did.

First, she went to some of the widows in the church and offered to help them redecorate at no charge. That proved to be a tremendous blessing to those women. Then the Lord opened a door for Georgia to work with Havenwood, a home for single moms. With no budget, Georgia went into the home and helped decorate and organize the common areas and living quarters. Today some of the women attend church, the director of the home is a friend and there is a regular Bible study in Havenwood itself.

And just last week, the mayor of the town met with Georgia and asked her to decorate the mayor's office and this time Georgia has something to work with that she usually doesn't have— a budget!

Georgia is preparing business cards to help spread the word about what she does and the slogan on her card is "Making Something out of Nothing." That has a nice sound to it, don't you think? Georgia's PurposeQuest has lessons for us all this week. Some of them include:

1. You may not get paid to express your purpose at first. It is more important to express your purpose than to get paid.
2. Eventually you will get paid as you fulfill your purpose.
3. Your purpose doesn't have to be expressed in church for it to be "spiritual."
4. Often you don't have to go looking for opportunities to fulfill your purpose; God will bring the opportunities to you.

So what can you learn from Georgia's PurposeQuest that you can apply to your own? Whatever the lesson, I urge you to apply that lesson this week. Don't delay any longer in taking the next step in your PurposeQuest. The world is waiting to receive you and to celebrate the person whom God has made you to be. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
From Temecula, California
Written by Dr. John Stanko
Issue 149

This week the purpose message brought me to sunny southern California. I had a wonderful time talking about purpose with Pastor Ted Miller and his church. Tomorrow I have the privilege of recording 10 one-minute messages for radio here in Temecula. Let's see, what should I talk about on the radio? I know, I'll talk about purpose; that's a novel idea.

This week I was having fun trying to decide what epitaph I should request for my tombstone. That may not sound like fun, and I truly hope I won't need to reach a final decision any time soon. But I must be doing now whatever it is that I want people to remember me for. With that in mind, I thought I should give it some thought to make sure I'm on target now. Stephen Covey goes one step further; he asks his readers to write their funeral eulogy today. Covey states that you must be doing *now* what it is that you want to be remembered for *then*.

I've come up with five finalists for my epitaph and thought I would share them with you this week. (If you wish, you can write me and let me know which one you feel would be the best choice.).

1. **Here lies a man of purpose.** People ask me how I do all that I do. I answer that I stopped doing what I can't do. Purpose helps you focus on what you do best and I want to be known as someone who knew how to say "no" because I knew what my "yes" was. Do you know what your "yes" is? If so, are you doing it as much as possible?
2. **John Stanko always had time.** I am learning to have faith for money, business and other people's success. I am also trying to have faith for time. In the Old Testament, Joshua asked the sun to stand still so he could finish the work he had to do, and the sun did so. I want to be known as someone who kept his priorities in order and then had faith to do what was most important.
3. **This man served others.** A servant-leader is one who knows how to come alongside other people and serve their highest priority needs. I don't just want to be polite; I want to know how to *listen* to what people are saying they need, what they are saying they want to do, and then devote my time and energy to make them successful. I want to help others grow, offering my gifts, time and purpose to help them do just that.
4. **John knew how to laugh.** The joy of the Lord is my strength. If I'm not doing what I enjoy, then I don't have God's strength. The only substitute for God's strength is my own strength and that is a poor substitute. I want to be able to laugh at myself and make others laugh so that they can enjoy God and what they were created to do. I want to have fun working.
5. **Here lies a man who was a bit crazy.** I want to be crazy like Abram (which means exalted father), who changed his name to Abraham (father of a multitude) before he had any children! I want to be crazy like Moses who led people to the Red Sea, where the Egyptians had him trapped, only to watch the Sea part before him. In other words, I want

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to do things in faith that defy the natural odds, but that were done in obedience to God's voice.

There you have my five nominations. But rather than spend time evaluating mine, why not write your own this week? What legacy would you like to leave behind? Whatever it is, you had better get busy doing it now or that legacy will be just a pipedream. We are not guaranteed tomorrow, let alone the next 10 years. With that in mind, get busy this week building a legacy with which you can be happy. I hope you won't need your epitaph for a long time to come, but you need to be doing what that epitaph represents today or you may start too late. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
From the desk of
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Issue 150

The Monday Memo is three years old! Since we can't get together to celebrate, be creative and do something to commemorate this important event. Better yet, do something this week that will help you fulfill your purpose. I can't think of a better thing to do to honor the purpose behind this weekly email letter.

Every now and then someone asks me a question whether or not it is selfish to pursue purpose. They then ask where the cross of Christ comes in when you are doing something that you love doing. Many people still feel that God will give you an assignment that you hate doing and that is somehow more spiritual than doing something you love. My answer to those who ask is that, in this case, self-interest is the *best* interest for you and for God. Let me explain.

First, let's look at Acts 13:2: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart *for me* Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'" (emphasis added). When God assigns you a purpose, He is really doing something for Himself. When God calls you to a purpose, that purpose actually brings you closer to Him. So pursuing your purpose, which gives you joy and peace, is not something you do for yourself. It is something you do for God.

Then, let's look at Psalm 37:4: "Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart." If you will delight yourself in the Lord and not in what He has given you to do, then God will grant you the desires of your heart. Why? Because He put those desires there in the first place! When you pursue your God-given desires, which may seem like self-interest, in actuality you are pursuing the things of God. God uses joy and your desire to do something as indicators that you are doing something right, not something wrong.

And finally, let's read Proverbs 16:3 in the Amplified Version: "Roll your works upon the Lord—commit and trust them wholly to Him—and He will cause your thoughts to be in agreement with His will, and so shall your plans be established and succeed." You may have been taught to distrust your thoughts and desires, but I am urging you to pay attention to them if you are serious about finding your purpose. If the Spirit lives in you to give you the mind of Christ, why are so surprised that you have it?

So where does the cross come into the picture? The cross does not require that you deny who you are, but the cross does require that you allow God to determine where and when you will express your purpose. Church work has never been my favorite place to fulfill my purpose of bringing order out of chaos, but it is the very place where I am most effective. So I submit to God's will

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for who I am *and* where I am most effective. To deny my purpose would deny me the power and joy I need to pick up my cross daily and follow Him.

So now you know why I say that self-interest is really the best interest where purpose is concerned. Don't deny who you are, but then don't try to choose the sphere where God wants you to give yourself. I pray that God will grant you the desires of your heart this week as you pick up your cross to follow after Jesus. Have a great week!