

THE MONDAY MEMO

**From the desk of Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 181**

I'm home and it's wonderful to be here. I am looking forward to a light schedule through the end of the year. This gives me a chance to work on two projects that are on my mind. You will be hearing more about these projects in the weeks ahead.

Last week we began another purpose profile, this time looking at the life of Nehemiah. Before we continue this profile, I want to go back to one of the points I made last week. If you haven't already, I would urge you to read last week's Memo before you read this week's issue.

WHY DON'T MORE PEOPLE KNOW THEIR PURPOSE?

Last week I made the point **that most people don't know their purpose because they don't ask enough questions.** And if they are asking the right questions, they don't hold onto their unanswered questions until they get answers—they abandon the quest. Finding and fulfilling purpose are often hard work. There are few shortcuts and no easy or pat answers. Even when you discover your purpose, it's often difficult to know how and where to invest yourself. In short, a PurposeQuest sometimes involves more heart and effort than someone is willing or able to give.

I can't stop thinking about the line I heard a motivational speaker make recently that quality questions lead to a quality life. What he meant was that you must seek the truth concerning who you are, and part of that seeking is asking the right questions. My job, as a purpose coach and writer, is to equip you with those quality questions. From there, I have faith that the quality answers will come.

Nehemiah was interested in Jerusalem and its residents, even though he had never been there. One day a group of travelers piqued his interest and he asked a lot of questions. Their answers provoked him to prayer, thought and action. The rest is history.

100 Questions

Recently I was talking with my sister-in-law and the issue came up of the questions I listed in my November prayer letter. She said those questions reminded her of a recommended exercise in a book I had given her by Michael Gelb entitled *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*. Her comment made me return to that book and find what she was referring to. Here is a recommendation that Gelb made:

In your notebook, make a list of a hundred questions that are important to you. Your list can include any kind of question as long as it's something you deem significant: anything from "How can I save more money?" or "how can I have more fun?" to "What is the meaning and purpose of my existence?" and "How can I best serve the Creator?"

Do the entire list in one sitting. Write quickly; don't worry about spelling, grammar, or repeating the same question in different words (recurring questions will alert you to emerging themes). Why a hundred questions? The first twenty or so will be "off the top

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of your head.” In the next thirty or forty themes often begin to emerge. And, in the latter part of the second half of the list you are likely to discover unexpected but profound material.

When you have finished, read through your list and highlight the themes that emerge. Consider the emerging themes without judging them. Are most of your questions about relationships? Business? Fun? Money? The meaning of life?

I sat down just this morning and did my hundred questions in about 30 minutes. It was a valuable exercise that I will be processing for quite some time. But I took the exercise one step further and went to a place that has some additional ready-made questions for you and I to ponder.

MORE GOOD QUESTIONS

Where did I go? I went to the Bible, specifically the gospels in the New Testament. I highlighted all the questions that Jesus asked people and all the questions that people asked Him. I added those questions to my list of 100 questions and now I have a quality list of 200 questions I can study and ponder. Some of the questions that Jesus asked were “What do you want me to do for you?” or “Why do you doubt?” or “Why are you afraid?” I won’t share my 100 questions with you, for they are personal. But I will give you the list of questions from the gospels. You can go to <http://www.purposequest.com/purpose.htm> and download the document “Bible Questions to Ponder” or write me with the word “questions” in the subject box and I will be glad to send you a copy.

But gathering the questions is the easy part; it’s getting the answers that’s the tough part. If you are going to be a person of purpose, however, you must do the work and spend the time pursuing the direction and insight that these questions can bring.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

I think your assignment for this week is clear: Work on developing your questions. Sit down and write out your own list of 100 questions. Then supplement your list with the list of questions that I am providing from the gospels. Does this seem like a lot of work? It may be, but let me ask you a question: Is this work worth it if you can clarify your purpose? I think it is. So in your pursuit of a quality life this week, make your quality list and study it. See what patterns emerge as you follow in the steps of Nehemiah by asking quality questions. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written from St. Louis, Missouri
By Dr. John W. Stanko

Issue 182

I trust all my American readers had a good Thanksgiving holiday and that my readers everywhere are beginning to focus on having a purposeful Christmas. I am writing from St. Louis where I enjoyed my time at St. Louis Family Church this weekend. I added many new subscribers and, if you are a new subscriber, I want to welcome you to **The Monday Memo** family. By the way, I don’t think there will be a **Monday Memo** next

week. My computer needs to go in for some repairs.

This week I want to continue with the purpose profile of Nehemiah that we began two weeks ago. Isn't it remarkable that someone like Nehemiah, who lived 2,500 years ago, can mentor you today as you seek your purpose? I urge you to spend some time this week with Nehemiah and apply the lessons from his life to yours. If you didn't read last week's Memo or finish your 100-question exercise, you may want to do that before you read this week's issue. Remember, quality questions lead to a quality life.

EXTERNAL OPPOSITION

Nehemiah faced a lot of opposition as soon as he began to rebuild Jerusalem, and that is the fourth point we can learn from Nehemiah's PurposeQuest: **You will always face opposition when you seek to fulfill your purpose.**

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble-burned as they are?" Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building-if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!" (Nehemiah 4:1-3).

That's how it is with people of purpose: your enemies don't show up until you get serious about doing God's will. Nehemiah wasn't the only one to face purposeful opposition. Joseph faced the enmity of his brothers when he shared his dreams with them.

David incurred the wrath of Saul after David was anointed king. And Jesus didn't have an enemy in the world until He preached and healed on the Sabbath. After He did, there was a group of men dedicated to see Him die. Your enemies are actually a sign that you are doing something right, not that you are doing something wrong.

So where is your greatest source of external opposition? Is it from family, friends or associates? Identifying what you do that attracts the greatest opposition may give you a significant clue concerning your purpose.

INTERNAL OPPOSITION

External opposition is serious, but it may not be the most serious obstacle where your purpose is concerned. I have found that the opposition from *within* is often the most crippling. Fear, doubt and anxiety all serve to disable and render you useless where purpose is concerned. And that is our fifth point in Nehemiah's PurposeQuest: **Your purpose is bigger than anything you can accomplish by yourself.**

They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed." [But I prayed,] "Now strengthen my hands" (Nehemiah 6:9).

Nehemiah's enemies taunted him and the people who were with him were fearful. Nehemiah recognized what was going on and he prayed for God to strengthen him.

When you clarify your purpose, you realize that you can't fulfill your purpose in your

own strength. If you behold the need and then assess your ability, you will probably say to God, “I can’t do this! I’m not smart or gifted enough. Help me, Lord!”

When I went to Afghanistan last year, I said “no” to the invitation three times. I didn’t have the time, money or energy to go, or so I thought. But I should have recognized that all those things only proved that it was God’s will for me to go; I faced the internal opposition of fear, doubt and inadequacy. All those simply caused me to trust God all the more. What is it that causes you the greatest fear and doubt? Could that be related to your purpose?

PLAN YOUR OWN FUNERAL

Stephen Covey wrote the classic book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. In it, he described his second habit as “begin with the end in mind.” To do that, Covey recommended that you write your funeral eulogy today. His reasoning was that you must be doing today what it is that you want to be remembered for tomorrow. And that is the sixth point we can learn from Nehemiah’s life is: **Your purpose is the legacy you want to leave behind.**

”Remember me with favor, O my God, for all I have done for these people” (Nehemiah 5:19).

”Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love” (Nehemiah 13:22).

”Remember me with favor, O my God” (Nehemiah 13:31).

I want to be remembered as a writer, so I must write books. I want to be a man who was organized, who always had time for people. So I have studies organization and teach time management. Do you get my point? Nehemiah prayed regularly for God to remember Him. He knew that a legacy had to be more than a statue; he wanted to be remembered as one who did great things for God. And guess what? God heard his prayer, for here we are, 2,500 years later, talking about Nehemiah’s legacy. God did remember him!

So I ask you: What do you want to be remembered for? What comments do you want people to make at your funeral? The answers to those questions can provide additional insight into your purpose, for they help you identify what is truly important in your life.

LET’S WRAP IT UP

As we finish our Nehemiah profile, let’s look at the points we learned by studying his life:

- 1. Most people don’t know their purpose because they don’t ask enough questions.**
- 2. Tears often go hand in hand with purpose.**

3. **You must be able to state your purpose and goals with clarity and conviction.**
4. **You will always face opposition when you seek to fulfill your purpose.**
5. **Your purpose is bigger than anything you can accomplish by yourself.**
6. **Your purpose is the legacy you want to leave behind.**

Those six points give you a lot to think about as you continue your PurposeQuest. Take those points and write down the insights you receive as you meditate on them. Don't take mental notes; the ink fades too quickly. Instead, keep a purpose notebook or journal and record your thoughts, prayers and insights. Go back and review the lives of Samson and Esther from previous weeks and allow them all to shed light on your own PurposeQuest. And as you do, you will develop your own purpose profile that will encourage and help guide others. If I can be of assistance, don't hesitate to write. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

From the desk of Dr. John Stanko Issue 183

I was wrong about two things. I said last week that I may not send a **Monday Memo** this week, but here it is. And the second thing I said that my computer was sick. It isn't sick; it died! So I am using my wife's computer this week until I get a new one. Fortunately I had everything backed up carefully, a lesson I learned when my computer went down last year. I've added hundreds of new subscribers the last two weeks, so if this is your first issue of **The Monday Memo**, I want to welcome you to the family.

The last few months I've written about men and women in the Bible and their PurposeQuest. I've called these studies purpose profiles and we will continue this week with another profile. This time we will study Peter's life to see what we can learn that will help us in our own PurposeQuest. I regularly hear speakers making fun of Peter's failures and weaknesses, saying Peter didn't know when to be quiet. You will never hear me say a bad word about Peter. Peter was a great man, whom Jesus counted on to do great things. And Peter did not disappoint Jesus.

YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN

I've found that God is often more comfortable with our humanity than we are. What do I mean by this? We let our failures and what we can't do keep us from doing what we can do. This wasn't the case with Peter. He made many mistakes, spoke out of turn and actually denied the Lord. Yet Peter was the one who spoke at Pentecost and ushered in Pentecost. He was also one of the first Jews to go to the Gentiles and begin the revival that made it possible for you and me to serve the Lord. Yes, Peter was imperfect but he was a purpose champion for God.

You can be a champion too, but you must not allow your imperfections and mistakes to prevent you from fulfilling your purpose. In January, we are going to pick up the theme of failure, something I wrote about more than one year ago. Our discussions then culminated in what I called “Celebrate a Failure” day. I think it’s time we resurrected that celebration, for I have run into too many people who are hung up on their failures and weaknesses. I have also encountered some trying hard to improve their weaknesses, not trying something for God until they or their circumstances improve. If you are doing that, I must be frank: it represents a flawed strategy. In all probability, God is less concerned with your failures than you are. Are you more righteous than God? Can you have higher standards than God has?

You’re only human and not perfect or superhuman. So stop trying to be either. If Peter left a purpose legacy, so can you. If God is willing to work in and through you, then let Him.

AN IDENTITY RUT

When Jesus met Peter, his name wasn’t Peter. It was Simon (see Mark 3:16). But Jesus changed his name and today we don’t refer to Peter as Saint Simon. Why did Jesus change Peter’s name? I think Jesus wanted Peter to see himself differently. Jesus became not only Peter’s Lord, but also his ministry coach. Coach Jesus decided that Peter needed a new perspective on who he was. So from that point, Peter was known as the rock.

So Peter now had a new identity and Jesus expected him to walk in it. So every time someone said Peter’s name, it was a reminder of who Peter was, not who he had been. So do you dwell in the past? Are you bogged down in an old image that others assigned to you and that you accepted? For many years, I was known as an administrator because that is what my job was. When I began to position myself as a speaker and consultant, some opposed me, not willing to receive this new image and identity. I then had a choice as to whether I was going to revert to that old identify or forge ahead in my new one. I chose to forge ahead and some still refuse to accept me as who I am, clinging instead to how they knew me previously.

Are you stuck in an identity rut? Do some know you as Simon, but Jesus knows you as Peter? If that’s the case, you have a choice to make. Whose report will you believe? Those who want to keep you as Simon or Coach Jesus who wants to free you to be the person He knows you can be. That’s an important yet difficult choice to make. I pray you will have the courage to accept your Peter identity and shed the Simon label.

STUDY YOUR RESUME FOR CLUES.

When Jesus met Simon Peter, he was working in his family business as a fisherman:

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men ." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him (Luke 5:8-11).

Again we see that Simon Peter was all hung up in his past, telling Jesus that he was sinful—like Jesus didn’t already know that! When you spend time reminding God of your sins, do you really think He is interested? Or do you think He has forgotten? But that isn’t the point I want to make.

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Simon Peter was a fisherman. His job held a clue to his purpose. Jesus related Peter's purpose to his employment and what Peter would do from that point was related to his business.

So does your employment history hold clues to your purpose? Don't be too quick to say "no." Do you have a resume? Study it and ask yourself some questions: What did I enjoy about that job? What did I hate? What was absent from the jobs I hated? Is there any common theme or activity among all your jobs? What feedback did you get during your job evaluations? Study the answers and see if there is any pattern that you can see.

LET'S REVIEW.

What did we see in Peter's life this week that could help you with your own PurposeQuest:

- 1. If God is willing to work in and through you, let Him. Don't allow your mistakes or weaknesses derail your PurposeQuest.**
- 2. Don't accept any other identify except the one that Jesus has for you.**
- 3. Study your job history to see if it holds any clues to help you in your PurposeQuest.**

I think I have given you enough tips to work on this week as you continue your PurposeQuest. If I can help you, please write. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written in Williamsburg, Virginia

By Dr. John Stanko

Issue 184

It is less than two weeks until Christmas. I've finished most of my shopping because I'm off to Holland and England this week. I'll return home just before Christmas and then have a few weeks at home before I hit the road again. What a great year for the purpose message this has been! I hope you find yourself closer to knowing and fulfilling your purpose as 2004 comes to a close. If not, read on—this could be the week of your breakthrough.

Last week we began another purpose profile, this time looking at the life of Peter. Peter was a partner in the family fishing business, who was engaged in an occupation that was related to his ultimate purpose, which was to be a fisher of men. Jesus used Peter to fish for souls and Peter enjoyed tremendous success. We see on two occasions (Acts 2 and 4) where Peter spoke and thousands came to know the Lord on both occasions. We will summarize our purpose points for Peter at the end of the **Memo**, but right now I want to draw a few more lessons from Peter's profile.

Last week I referenced Luke 5:8-11, which states:

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then

Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men ." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him (Luke 5:8-11).

Peter gravitated toward his purpose before he ever knew Jesus and perhaps you have too. Purpose is so ingrained in you that it is possible to pursue interests and careers that are related to your purpose **before** you know what your purpose is. And that is why I urged you last week to study your resume and employment history to see if there are any clues to help you clarify your purpose. This week I want to look at the same account in Matthew's gospel:

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him (Matthew 4:18-20).

Here we have three more purpose points that may be able to help you in your personal PurposeQuest.

ONE MESSAGE EVERY 11 YEARS

Jesus told Peter to follow Him. And that's our first purpose point this week: **your purpose isn't fully energized until you follow Jesus.** You may think that point is a given, so obvious that it needs no mention. But Peter followed Jesus and for the next four years, he did very little fishing, either through his business or as an evangelist. Jesus took Peter through a preparation process that included the lessons Peter learned through his denial of Jesus. You may feel like you know your purpose, but you've been following Jesus all these months and years, and don't feel any closer to its fulfillment than when you started. But your PurposeQuest comes alive when you begin to follow Jesus and it is at that point that you must say, "Lord, I trust You. You gave me my purpose and I believe you are helping me fulfill it." Fulfilling your purpose can sometimes be more difficult than finding your purpose in the first place.

When I began to follow Jesus, I knew that I would be a public speaker. So then for the next 11 years as an associate pastor, I spoke twice, and the second time I spoke was the last Sunday I was in that particular church. So you might say that I averaged one message every 11 years. Today I have more speaking engagements than I can handle, but it wasn't always like that. My path to be a speaker is the same path that you will have to take, and that path is to follow Jesus. That path may seem to take you away from where you want to go, but that's where the trust comes in.

I CAN'T DO THAT; I CAN DO THAT.

After Jesus told Peter to follow Him, Jesus made a promise. He promised Peter that He would make him a fisher of men. And that is the second point I want to make this week: **Jesus has to help you fulfill your purpose or else you can be found doing a good thing in your own power, wisdom and strength.** Jesus said to Peter, "I will make you a fisher of men." I've known people who found their purpose, but then didn't take steps to fulfill it because they couldn't see how they could possibly do it. In their opinion, they didn't have the money, education, time, or energy. Then I've known others who ran out of the gate, so to speak, and tried to get results prematurely, just like Moses did when he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. Neither way works. There's only one

person who can make you a person of purpose and that's Jesus. He has to show you your purpose and then empower you to fulfill it, or else you are paddling a large boat without any oars.

When I finally became a pastor, the largest crowd I ever had in my church was 250 people. Today I write to 10,000 people every Monday and 5,000 every Wednesday. What's the difference between my results back then and now? Back then I tried to be a pastor because I thought that was what I was supposed to do. I stopped trying to achieve purpose results in a way that I thought was appropriate and today I trust God to do it in ways that are more consistent with who He made me to be. Can you see the difference? People ask me all the time how I do what I do. I answer that I stopped doing what I can't do and trust God to work in and through. There are no shortcuts

GIVE UP WHAT YOU KNOW TO RECEIVE WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

Finally, Peter listened to Jesus, left his nets and followed Jesus. And that is the third point to consider this week: **Once you know your purpose, you must be committed to absolute obedience if you are to have success.** Peter left his livelihood to follow Jesus. I've often said that Jesus doesn't recruit us to a job with benefits. He calls us to fulfill our purpose and He knows how to make that happen. But you must trust Him and obey, for there's no other way.

Four years ago, I had to walk about from job security to do what I do today. I started writing the **Monday Memo** three months after I obeyed and **The Memo** has now touched thousands of lives, including yours. But I had to obey, giving up the security I had to do this and more. I'm not saying that you should give up your job tomorrow, or that a job with benefits is wrong. But I am saying that you must obey God, and it is possible that He will have you give up what you know in order to receive what you don't yet know.

LET'S SUMMARIZE

So what did we learn last week and this week from Peter's purpose profile:

- 1. If God is willing to work in and through you, let Him. Don't allow your mistakes or weaknesses derail your PurposeQuest.**
- 2. Don't accept any other identify except the one that Jesus has for you.**
- 3. Study your job history to see if it holds any clues to help you in your PurposeQuest.**
- 4. Your purpose isn't fully energized until you follow Jesus, trusting that He knows how to prepare you to fulfill it.**
- 5. Jesus has to help you fulfill your purpose or else you can be found doing a good thing in your own power, wisdom and strength.**
- 6. Once you know your purpose, you must be committed to absolute obedience if you are to have success.**

This week, I want you to focus on point number five. Ask God to help you see if you are dismissing your purpose because you don't see how you can do it. Also check out if there is anything you are doing in your own strength. Then go back over the lessons we learned from Peter's life and apply them to your own PurposeQuest. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written in London, England

By Dr. John Stanko

Issue 185

I'm inspired this week. Last night I went to see Handel's *Messiah* here in London at the Royal Albert Music Hall. What a wonderful way to enjoy a timeless masterpiece of music and Scripture in the city where it was composed and first performed. The *Messiah* is considered by many to be the greatest musical feat in the history of mankind. Commissioned by a charity to produce a benefit concert, Handel wrote the *Messiah* in only 24 days. A musician once told me that someone trying to copy the *Messiah* could not do so in 24 days—that is the level of inspiration in which Handel operated when he wrote. Handel never left his house for those three weeks. His food trays remained untouched outside his office door. A friend who visited him as he composed found him sobbing with intense emotions. Later, as Handel groped for words to describe what he had experienced, he quoted St. Paul, saying “whether I was in the body or out of my body when I wrote it I know not.”

What's even more impressive is that Handel wrote *Messiah* under extreme duress. The Church of England strongly criticized and opposed Handel and his previous Scriptural works put to music. At the age of 56, he had no money, often going out only at night so as to avoid his creditors. Handel performed what he considered his farewell concert and went home, fully expecting to end up in debtor's prison. Yet the first performance of *Messiah* raised almost 400 pounds for charity and freed 142 other men from debtors prison in 1742. Of course the rest is history as countless millions have enjoyed and marveled at this work for more than 250 years. Handel also went on from there to enjoy tremendous success and popularity in his latter years.

So what does this have to do with you? Perhaps you are a person of purpose but you feel frustrated, even defeated in your PurposeQuest. Maybe you find yourself down and out, discouraged and criticized, forgotten and a failure. Perhaps your finances are in poor shape. If that description fits you, read on, for I believe this **Memo** can restore your hope and faith. If that's not you, read on anyway, for you will probably enter that phase one day as you pursue your purpose.

HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

God knows how to prepare His workers for their work. There is always an element of suffering, misunderstanding, success and then failure before there is the breakthrough success that God has for His servants. You are no exception to this timeless rule. The Bible and history itself contain many examples of this truth. This week, I would like to focus on one such example: Daniel.

Daniel had distinguished himself in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. His exploits are described in the first four chapters of the book that bears Daniel's name. When Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar took the throne, we have the well-known story from which we get the oft-used phrase “the handwriting's on the wall.” I urge you to at least read Daniel 5, for I will now quote from only part of that story:

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled. The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "O king, live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. King Nebuchadnezzar your father — your father the king, I say — appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. This man Daniel, whom the king called Beltshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means" (Daniel 5:8-12).

Now my question to you is this: if Daniel had been so successful in serving Nebuchadnezzar, why didn't Belshazzar know who he was? Why did the queen have to remind the king that Daniel even existed? The answer is simple: after his long success, Daniel now faced a down time in his life. He was forgotten, retired and rejected by the new leadership! Daniel was famous one day and forgotten the next.

While man had forgotten Daniel, God had not. And the same is true for you. It may seem like all your doors are closed and that the success you once enjoyed has now evaporated into thin air, never to return. Or you may feel like you are at your end, not able to go on another day. But that isn't necessarily the case. As with Daniel and Handel, your best days may yet be ahead. In fact, while 2005 may be the year for your breakthrough. After Daniel gave the king the bad news of what the writing on the wall meant, Daniel was once again restored to prominence:

Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:29).

WHAT TO DO WHILE YOU'RE DOWN AND OUT

What should you do if you are in a season of "un-use," disfavor or inaction? As we close out 2004, I would urge you to do three things if you are discouraged, disillusioned or dismayed. And if you're not, I urge you to find someone who is—you shouldn't have to look too hard—and encourage them in their dark time.

1. **Renew your faith in God.** – Your success and purpose expression doesn't depend on your faithfulness; it depends on God's. So remind yourself that God can do anything, and then rest in Him. Handel went home to retire and Daniel perhaps thought it was all over for him. Yet God helped both of them and He will help you.
2. **Keep preparing for your day of success.** – I don't think Handel went home and abandoned music. And I don't think Daniel went home and stopped seeking God. Keep writing, reading, learning and practicing. When the phone rings or the mail comes with your opportunity, you will be fresh and prepared, having worked in faith for the day of success.

3. **Be generous.** – Handel wrote the *Messiah* for charity, even though he was destitute. Daniel, having been snubbed and ignored, could have refused to render his wisdom services for Belshazzar. What can you do for someone else, even though you are down and out?

I'm grateful for 2004 and I hope you can find reasons to be as well. If not, then just thank God for His faithfulness. At least you're still alive! Then take this **Memo** to heart or share it with someone who needs it. I pray that as you do what I recommended above, you will see the purpose breakthrough in 2005. Thank you for allowing me to come into your life every week and thank you for being a purpose seeker. As I close this **Memo**, I wish you not only a great week, but also a very Merry Christmas!