

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written and Sent from Johannesburg, South Africa By John W. Stanko - Issue 231

I have been unable to send any of my studies or **Memos** from Zimbabwe due to technical difficulties, but today I am in South Africa. Next week I will be in London, so I shouldn't have to miss any more mailings. I don't know if that makes you happy or not! Also, it's been a while since we've had a subscription drive for **The Monday Memo**. In the spirit of Christmas, why not add your family, friends and associates to the mailing list? Simply go to <http://www.purposequest.com/mmemo.htm> and enroll as many as you would like to give the gift of purpose in 2006.

Christmas is upon us and I find myself asking where this year has gone. I have been so busy that I haven't done any Christmas shopping and that brings me to the focus for this week's **Memo**. This time of year is synonymous with giving, and many people come under pressure to give, sometimes beyond their ability. In keeping with this season, let's look at giving and the role that it can play in your PurposeQuest.

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

When my wife and I began PurposeQuest International five years ago, we had no money, support or income. I had written four books, I was known for the purpose message, and many of my former contacts and ministry partners were no longer a source of income or ministry opportunities (for reasons I won't go into). In my mind, I had nothing to give, so I began to focus on what I could do to generate revenue.

Yet at the same time, I wasn't comfortable with not being generous during this down period of my life. I remembered a situation years ago when I was complaining to the Lord that I had no Christmas gifts to give anyone, and He reminded me three times that I had a nice library. I finally got the message and pulled books off my shelves to give away to family and friends. They were blessed and I had learned an important lesson. Five years ago, I wanted to apply that same principle with the books to the start of my company.

Somewhere around this time I read Exodus 4:2-4 "Then the LORD said to him, 'What is that in your hand?' 'A staff,' he replied. The LORD said, 'Throw it on the ground.' Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the LORD said to him, 'Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.'" So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand." I had to look at what was in my hand, if there was anything I had to give even though I had no money.

So I decided to start **The Monday Memo**. I've had many people tell me that I'm crazy to send **The Memo** and the weekly Bible studies free or charge. I saw it differently. If my message and company were to prosper, I had to sow some seed that would lead to a harvest. **The Memo** and Bible studies were the **only** things that I could give at that point in my life. Just like Moses ran from how the Lord used and changed his staff, so I went through many times of doubt and fear that the Lord would not provide, that these things I was giving away would not generate a return. Yet just as Moses touched the snake and it turned back into a staff, I have seen the Lord transform this free service into an abundant harvest.

HO, HO, HO

I think it's possible to focus too much on money when we talk and t each about giving. I'm not minimizing the importance of giving what financial resources you have, but there is often so much more that you can give even when you have no money. If you have nothing to give, then give away yourself, the essence of who you are. Take your purpose and apply it to the need of someone else, just like I've done with my weekly emails and see God bless you. As I write that, I think of what Paul wrote: "And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will" (2 Corinthians 8:5-6). Is there someone to whom you can give yourself this year and it will possibly be the best gift they've ever had? If you can organize, go organize someone's home or office? If you can fix things, go gather things that are broken, repair them and make them even better than they were before they broke. And last and not least, you can also give them a subscription to **The Monday Memo!**

The secret to being blessed isn't some magic formula or person, like Santa Claus or Father Christmas. It's reaping and sowing. This year has been a tight year financially, yet somehow, and I mean that I'm not sure how it all happened, we are out of debt. The debt we incurred to start the business is no more. God is faithful and I can see how writing what meager thoughts I had every week and giving them away helped produce an abundant harvest.

I've often said that God has a big book and a sharp pencil and He records everything you do for Him. In the fullness of time, He rewards you. God is a debtor to no man, nor can any man give more than He does. So take some time this week to determine what you have in your hand. Determine to give it away not just at Christmas time, but throughout the year. Let's do our best to produce an atmosphere of giving the year round and let's see if we can make our purpose a part of that giving. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written and Sent from London, England By John W. Stanko - Issue 232

I love London. Last night I went to see the show *The Lion King* with some friends. While I enjoyed it, it wasn't as special as what I did last year here right before Christmas. Last year I went to see Handel's *Messiah* 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

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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 Belteshazzar, 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 2006 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 2005, 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? If you need more encouragement concerning giving, then see last week's **Memo** 231.

I'm grateful for 2005 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 2006. 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!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written By John W. Stanko - Issue 233

Happy New Year! I am sending this **Memo** to a greatly reduced audience due to recent email server problems. After I sent my **Memo** on December 19, without notice my email provider stopped allowing me to send emails to any more than 50 email addresses. Since many of my distribution lists include up to 300 names, I have been stymied in my efforts to communicate with my loyal readers. You are receiving this **Memo** because your name is on one of my smaller lists and I was able to get this through to you.

We are working on the problem and I've had several “experts” come forward to help me plan the way forward. So if you can help spread the word to others whom you know subscribe and let them know I am alive and what the problem is, we will keep you

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posted. In the meantime, I will write to my reduced list and post every **Monday Memo** to my website for people to access there.

I knew this “day” was coming but I was hesitant to go to one of the services that could have managed my email distribution lists for me. I was hesitant for a number of reasons that I won’t go into now. But this break has caused me to step back and consider how to continue **The Monday Memo** and whether or not I should continue it at all. I have written it for almost five years and maybe, just maybe, it’s time to do something else. Or perhaps it’s just time to release it to an outside service to maintain and send.

PURPOSE: NOW MORE THAN EVER

Yesterday was New Year’s Day and I spoke at a church in Baltimore, Maryland. The pastor mentioned that I would be available last evening for anyone who wanted to come out to talk about purpose and do a basic profile that I use to help people understand who they are. I was shocked that more than 75 people came out on a holiday to talk purpose. When I think of it, however, I should not have been surprised. That is the kind of hunger I see everywhere I go for purpose and anything that can help people clarify what their purpose is. Why is there suddenly such a purpose hunger? There are many reasons.

First, you and I have more choices of what to do than ever before. A few decades ago, most people worked for a company and had to report to the company’s offices to perform their duties. Now there are less companies and corporate opportunities. The Internet allows people to work at home if they so choose. Companies have downsized and older workers affected by the downsizing have started their own companies (like me) to try and make a living. What’s more, travel and communication have never been easier, which gives workers more options of where they will live and work.

Then the Internet has created an instant society. When I go online to buy or find something, I want it right away. I upgrade to computers that can get me what I want without waiting. This has created an expectation, especially in younger people, that they can find and have what they want now. They aren’t willing, as my generation was, to work for a company in the hopes that someday they will do something they enjoy for some of the time. In other words, they want to know and express their purpose now, and they want paid for it.

All these social forces have caused people to ask questions like, “Who am I? How do I work best? What can I do that distinguishes me in this crazy new work world?” William Bridges, an author who writes about transition and this new workaday world, wrote:

“In the dejobbed world, the truth that each of us has an inherent life work is suddenly rich with meaning. Nothing less than finding what you were meant to be and do will give you the motivation and the capability that today’s work world demands. Identifying your lifework is no longer an escapist fantasy. It is a condition for being successful. You now have to discover your lifework if you are to have a chance of creating a satisfactory and satisfying work life.”

And

“This is a world in which people had better be doing whatever they do best, whatever they are really motivated to do, whatever most suits them temperamentally, and whatever makes best use of such assets as they happen to have. In this marketplace, organizations pay for results.”

NOW WHAT?

Purpose isn't going away as an issue. It will grow in importance in the years to come. So it is vital, even essential, that you and those close to you know what your purpose is. If you know, keep working to stay focused and clear. If you don't know, then continue your PurposeQuest and don't settle for anything less than clarity. Whatever you do, don't give up or be discouraged! Your search is part of your preparation. Whether you find your purpose today or in two years, I promise you, as one who has been teaching about purpose for 15 years, that it is the pearl of great price, worthy of all your efforts. I can't predict when you will find your purpose, but I can promise that you will—if you don't abandon the quest.

As we enter a new year, I am more committed than ever to the purpose message and to help you find your purpose. If that means I must stop the Memo in order to embrace something else that will help you be a person of purpose, then I am ready to do so. I pray that the Lord will bless your search in 2006 and that this year will be one of purpose and productivity for you. Have a great week and a Happy New Year!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Sent from Seattle, Washington By John W. Stanko - Issue 234

I know that it's Wednesday and **The Monday Memo** is late. Let's see what excuse can I come up with? I was busy. No, I teach time management and can't use that one. How about I didn't know what to write about? No, I knew. What if I told you I was having technical difficulties? That would be partly true, but I am now able to send to about 40% of my list. The truth is that I left home yesterday for 17 days on the road, only to return home for one day only to leave for another four weeks the next day. So I spent Sunday doing what needed to be done to leave and then went to visit my 89-year-old mother and spent the day with her. So here I am, better late than never.

By the way, if you have any friends in Zimbabwe, please tell them that I am currently unable to send any **Memos** to my Zimbabwe lists due to my email problems. What's more, I am only able to send to two of my eleven Kenyan lists. I am studying three options that should allow me to resume mailing to my entire list in the near future. In the meantime, forward this **Memo** to your friends who may not be receiving at this time.

ONE MORE TIME

I have begun almost every purpose seminar with Acts 6:1-7. As we begin another year, let's start there one more time:

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from

among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

I see a lot of purpose lessons in this passage, but there are three I want to share with you that can help you as you start 2006. These three lessons can be applied to any company or individual, and I regularly work to apply them to my own purposequest.

SO WHAT ARE THE THREE LESSONS, DR. STANKO?

I'm glad you asked. They are:

1. **Face reality** – The apostles had to face the reality that they could not relate to the church as they had in the past. It was too big. They also had to face the reality of what it was that they did best, what it was that they did for the church that no one else could do. As a career or business grows and develops, it is necessary to face reality on a regular basis and ask, "What is working and what isn't?" You need to apply that question to your own life, job or ministry. Are there new opportunities that you can't work on because you're too busy? Is there something that was flowing smoothly a few months or years ago that isn't going as well now? Have you lost your joy and enthusiasm? A few years ago I had to face the reality that I wasn't happy. I didn't sense the joy of the Lord in what I was doing, although I was still capably performing my duties. Facing reality can be hard, but it can also be exciting to study the unexpected successes that can become greater with more attention and effort.

2. **Embrace change** – The people and the apostles had to embrace the changes in the role that the apostles played. They also had to face that new people were coming into the church, people who had different cultures and languages. When you get too busy or when some project has come to an end of its usefulness, then it's time to embrace, not resist, change. You may be ready for a new position or title, or you may need to face the fact that you can't do it all. You may need to give some of your responsibilities to someone else or phase out a role you've played for some time. Even in your family, you may need to embrace the changes that come when children mature. But you can't make any progress if you're holding onto the past too tightly. I had to embrace the change and resign from my jobs to start PurposeQuest International. It has been challenging and there were times I woke up in the night thinking, "What am I doing? I must be crazy!" And there were times when my wife wholeheartedly agreed! But it was time both to face reality and embrace change. Notice I didn't recommend that you endure or tolerate change, but rather to embrace it!

3. **Feed opportunities and starve problems** – I'm not advocating change for change sake. I don't want you to do something different for the adrenaline rush it can bring. But you need to be honest with yourself and ask, "What is taking more energy than ever for me or us to do?" "What new opportunities await if we face the reality that something isn't working anymore?" "What could I do if I wasn't spending so much time trying to hold onto something whose end is near?" For example, I didn't develop **The Monday Memo**

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until I first created the time by resigning two salaried positions. Now I am writing to people all over the world. I am working on two books and have the chance to travel to help people who need my help. There were opportunities out there, but I didn't even know what they were because I was too busy with the past.

As you enter another year, I urge you to think about these lessons and how to apply them to your world and life. Take a look at reality (both good and bad), embrace any changes that may need to occur, and look to feed your opportunities and starve your problems whenever possible. Stop wasting creative energy on maintaining the past and invest that energy in the future. Find the answers to the questions I have raised above and then develop strategies for 2006 that will renew your energy and bring you joy. It may not be easy, but it will bring rewards that will make 2006 a productive and meaningful year for you and yours. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo

Sent from Temecula, California By John W. Stanko - Issue 235

If it's been a while since you've heard from me, it's not because I haven't tried to write you. I've had a lot of trouble with my email server and that trouble hasn't allowed me to send **The Monday Memo** to more than half my list since December 19. I'm now in California and decided to try and send my Bible studies yesterday and, to my surprise, they all went through! I'm not sure if I can do this again next week, so if you don't hear from me after this **Memo**, keep checking my blog or web sites for updates on my technical challenges. I am addressing this issue, however, to insure that it this problem won't keep occurring and will keep you posted as best I can on my progress. I am regularly posting to my blog site, however, so if you don't receive **The Monday Memo**, you can still go to www.johnstanko.us to get your regular dose of purpose prose.

Speaking of my blog, this week I wrote two articles called "Blind Spots" and I plan on posting two more in the coming week. What was I referring to? The problem that we often have seeing ourselves and our circumstances the way God and others see them. Since this topic is on my mind quite a bit, I thought I would add some additional thoughts in this week's Memo.

Lord, Open My Eyes!

Have you ever noticed how many people had their eyes opened in the Bible? I'm not talking about blind people, but rather people who could see but in reality could not see what was most important--the spiritual reality behind their situation. One example that I have seldom seen discussed is Abraham's maid, Hagar. When Sarah found out that Hagar was pregnant to Abraham, Hagar fled due to Sarah's abuse. The Lord encountered Hagar, however, and told her to return, promising that He would be with Hagar and the child she would bear. Look how Hagar responded: "She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me.' That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered" (Genesis 16:13-14). So Hagar declared that she had seen the God who had seen her. So far, so good.

But later after her son was born, the abuse became so bad that Abraham had to send Hagar and Ishmael away. When their water had run out, Hagar sat down and wept: "When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then

she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "' cannot watch the boy die.' And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob. God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation'" (Gen 21:15-18). Now this woman who had seen God in chapter 16, who had given God a name based on her revelation, now had to have her eyes opened one more time: "Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink" (Genesis 21:19).

If you are going to find your purpose, you will need to have your eyes opened to see what it is. If you are going to fulfill your purpose, you will need to have your eyes opened to see how to do it. Either way, you need God's help to see what is already there, what already exists. My point is that having your eyes opened isn't an event on your PurposeQuest, it's a way of life! Jesus is the author and finisher, the alpha and omega of my purpose. Without His help, I am helpless and so are you.

Purpose isn't something you figure out. It isn't a means to self-fulfillment or self-expression, although both of those are important byproducts of purpose. Purpose is a matter of divine revelation, of God showing you something that ordinarily you could never see. Once you see it, however, you can't say, "Okay, Lord, I can take it from here. Thanks!" No, you need God's help, for you will be just like Hagar at some point--in the desert, feeling like you will die of purpose thirst.

Your Assignment

I have two assignments for you this week. The first is to do a Bible study on all those who had their eyes opened at some point, just like Hagar. I'll give you a few names to help you out--Abraham, Balaam and Saul. But that's all I'm giving you; the rest are up to you to find. You may want to make this a project if you are in a small Bible study group or cell meeting.

Then I want you to pray for yourself and others where purpose is concerned? What should you pray? Pray what Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:18-22: "**I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come." When you pray, expect that God will open the eyes of those for whom you pray, including yourself. I expect you to see things this coming week about purpose that you have never seen or understood before.

Then I invite you to check out my blog to read the four entries about blind spots, two of which have been posted and two which will be there later this week. Keep good notes, trust God and in the meantime, have a great week!