

## **The Monday Memo 271**

I am in New York with my friend Bill Hobbs where we've had a good time enjoying all that the city has to offer. Tonight we are going to the New York Giants football game, where they will play the Chicago Bears. This trip confirms what I've always said: it's hard work having fun!

If you have read these Memos for very long, you know that I have pointed out that quality questions lead to a quality life. (If you are new to this Memo, you can read some of my previous issues on the site where they are posted.) I think part of seeking the Lord is holding a question before Him and then sticking with that question until you get an answer. If that's true, then you need to choose good questions while you seek.

### **OLD QUESTIONS**

In the past, I have tried to give you some questions that you can use to help you in your PurposeQuest. Some of those questions have included:

1. What did you enjoy doing when you were young?
2. What makes you cry? What makes you angry?
3. What compliments have you heard regularly?
4. What would you do with your time if you had all the money you needed?
5. What opportunities seem to come your way without any effort on your part?

### **NEW QUESTIONS**

This week I have two new questions for you to consider. I discovered these questions when reading the latest book by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *A Leader's Legacy*. Those two questions are:

6. Who am I willing to serve?
7. For what am I willing to suffer?

The authors go on to say:

Each of us has to answer these questions of ourselves before we can change the world, make a difference, and leave a legacy. If we're going to

be authentic in our leadership, we have to be willing to serve, and we have to be willing to suffer.

"Now, wait a minute," you say. "Do you mean to tell me that I have to work hard all my life, and that when I get to be a leader what I get in return is that I have to serve others and I have to suffer in the process? That's not what I signed up for. No one ever told me that leaders have to do that!"

I won't take up your time with any more explanation. Just take those two questions and think about them this week. Take notes on your thoughts and write me to let me know what you hear. Your answers could and should help you clarify your purpose.

## **The Monday Memo 272**

I will be in New York this week celebrating our Thanksgiving holiday with our daughter and then heading to Zimbabwe next Friday. 2006 is almost history, but I still have a lot to accomplish. I am also giving some thought to 2007 and what I would like to accomplish then. With that in mind, I found a prayer this week while reading a purpose book entitled Chazown: A Different Way to See Your Life by Craig Groeschel. I urge you to pray that prayer, if you dare. I already did.

### **DISTURB ME**

The prayer was first prayed by Sir Francis Drake, who sailed around the world for England in 1577. The prayer goes like this:

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we arrive safely because we have sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity; and in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; and to push into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.

Now you see why I cautioned you about this prayer. It is dangerous! As I travel and talk with many people, however, it is a prayer that many desperately need to pray.

## **SHRINKING BACK**

I have been looking at a passage in Hebrews 10:35-39 that address the issues raised in the prayer:

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.' But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

I have found that many will say they are living by faith, but that is because they are living so small. Their goals are timid, their fears overwhelming and their vision limiting. They are not doing anything big, so of course it appears that they are living a full life. Instead, they are living woefully below what God has for them. They have shrunk back to their comfort zone but describe it as only a place of respite. In actuality, it is a place of refuge from which they have little intention of venturing out.

I hope you aren't among those whom I describe in the previous paragraph. If you are, however, and you know it, now is the time to do something about it. It's time to set some goals and live by faith once again. With that in mind, think about 2007 and what faith projects you will launch or resume. The beauty of doing this is that you don't need to have any idea how you will do those things; that's where the faith comes in. If you've decided, however, that faith is just too demanding or stressful, then you may be guilty of shrinking back and incurring God's displeasure.

So the choice is clear: have faith and please God, shrink back and displease God. The choice is yours and I do hope you will choose wisely. Have a great week!

## **The Monday Memo 273**

Greetings from Zimbabwe! I arrived safely yesterday afternoon along with my luggage. It's always great when we arrive at the same time. I already had a nice surprise when some friends arranged to take me to a local

production of Handel's The Messiah. It wasn't the rendition I heard two years ago at London's Prince Albert Hall, but I was pleasantly surprised at how well the 50-voice choir did along with a soloist and organist from South Africa. I am glad I went and I commend them for using what they had to bless their community. It was an outstanding performance.

This is my fourth trip to Zimbabwe this year and I was thinking about that on my way over on the plane. One tends to think about a lot of things when one is on a plane for 20 hours flying time from New York to Amsterdam to Johannesburg to Harare. The main reason that I come to Zimbabwe is that God wants me here; it's part of my purpose. And that is what I want to talk to you about this week.

### **GEOGRAPHIC PURPOSE**

I wish some of the good things that happen for me here would happen back home. The simple fact is that they don't. I got an email today from a woman in Angola who is flying to see me in Johannesburg when I am there next week. I have trouble getting people to come across the street to see me in the States, but people here are willing to cross national boundaries to hear what I have to say about purpose.

Why doesn't this happen in the States? If it did, I wouldn't be here, would I? Purpose isn't just about what God wants you to do, but where he wants you to do it. It's what I call geographic purpose or righteousness. It would not be possible for me to be righteous--in right standing with God--in the United States if God wants me in Africa, no matter how many good things I was doing in the States. The same is true for you.

It's not enough to know your purpose. You must also know where it is you can best express that purpose. I have brought many people to Africa with me over the years, and they have all been blessed. I have seen some sing here, for example, and been popular. When they go home, they aren't so popular and sometimes get an attitude about the people back home.

When they ask me about that, this is what I tell them: "You were so well received here when you sang because God was showing you where He wants you to sing. To go home and expect the same reception isn't realistic. The question therefore, isn't why doors won't open for you there. The real question is when are you coming back here?" Not everyone is pleased with my answer.

### **AND MY POINT IS . . .**

You may be thinking, "So are you telling me I have to move to Africa?" I am not. What I am telling you is that you must stop fighting where you are most effective and purposeful. If you sing in prisons and get invitations to come back, for example, stop trying to launch a singing career anyplace except prison, at least for now. If you write and children want to read what you write, abandon the adult market for now and write for children. If you speak and urban poor receive what you have to say, then it's time to focus on the poor.

God is for you in your PurposeQuest. He wants you to fulfill your purpose more than you do; that's why He created you and why you're still here-- you have something to do that only you can do. God will make it obvious although not easy for you to express your purpose.

While I am not saying you must come to Africa, I am not ruling out that possibility, without limiting your focus to Africa. Consider Mother Teresa. She was Albanian and God sent her to India. Would she have been the woman of purpose back home that she was in India? Absolutely not. The same is true for you. I'm sorry, that may not be what you want to hear today.

I am sitting in my guest house as I write, jet lagged and facing a busy three weeks in southern Africa. I am here in faith; God will provide for me in many wonderful and surprising ways. As I write, I have a sense that this is where I need to be without any question. In other words, I have peace. Do you?

I have felt for many years that I am in Africa because others were asked to come and didn't. Do you realize how many anointed servants of God I flew over yesterday on my twenty-hour trip? I think many of those servants at one time or another said, "I'd like to go to Africa one day." Perhaps you are one of them. The difference between them and me is that I came; I'm not sure whether all have come who were invited.

Has God shown you where you can be most effective? Are you scared? Doubting? Worried about how it will all work out? If you are, join the club! Don't let any of those thoughts, however, keep you any longer from embracing your destiny. It's important to not only know what you are to do, but where you are to do it. I know if you open your heart to this truth, God will show you where it is. Have a great week!

Feel free to write your comments to this Memo on the [site](#) where it is posted.

## **The Monday Memo 274**

I am off to Bulawayo (Zimbabwe's second largest city) tomorrow after a busy but successful week of work here in Harare. From there I go to Johannesburg where I will speak at Celebration Church in the morning and Hatfield North in Pretoria in the evening next Sunday. If you're in the area, I hope you can come out.

Last week, I wrote about the need to find out where you are supposed to do what you were created to do. That doesn't mean you have to venture very far away from home to find it, but it may. In this context, I was thinking of William Carey, a man who is called the father of modern missions. William Carey first found out where he was to be and from there found out what he was supposed to do. Let's look at his story.

## **OFF TO INDIA**

William Carey was a shoemaker in England when he sensed God wanted him to go to India to preach the gospel. That doesn't sound so unusual today, but in the eighteenth century it was radical and unheard of. Carey persevered, however, and went to Serampore, India. The rest, as they say, is history.

When Carey got to India and saw the conditions there, this simple shoemaker came to life. He saw what needed to be done and he set about doing it. If you think all Carey did was preach while he was in India, you are wrong. Consider these roles that Carey played once he got to where he was supposed to be (I took these from the book *The Legacy of William Carey: A Model for the Transformation of a Culture* by Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi):

1. Botanist. Carey often lectured on science. He brought flowers to India like the English daisy and introduced systems of gardening. He taught the Indians about nature, that insects weren't souls in bondage as they had been led to believe, but rather living organisms worthy of study and appreciation.
2. Industrialist. Carey introduced the steam engine to India.
3. Economist. He introduced the savings bank and worked to combat the evil of usury, charging high interest rates on loans.
4. Medical Humanitarian. Leprosy was common in India and Carey taught the people how to care for and not reject their lepers.

5. Media Pioneer. Carey built what was the largest printing press in India. His English-speaking journal, Friend of India, was the force that gave birth to the social reform movement in India.

6. Agriculturist. Appalled that so much land was unused while people starved, Carey founded India's Agri-Horticultural Society in 1820.

7. Astronomer. Knowing that the heavenly bodies weren't deities, he taught the Indians the scientific approach to the study of God's creation.

8. Translator and Educator. As would be expected, Carey translated the Bible into Bengali, Sanskrit and numerous other dialects. What may surprise you is that he translated Indian works into English for the world to enjoy.

9. Library Pioneer. Carey started the first lending libraries in India.

The list continues with Carey's roles as forest conservationist, crusader for women's rights, public servant, moral reformer and cultural transformer. Carey didn't do too badly for a shoemaker!

## **GO WHERE YOU WILL BLOSSOM**

Would William Carey have blossomed into the leader and pioneer that he was if he had stayed in England? Probably not. He allowed God to transplant him to India and there he blossomed into a magnificent man of purpose.

There is nothing wrong with making shoes, but Carey would have lived far beneath his potential if he hadn't stepped out of his comfort zone. The same is true for you. You won't know what you are capable of, with God's help, until you try or until you must. Thinking about your purpose won't do it, and putting it off won't get you where you need to be.

I recommend that you consider this week what you do when you are most effective. It may be with children, in prison work, with the mentally challenged or in the ministry. You may now know what you can do, however, but you may sense you know where it is that you will grow and blossom. It may be across the street from where you live now or 5,000 miles away. God determines the ground; you just have to allow Him to plant you so you can put down roots.

You may also want to spend some time this week reading or thinking about William Carey. You have the same potential he had, but only if you find your niche, your place, your ground. You aren't alone in this search

for God is with you. Don't fret, but don't delay any longer. The world is waiting to see what you have, what you can do in the power of God and your purpose. Have a great week!

If you have anything of interest to add about William Carey, or to comment on this Memo, please feel free to write them on the [site](#) where this entry is posted.

## **The Monday Memo 275**

I am off today for Zambia, but not before having had a great time here in Johannesburg. Last night I spoke at Hatfield Christian Church North. Of course, I took the opportunity to talk about purpose and, judging by the response after the service, I think it went very well. Last Saturday I did a seminar for Glen McQuirk, author of the popular Map 4 Life, and some of his Purpose Club members. That also went well. I am amazed that I have made my purpose presentation on more than 1,000 occasions in 25 countries and it's still as relevant and fresh as when I first began in 1991.

Why? I think because God is a God of purpose. He wants you to know His will for you cannot be accountable to do something of which you aren't aware. What's more, God wants you to fulfill your purpose more than you do--that's why you're still here. I have the privilege talking about something that is close to God's heart and important to God's people. That combination has made the last 15 years of purpose work most enjoyable.

I was reminded last night as I spoke that most people don't know their purpose for two reasons. First, they have not asked and kept on asking. Second, they don't recognize it even when it's right in front of them. It's not that they lack intelligence; it's just that they have been conditioned to think a certain way and that thinking often works against knowing purpose. Let's look at the second reason for a moment.

I have found that most people are looking for something that is complex and deep. Most purpose statements aren't like that at all. On Saturday, we took time in the seminar to look at one woman's purpose. She didn't see how she could find one purpose statement from the many activities that she enjoyed. I put all the activities on the board and then she made a simple statement that held the key to why she did everything on that board--she cared deeply to see people "get better."

I don't know if that is her exact purpose statement, for I never assign or define purpose for anyone. That is between them and God. I strongly

urged her, however, to pray about that simple statement--"I help people get better." That's simple but profound.

Then I met with a man yesterday at lunch who told me he didn't know his purpose. He went on to tell me that he knew about what he was passionate: "I like to bring people to Jesus." I listened and then said, "I think your purpose is to bring people to Jesus." He was surprised. We went on to talk about how he does that in many ways, and I left him with something to think about. It was something he already knew, however, but he just couldn't see it for what it is.

The same may be true for you. Your purpose may be right there and you're walking all around it, trying to give it a name other than what it is. If so, don't make it complicated. Walk in the light that you have today and go with it. If you love, then love is your purpose. If you pray, then consider prayer. If you love to laugh, then why not adopt joy as your purpose?

I feel like I am entering a new phase of purpose teaching. My most recent seminars and one-on-one sessions have been unusually clear and helpful. If you, your family or your organization would benefit from such clarity, then write me and let's schedule some time together in the coming year. You've read and listened to the purpose message. Why not let 2007 be the year of purpose for you and yours as you work not necessarily to find your purpose, but to renew your way of thinking so you can recognize the purpose that is probably already there. If I can help you with that glorious and important quest, please let me know. In the meantime, have a great week!