

## **The Monday Memo 281: Who You Aren't.**

Did you ever stop doing something you once did or even quit a job? Did you feel like doing either of those things but did not for whatever reason? If you can answer yes, then you may have a clue as to what your purpose is based on what it isn't. Confused? Read on and see if I can bring some clarity.

### **WHO YOU ARE NOT.**

I recently conducted a seminar and met a woman whom I described in Monday Memo 275. This woman told me that she had quit her job as a pharmacist because she didn't see anyone get better. She found out that she wasn't cut out for the pharmacy, not because she could not do the work, but because she wanted desperately to see people improve and be healed. She found out who she wasn't and that propelled her on a PurposeQuest to find out who she was.

I was a pastor for four years and I was miserable. It's a bad sign if you're a pastor and you don't like Sundays. It's like being a surgeon and not liking to operate on people! I tried to like it and even went back to school to earn an advanced degree in pastoral ministries. It didn't help. I was still miserable. So part of my PurposeQuest was facing who I was not.

### **WHO YOU ARE.**

Yet my eventual departure from the pastorate did not mean I left church work. Today I do more work in churches than I ever could or would have done as a Sunday-morning pastor. What didn't I like about being a pastor? I didn't like being in one place all the time. Facing that fact enabled me to embrace my love for travel and speaking more than once a week. It led to the eventual formation of my company and the rest, as they say, is history.

In other words, facing who I was not enabled me to accept who I am.

When I asked the woman I mentioned above why she left the pharmacy business, she said she never saw anyone get better. That led us to a discussion of whether or not her purpose was to see others improve. I think you can see how facing who we were not helped both of us see who we are.

So who are you? Perhaps more important this week, who aren't you? Why are you unhappy in your current position? Why have you left other jobs

you've had? If you can see who you aren't, it may provide the clues I promised as to who you are.

Spend some time this week, with your journal close by, thinking about the questions I just posed. Be honest and see if there is an answer to what you haven't been able to achieve but would like to. Be careful, though, for once you get some answers, you will be responsible for what you know. It could very well thrust you into a whole new world of purpose and productivity. That is where I live now and I wouldn't trade it for anything else. Care to join me? I hope you do.

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

## **The Monday Memo 282: Enjoy The Ride!**

It was 2001 and I had just started PurposeQuest International a few months earlier. I was in Zimbabwe and had a full week of training sessions ahead of me. I was teaching five new seminars to people I didn't know. What's more, they weren't "church" people, so I had to change all my outlines to fit that audience.

I was in a small guest house in Zimbabwe, where I had two beds, a small desk and a bathroom, so I was cramped for space. It was Sunday night and my first session was the next day. I still had to change my PowerPoint slides to match my handouts, I didn't know what I was going to wear, I had forgotten something in the United States that I needed and I was nervous about the new people I would be training, people with whom I wasn't sure I could relate.

In a word, I was uptight!

### **THE QUESTION**

Then out of nowhere, a question occurred to me. I'm not sure if I thought of it, or if the Lord spoke it to me. You decide. But the question, or should I say the answer to that question, changed my life and work from that point forward.

What was the question?

It was, "I thought this was what you wanted to do?"

When it came to me, I immediately burst into laughter! This was what I wanted to do. I was 50 years of age and had prepared my whole adult

life to stand before people and teach them about purpose, productivity, faith, time and organization. I had a chance before me to do just that for five whole days, and I was ruining it by my attitude. I was allowing myself to get overwhelmed by the details, and fear and anger were getting the best of me.

I determined then and there to enjoy what I was doing every day and in every way. I made a decision that Sunday night not to let the details of my work, the logistics, the response of the people or the mistakes I may made to take away from the journey.

## **THE ANSWER**

I have made good on my decision I made that Sunday night. I have enjoyed my work since then. What's more, I am enjoying it more now than I did then. It's getting better and better. I am more experience, have more confidence, trust the Lord more effectively, and know more than I did back in 2001. God is opening more doors and I get emails with feedback to let me know that I am making a difference in people's lives.

Why do I write this now? First of all, I am facing a busy schedule from now until March 11, when I return from my visits to Zimbabwe, England and Kenya. Before I depart on February 7, I have visits to Philadelphia, New York and Nashville. There is still the temptation to get uptight, and I don't want to do that. I know there will be challenges during that period, but I have decided again to enjoy it all.

Second, I am wondering whether you are enjoying what you are doing? Are you allowing the nagging problems of work to take away your joy? If so, then you can make a decision today to stop that from happening. Do what I did. I determined I was going to enjoy all of what I do--the good, the bad and the ugly. When I set my heart to do that, I found that it all became good, even what I would have previously considered the bad and ugly.

You only get one chance at this life, so why not decide to enjoy it? When you do, you actually help create the joy that God wants you to have. So stop fretting and fuming over things that challenge or bother you. Join me as a member of what I call the joy club and together let's fuel our PurposeQuest with the decision to enjoy the journey. Have a great week!

Feel free to post your comments to this Memo on the [site](#) where it is located. You can also go to the same site to read the other Monday Memos from 2006 (Memos prior to 240 can be found on my website). Don't forget my personal PurposeQuest website, which has loads of

material that will help you find your purpose and be productive. You can also sign up for my weekly Bible studies where we have started a study of Mark's gospel this year. Finally, please remember PurposeQuest and the Stankos in your missions giving.

## **The Monday Memo 283: Climb Your Mountain**

Did you ever feel like you were facing insurmountable odds as you work to fulfill your purpose? Do you feel like you are facing an uphill climb to do God's will? If so, you are not alone. Not only are there plenty of people today who feel what you feel, but there were some in the past who did as well.

One such person was Jonathan, Saul's son and David's friend. While everyone around him felt stifled by their obstacles and opposition, Jonathan decided to do something about it. His story is found in 1 Samuel 13:20–14:23. You may want to read those verses again before you proceed with the rest of this Memo.

### **TWO CLIFFS WITH NAMES**

It is interesting that while Saul's army was pretending to fight, Jonathan decided to engage the enemy. The army daily went through the motions of fighting, yet they never did anything. That reminds me of the Church today. We often go through maneuvers, but we don't help people attack their real enemies of fear, laziness and lack of faith.

Once Jonathan decided to fight the Philistines, he faced formidable odds. There were only two of them (Jonathan and his armor bearer) against a whole Philistine army. They only had one sword between them, and they had to scale two large cliffs with names. A cliff has to be significant to have a name and both of these cliffs had them, so they must have been foreboding.

When Jonathan decided to climb up, the Lord didn't carry Him in the "shadow of his wings." Jonathan had to climb up using his hands and feet. Maybe he got dirt under his fingernails. His armor bearer probably got a mouthful of dirt as he climbed up behind Jonathan.

They made it to the top of the cliffs, however, and the Philistines were surprised to see them. They were so surprised that Jonathan and his sidekick had a serious competitive advantage, and that advantage was courage.

What can you learn from this story of courageous action in the face of difficulty?

## **START CLIMBING!**

Jonathan came to the right conclusion as he considered whether or not to climb his mountain. He voiced it when he said, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6).

Jonathan didn't let his circumstances prevent him from taking action. He was looking for some sign, any sign to attack rather than any sign why he should not attack. Is your attitude the same as Jonathan's? Are you looking for any sign to indicate that you should take action? Or are you waiting for conditions to be just right before you take your first steps?

There is only one way to get on top of your situation and that is to climb up there from where you are. You can't wish your cliffs away or rebuke them. Nor can you conclude that mountains in your way are not God's will. Usually, they are. Climbing them will only make your purpose and productivity more special and memorable.

So where can you apply the lessons of Jonathan and his armor bearer this week? What cliffs are you facing? When will you start climbing? What is at the top that is worth the climb? Jonathan succeeded one step at a time and God helped him, even though He was greatly outnumbered. Rest assured that God will help you in the same way, but you must first start climbing. Don't put it off another day. It's time to move on up to the high place that God has for you. Have a great week!

## **The Monday Memo 284: You Want Answers!**

Last week, we looked at the story of Jonathan and his armour bearer and examined how they had to climb two cliffs to get to their desired goal. You have obstacles and cliffs to climb as well, and I urged you last week to start climbing.

There is one more question, however, that may be keeping your feet on the ground instead of on your cliffs heading upward. What is that question? I'm glad you asked! The question is: How do I know I am climbing the right cliff heading to the right destination, the right path for the correct goal?

The answer is that you don't know. For the explanation, read on.

## **PERHAPS**

We all want answers and assurance before we set out that we are on the right track. If that's what you want, you are not alone. This desire, however, can actually hinder more than help as you try to pursue the goals and aspirations you have.

You need to see what Jonathan said to understand what I mean:

Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6 emphasis added).

The key word that Jonathan uttered is perhaps. Jonathan knew that there were no guarantees in what he was about to do. He had faith, but was his faith accurate? There was only one way to find out, and that was to start climbing. He knew God could deliver through just two of them, he just didn't know if God would deliver through the two of them.

There are some who see doubt as the enemy of faith; I rather see it as a part of the faith process. If you knew for sure, it wouldn't require faith, now would it?

But what's to keep you from climbing wrong cliffs on a regular basis?

## **WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART?**

The answer is found in what the armour bearer said to Jonathan when he heard of Jonathan's plan. He said:

"Do all that you have in mind," his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul" (1 Samuel 14:7).

Why can't you often trust what's in your mind and heart? You can because of how the Amplified Bible interprets Proverbs 16:4:

Roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and] so shall your plans be established and succeed (emphasis added).

So, do you have any good ideas? Is there something that's been in your heart to do for a while? If so, then start climbing. Perhaps the Lord will help you. What if He doesn't? Try again, this time climbing a different

cliff. The point is that you want answers before you go and the Lord will provide answers as you go.

I urge you again this week to follow in the footsteps of Jonathan and his aide. Get moving and stop worrying about the results. God is with you, even if you have to retrace some of your steps. As you go, you will get a better view from a higher vantage point and it will only help to make your journey, perhaps even your PurposeQuest, more scenic and memorable. Have a great week!

### **The Monday Memo 285: What Are You Wearing Right Now?**

It's hard to walk in someone else's expectations, especially when those expectations don't relate to your purpose. You can try to please society, your family, and even your own expectations of what you think you should be or do, but eventually you will fail. It will deplete your energy and creativity and you will be miserable. So what's the answer?

It's simple; just don't do it.

You must resist every attempt when someone, well-meaning or otherwise, tries to get you to fulfill their vision for your life. You must learn to have and pursue your own vision, for it is the only road to happiness and success.

That's what David did before he was king and it served him well. You may want to read the story I am referring to in 1 Samuel 17 before we proceed.

#### **TRY THIS ON.**

The story of David and Goliath is known in many cultures and lands. Every day, Goliath and the armies of Israel would line up across from one another and nothing would happen. One day, David came to check up on his brothers and heard Goliath taunting the armies of Israel. That made him angry and he wondered why no one was doing anything about it.

When he heard that there was a reward for anyone who would kill Goliath, David immediately volunteered to do the deed.

When David told King Saul that he [David] would be the one to kill Goliath, Saul laughed, dismissing him as too young and inexperienced. David would not relent, so Saul eventually gave in and sanctioned the encounter. Before he let David go, however, he gave David his personal armor to wear:

Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine (1 Samuel 17:38–40).

David could not function in Saul's armor because Saul was a head taller than all his peers (see 1 Samuel 9:2). Instead David took off the armor and took up what he felt most comfortable with--a slingshot and some stones.

### **WHAT ARE YOU WEARING RIGHT NOW?**

Do you see the lesson here? Saul had expectations that David could only fight dressed in body armor, so Saul gave him his. Others have tried to give you what fits them and you have tried to walk in it. It's not possible, however, for you to be a man or woman of purpose and walk in what someone else gives you. You must find your own joy, creativity and passion.

What's more, you can't explain it to anyone so they can understand. You don't even understand it! You just know what your heart is telling you and that is what you pursue, whether it makes perfect sense or not. Remember what the wisdom writer told us:

Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy (Proverbs 14:10 emphasis added).

You know how much you love music, art, travel, writing, business, preaching, or medicine. No one knows better than you what is in your heart, no matter how much they love you or well-intentioned they are. Only you are equipped to hear and follow your heart. Are you up to the task?

It's time this week to be honest. Are you trying to fulfill someone else's expectations for you? Have you put on someone else's armor? If so, take it off immediately! Don't face your Goliaths this week in someone else's image for you. Face them in your own; that is good enough to get the job done. You will be lighter, nimbler and happier than you have been in a while, and it will be a significant step to identify and embrace your purpose. As you do, I know you will have a great week!