

## **Monday Memo 371: A Tribute to Mother Stanko**

I wrote last week about a time to live and a time to die. For Mother Stanko, yesterday was her time to die. At 3:40 PM, my mother went to be with the Lord and the most important part is that I was there to help her make her transition. I watched her take her last breath, told her I loved her as she did and then it was over. The nurse who came to confirm her death said that she had a look of peace and that many of her "patients" look twisted and tormented when they pass. Not Mother Stanko.

### **NO REGRETS**

In a blog post a few weeks ago, I said that I had no regrets where my mother was concerned. Since my dad passed away 12 years ago, I called her almost every day I was in the country, visited her every Sunday, took her to see her family and on special trips and always included her in family celebrations. My sister and I had a special 90th birthday party for her two years ago when family and friends got together to honor her life. When I returned from a trip overseas, I would first call my wife and then my mother and would say, "God bless America!" She would always say, "Amen!" and then assure me that she had been praying for me while I was gone.

My mother was the most organized person I ever knew. She would not only do spring cleaning in her house every year, she would start on the same day every year. She never, ever forgot a birthday or special occasion and was always so early for appointments that I would always bring plenty of work with me while we waited for her appointment time to arrive.

My mother loved to eat out every now and then, but only in a restaurant that met her standards for cleanliness. If the glass in the front door of the restaurant had fingerprints, they were disqualified from future consideration. My mother expected public places to be as immaculate as her house was and would not accept any excuse for sloppiness or lack of attention to detail.

### **GOD ORDERS OUR STEPS**

God had to order a lot of steps for me to be present yesterday for her passing. And that is perhaps the most important element in time management, something we have discussed the last few weeks. I always count on God's help to see what I can't see and to order what I can't understand. I try to exercise faith when I manage my time and I feel like yesterday I received a huge gift from the Lord by being present for my mother's passing. I could not have organized that; only He could and He did. If I shed any tears, they are tears of joy that I was in the right place at the right time to do the right thing. When talking about time or event management, it doesn't get any better than that.

God helped me be there and I am learning to trust Him for time -- that if I can't do something, it's because He didn't want me to do this or that thing. I could have been in Africa this week, but all the doors closed for me to be there and I rested in that. My

mother could have died on someone else's "shift." Instead, God worked it all out so she would go to be with Him on mine. Thank You, Lord.

So farewell, Mother Stanko. So much of what I write and speak about, you taught me. You through me have blessed many people around the world. I have often quoted your words of wisdom and will continue to reference your life as a guiding light for my decisions and work. Until we meet again, I wish you joy in God's presence and I promise to carry on the family traditions and values that were so important to you, including always being on time. Amen!

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## **Monday Memo 372: Just a Minute**

I woke up at 3:39 AM this morning, wide awake and staring at the ceiling. I was thinking of all the things I still needed to get done to catch up from last week. I don't think I was anxious, but my mind was definitely going a mile a minute. Then I remembered a simple principle that I teach where time management is concerned and it helped me greatly. What is that concept?

It is that I must trust the Lord for time, just like I do for money, health, business and ministry opportunities and for creativity. Time is no different than anything else. I got out of bed and dove into my day and, as the day ends, I can say that God rewarded my faith. I got a lot accomplished.

### **A HELPFUL VERSE**

When I conduct time management seminars in churches, I show the people a verse with which I am sure you are familiar. It is 2 Peter 3:8, which states: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."

A few years ago, I began to play with the math in that verse. I asked myself, if a day is like a thousand years, what would an hour be like. So I divided it all out and found that an hour would be the equivalent of about 42 years. Then I wondered what a minute would equate to. When I divided it all out, I found that a minute would be about nine months. So one day is like a 1,000 years, one hour like 42 years and one minute the same as nine months according to that verse. So what is so special about all that?

Well, if the Lord tells you that He will be there to help you in "just a minute," you realize that what He means by a minute and what you mean can be two entirely different concepts. If you ever had a baby or know someone who did and that woman carried the baby nine months, the Lord would say, "Oh, she was pregnant for just a minute!"

### **JUST A MINUTE**

So what does that have to do with the issue of time or event management? I think it has great relevance. How often do you put off something you want to do because you think and maybe even say, "I don't have time." You may think that what you want to do could take as long as nine months, so you don't even start.

Yet 2 Peter 3:8 also states that a thousand years can be like a day. If we reverse the math, we see that 1,000 years could be like a day, 42 years like an hour and nine months could be like just a minute. Something you thought would take long to do, if you have faith, could take much less time.

So I activated my faith this morning and waded into the pile of papers on my desk. By 8:30 AM, what I thought was two days work was all done! What's more, I went on to have a great day, with energy enough to take a long walk with my wife before dinner. Now I am writing this Memo, which as you know is one day late. (Hey, I got tired last night and went to bed early.)

What have you been putting off for a long time because you are convinced you don't have the time? Can you also activate your faith this week to take the first step? Who knows, you may find all kinds of energy and supernatural help that will enable you to take a complicated task and make it simple, completing it in much less time than you expected. Experiment with having faith for time this week and watch the impossible become possible. As you do, I know that you will have a great week!

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## **Monday Memo 373: If Only God Would Speak To Me**

Have you ever said, "If only I knew that God wanted me to do this or that," or "If only God would speak to me, then I would do it!"? While it sounds logical and spiritual, it isn't necessarily true, as we will see in this Memo. Who do you think I will pick from the Bible as a character to prove this point? If you guessed Gideon, you guessed correctly.

### **IT CAN'T BE ME!**

In Judges 6, we see that the angel of the Lord came to give Gideon his assignment of liberating the Jews from the Midianites. Yet Gideon engaged the angel in conversation, explaining why he (Gideon) could not be the one. I'm sure you have never done this, but Gideon felt that circumstances were too awful and he was too insignificant to do what God was sending him to do.

Perhaps you have calmly explained to God and others the reasons why you are not the one to accomplish some great purpose. You have pointed out that you are too young, too old, the wrong gender, undereducated and inexperienced. Even though you too may have had an angel of the Lord visit you, you have dismissed the call as irrelevant, saying something similar to what Gideon said: "But Lord." Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family" (Judges

6:15). So it isn't always the case that if God were to speak to you, you would know and automatically do His will and purpose.

## **TWO SECRETS**

God shared with Gideon two secrets to success and they worked for Gideon and they will work for you. The first secret is found in Judges 6:14: "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" Gideon felt like he needed more strength if he was to go; the Lord told him to go in the strength that he had and it would be enough.

You can put a whole slew of words in that verse and they would all be secrets of godly and purposeful success. "Go in the time you have; go in the wisdom you have; go in the knowledge you have; go with the gifts you have; go in the faith you have; go in the money you have." You won't get any more until you need it, so it's best to start right where you are today and obey God with what you have now.

The second secret is in verse 16: "The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." When God speaks to you to do something, you become partners with God. You and God always comprise an insurmountable majority, no matter how improbable your success may seem to you at the start.

So there you have it. It may not be enough for God to speak to you, for your bias against yourself and your abilities may try to overrule God. If you are going to go and do anything, you must go in the strength you have today, but you can go in the confidence that God goes with you. If you can somehow apply these three points to your life and purpose this week, I know you will have a great week. I know I intend to do just that.

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## **Monday Memo 374: Portable Comfort Zones**

How many times have you heard someone say that you need to get out of or expand your comfort zone? Have you ever said it to yourself? Yet I am not sure that a comfort zone is really a comfort zone. I think it may be a fear zone, for there a whole lot of people I have talked to who are anything but comfortable in their supposed comfort zone. If you would like to explore the possibility that your comfort zone isn't what you think it is, then I invite you to read on.

### **FEAR ZONE**

Let's consider the apostles for a moment, shall we? These men were with Jesus until He left earth, when His last instructions were for them to go to the ends of the earth. The apostles, whose name in Greek means "sent forth," were afraid to venture out of Jerusalem because they did not like to be around Gentiles. Even though God had spoken

to them (see last week's Memo), they were stuck in a zone, but it was anything but comfortable for them.

Their comfort zone was really a fear zone. They were afraid of missing the Lord, of what other Jews would say and think, of doing the wrong thing, of touching the unclean, of venturing out into new things and contact with people who didn't think and act like they did. While it appeared that they were in their comfort zone, they were not. How could they be comfortable with so much fear and trepidation?

It wasn't until they got free from their fear and hang-ups that they could be comfortable with who and where they were and then embrace what they needed to do and be. I would say that the first step in venturing out of one's comfort zone is to be truly at comfort and ease with your present reality -- with who you are and what God has purposed for you to do.

### **PORTABLE COMFORT ZONES**

I found this true in my own life. Until I discovered who I was and stopped pretending to be who I wasn't, I could not venture out of my little world. I only wanted to be with people like me because I was afraid to confront people who thought and acted differently than I. I could not venture out of my comfort zone because I didn't have a comfort zone. I only had a fortress that was built to keep me in and others out. I also didn't want to try new things or venture into the unknown. That's all changed today. I know who I am and therefore I am free to change and make mistakes trying.

So are you in a comfort zone or a fear zone that you are trying to disguise as comfortable? Are you afraid or are you so comfortable with who you are and what God has given you to do that you can experiment and learn new things? Don't worry too much about getting out of your comfort zone until you find where it truly is.

When you do that, you will have the courage and self understanding that will enable you to actually carry our comfort zone into the new and uncomfortable. You will have portable and expandable comfort zones that go where you go, because your comfort zone isn't external but internal. When you achieve that, you will learn, grow and be the person of purpose that God always intended you to be. Have a great week!

### **Monday Memo 375: Hard Hearts, Bread Smarts**

If you are doing to fulfill your purpose, you are going to need what I call "bread smarts" at some time (not to be confused with street smarts). You will have to learn to trust the Lord for bread and confront what can be a hard heart in the process. Are you ready to learn what it takes to have bread smarts? If so, then read on.

### **HARD HEARTS**

At one point, the crowd had been with Jesus for quite a while and the disciples came with this suggestion:

"This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food" (Matthew 14:15).

This made perfect sense, at least from the point of view of the disciples. There were a lot of people and there was no way they could feed them all. Yet those disciples had the same problem that modern disciples have, including you and me. Their hearts were hard. No, they weren't in gross disobedience. They just could not see the possibility before them because they had small thinking that emanated from a hard heart. So Jesus replied,

"They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat" (Matthew 14:16).

This suggestion blew their minds, which is just what Jesus wanted to do. He introduced a new thought but it was so outside the realm of their thinking that they made an immediate assessment and came back with an inventory of their current reality and ability:

"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered (Matthew 14:17).

## **BREAD SMARTS**

This lesson has important implications as you pursue purpose. Is it possible that you can't clarify your purpose because you are concerned about bread? Is it possible that God is speaking to you, but you are coming to the wrong conclusion because you are worried about how He will provide for you while you fulfill your purpose? Since we launched PurposeQuest in 2000, God has provided for my wife and me in miraculous ways, often in the very hour of our need. Yet that hasn't stopped me from fretting and often misunderstanding what God wanted me to do because I was overly concerned about whether or not His abundance would show up when I needed it.

I almost missed going to Afghanistan along the way because I was focusing on bread while God was speaking to me about purpose. As I've talked to many people about purpose, they immediately turned the discussion to finances. Yet many of them have testimonies of God's provision over the years. Jesus identified this inability to trust God in spite of ample evidence to the contrary as hardness of heart (see Mark 8:14-21). Is your heart hard or soft where the issue of God's abundance and provision for you, your family, business or ministry is concerned?

As you seek your purpose or seek to fulfill it, may I leave you with three lessons that are part of what I call "bread smarts." They are:

- 1) God will take care of you. If God can feed thousands from five loaves and a few fish, He can provide for you without any trouble.
- 2) God won't provide what you need before you need it. God does this because He is so confident in His ability to provide for you. You need to share His confidence.

3) Your thinking is often the problem. God gave the disciples more than a miracle. He gave them a new way of thinking when they confronted what seemed like an insurmountable problem. God may want to do the same for you; don't miss the lesson.

This week you may need to deal with a hard heart or pick up some bread smarts. Whichever it is, both will help you as you pursue your PurposeQuest. I pray the truth of God's abundance will touch you this week, spurring you to greater heights and depths as a person of purpose. Have a great week!

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