

[406: I Hope You Dance](#)

About eight years ago, a friend gave me a CD with a song on it when I was going through a tough transition. I was disillusioned, scared and in turmoil. The song was Lee Ann Womack's song, *I Hope You Dance*. I have written about it before, but this week I want to use it as we wrap up my series on PurposeParents. What does this song have to do with PurposeParenting? Ah, for the answer you know you will have to read on.

A SIMPLE MESSAGE

The message in *I Hope You Dance* is basically be yourself and don't give up when life happens, as it does to everyone. If every parent can impart that message to his or her children, along with values that stress the importance of service, integrity and love, their job as a PurposeParent will be a success.

I am not going to include the words to this song in this Memo, but I have attached Monday Memo 242 below, which included the words when I last wrote about the song. I am doing this because I would rather you watch Lee Ann's rendition of the song, sung to her children, at this [link](#). It would be great to watch this with your children and discuss the implications for purpose, life, career and God's will. It may even have some relevance not just for PurposeChildren, but PurposeParents as well.

That's it for this week. Enjoy the song and get ready as we embark on a series focusing on Daniel starting next week. Have a great week, and Happy Fourth of July to my American readers.

[407: You Are What You Eat](#)

As promised last week, we are starting a new series that will focus on Daniel in the Old Testament. I think I have enough material for an eight or nine week series, but let's see how it goes as we move through the material.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

In most American high schools, graduating seniors elect one of their classmates whom they deem most likely headed to future success. Daniel didn't go to high school, but if he had, he would have been elected. How do I know this? Let's consider the kind of young people that King Nebuchadnezzar was looking for to serve in his kingdom: [“Young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace” \(Daniel 1:4\).](#)

Since Daniel was chosen, we know that he qualified based on the listed criteria—smart and good-looking. Daniel had a bright future in his homeland of Judah, but God had other plans. Before he knew it, this young teenager was whisked off to Babylon, selected for royal duty and given a three-year crash course in Babylonian culture.

What was involved in this crash course? Daniel was sent to language school. Then he was given a new name – Belsheshezzar—which contained the name of one of the main Babylonian gods, Bel. He was placed under the care of the chief of the eunuchs. Now I ask you: Why would Daniel be under this man unless they had made Daniel a eunuch himself? Can you imagine? Here was this bright young man, with his whole future ahead of him. Suddenly he's living in a foreign land, called by the name of a foreign god, learning a strange culture, and facing a future that didn't include a wife and family!

Yet Daniel distinguished himself throughout his Babylonian career. He was a man of skill and efficiency and also penned a book in the Bible that carries his name. What enabled this man to be so successful?

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT.

Daniel was a man of purpose, but he was also a man of values. When he first arrived in Babylon to become a royal official, he was assigned royal rations to eat. Daniel, however, refused: **“But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way” (Daniel 1:8)**. If I am a teenager, having gone through all that Daniel had been through, the last thing I would have been concerned with was eating the local food. Daniel knew the dietary laws of a Jew, however, and was determined to maintain a kosher diet even in Babylon. As a young man, Daniel knew what was important to him and he was determined to follow those values no matter what.

The most impressive thing to me is that Daniel had such well-defined values at an early age. The second most impressive thing is that he was committed to follow them, even in a foreign land after his life had been turned upside down. Have you defined your values? If so, do you think you could follow them if you went through what Daniel went through? I'm not sure that I could.

So your assignment this week is to do some work to define your values. If they worked for Daniel, they will work for you. I have an article on my [website](#) outlining how to do this entitled “How to Define Your Governing Values.” Can you spend 60 minutes this week giving thought and expression to what is important to you? I certainly hope you can, for values are a critical part of your PurposeQuest. As you work on yours, I will also review mine this week to see if they need adjusted and, more importantly, to determine if I'm living them! If I can help you, let me know. Otherwise have a great week! I know I will.

408: The Babylon Model

I hear many people bemoaning the current state of the world. They are convinced that we are close to the end and, who knows they may be correct. Yet I happen to think that God is up to something different, something that most don't recognize. It is what I call the Babylon model. What is that, you may inquire? Ah, I will be glad to answer but it will require that you read on.

BABYLON THEN

Daniel was taken from the comforts of Judea to the discomfort of Babylon. There was nothing about Babylon that reminded Daniel of what he knew in his youthful past. He had to learn a new language, adapt to a new culture, learn a new currency, get accustomed to a new name and a society where everything was a god. This young man who served one God had to learn how to live, work and prosper in a land where everything and everyone was a god. I would expect that Daniel had culture shock.

Yet God brought Daniel to Babylon. You may say that it was God's handpicked place for Daniel to learn, grow and prosper. Daniel had no time to yearn and mourn for the "good old days" back in Jerusalem. He had too much work to do to make it in Babylon. And make it he did.

When you think of it, Daniel was one of God's first missionaries. God sent Daniel to Babylon and immersed him in a place where Daniel's voice and God were only one among many competing for the allegiance of men. Yet Daniel did it and soon was at the top of the world in his new home.

BABYLON NOW

So what does that have to do with now? We live in a modern Babylon. Everyone is a god and consequently no one is. Every man does what is right in his own eyes and, like Nebuchadnezzar, we build monuments to heroes who are not heroes at all. Yet God is raising up missionaries to this new Babylon but only those who embrace it, who embrace this Babylon model, will prosper and succeed. Those who build spiritual

fortresses to preserve the past will miss the fact that this Babylon model is God's idea. He has made His people one voice among many and promises them to succeed and prosper but only if they don't oppose what He is doing.

Daniel did not just exist in Babylon, he prospered there. He did not oppose the soothsayers and necromancers, but rather became their supervisor as chief of the so-called wise men of Babylon. Daniel thrived in the Babylon model and you will, too. First, however, you have to let go of the past and learn to express your purpose in this new day where God's ways have to compete with many other ways that claim to be superior. Wherever you are in your PurposeQuest in Babylon, I pray you will have a great week!

[409: Purpose Isn't Enough](#)

I find myself meeting with two or three people every week to talk about life purpose. I am always thrilled when I see the concept of purpose break through in someone's thinking. Furthermore, I have met with about 2,500 people one-on-one in the last eight years to talk about purpose and it never gets old or dull.

Two weeks ago we started a series on the prophet Daniel, so you may want to go back and read those entries if you have not already. Daniel was a success both as a prophet as an administrator in Babylon not only because of his giftedness and anointed, but also because he was faithful.

[They could find no corruption in him \[Daniel\], because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent \(Daniel 6:4\).](#)

Daniel had skill but he also had integrity and both go hand in hand if you are going to fulfill your God-given purpose.

A BIG MISTAKE

Yet for all my emphasis and love of purpose, I find that many people make a crucial mistake in life, work and ministry. They believe the power of purpose or an idea is enough to insure success. If you are serving God, however, you cannot overlook faithfulness, sowing, service and heart attitude as important means through which you will succeed in your purpose.

There is one passage that Luke 16:10-12 that is critical to your life and ministry success:

["Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"](#)

Here are some things to think about in regards to this passage:

- 1. Are you faithful in little things?** This can include things like punctuality, follow-through on promises and all the other "little things" that can easily be overlooked. As "small" as they are, Jesus said they were important, because if you are dishonest with those little things, you will be the same with the more important things.
- 2. Are you faithful with money?** This would include giving something to the Lord's work when you have the chance, paying your bills on time, paying back money you borrow from others, and being free from greed and theft.

3. **Can you handle someone else's property as your own?** This includes being faithful with a business, church or opportunity that belongs to another. If you borrow something, you return it in better shape than you received it.

A PARTNERSHIP

Yes, knowing your life purpose is critical, but so are integrity and stewardship. God is watching you and He does not bless and promote solely on the basis of potential or a good idea. God looks at the heart and He promotes anyone whose heart belongs to Him, which means those who will work and act like Jesus. You need purpose but it needs to partner with faithfulness if God is going to use you.

Maybe one day we will meet to talk about purpose. I hope so. Don't be fooled, however, into thinking that purpose will guarantee your success. It's an important step in the process, but you cannot ignore Jesus' words in Luke 16 and expect to get very far in business or ministry. God is watching and you had better make sure that your character matches the size of your purpose vision. Where God is concerned, purpose just isn't enough.

[410: Smelling Like a Rose](#)

I have been on many safaris in Africa and it is always special to see a lion, male or female. In South Africa once, I was put into a cage with five or six lion cubs, and they were afraid of me. Truth be told, I was a little afraid of them, too. I picked them up and tried to hold them as they clawed and squirmed their way back to the ground. It was a memorable experience. I remember smelling their breath and wondering what they would smell like when they were older.

We have been studying Daniel the last few weeks and he is a fascinating study in purpose. Daniel was taken from his home, sent to Babylon, promoted in Babylon, demoted in Babylon and then promoted again. As we read last week:

Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God" (Daniel 6:3-5).

This set the stage for one of Daniel's most famous trials when he was thrown to the lions. He spent the night so close to those lions that he also could smell their breath and they his. Yet even though Daniel spent the night with those lions, he came out smelling like a rose.

THE KING

As it goes on in Daniel 6, those against Daniel had the king pass a law that outlawed any prayer to anyone except the king for a period of time. Of course, Daniel did not honor this law, but kept right on praying as was his custom. What's more, he did not hide the fact that he prayed, but rather did it publicly and openly.

When the king was confronted with this fact, he had no choice but to follow through with the punishment he had set. Daniel had to be thrown to the lions.

So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep (Daniel 6:16-18).

Daniel was so faithful and valuable an employee that the king could not eat or sleep and actually prayed to Daniel's God for Daniel's protection. When is the last time your pagan boss lost any sleep over your well-being? When has someone you have served prayed for your safety and protection? Such was Daniel's value that his rivals hated him but the king loved and honored him.

THE MORNING AFTER

After a sleepless night, the king ran to Daniel's den:

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God (Daniel 6:19-23).

I want to be like Daniel when I grow up! I want to pass every test like he did! I want to serve the king and be found innocent when charged with corruption! It is never a surprise or coincidence when someone like Daniel succeeds and your success won't be a surprise either. If you know your purpose, serve faithfully and maintain your integrity, there isn't a king or lion in this world who can stop God from promoting you. If you are in your own lions' den as you read this, don't panic. God will protect and rescue you and, when He does, you will be even more effective than you were before. Have a great week as you serve God and man with excellence and integrity and come out smelling like a rose no matter how severely you are tested!