

[461: It Takes Heart](#)

Two years ago, I developed a purpose assessment tool and put it on the home page of my website. Since then, about 1,300 people have taken the assessment. The tool has 20 statements and those who take it respond to those 20 statements in one of five ways. Then each person that finishes gets a score from me as to where I believe they are in their PurposeQuest. I thought it may be interesting to analyze the results.

THE TALLIES, PLEASE.

When each person gets their score, I place them in five categories: Platinum, which is the highest, followed by Gold, Silver, Copper and Bronze, which is the lowest. Here is the percentage breakdown for those who got scores:

1. Platinum -- 2%
2. Gold -- 14%
3. Silver -- 27%
4. Copper -- 32%
5. Bronze -- 23%

So 85% of those who took the assessment fell into the lowest three categories of the assessment. Along with each score, I also provided recommendations of what that person can do to move up to the next level of purpose awareness. I have no idea how many followed up with my recommendations, but I know few enlisted me along the way as a purpose coach.

I decided to analyze just the last three months and compare it to the previous 21 months and found that there was about five percentage points increase in the copper, silver and gold levels, with little change in the highest category and a decrease in the lowest. It seems that people are increasing in their purpose awareness but it is a slow process for some.

What does this tell me?

THE ANALYSIS

The assessment and its results are hardly conclusive but I do have some theories. Here they are.

1. You are so conditioned to think about jobs and career that purpose requires a radical change of thinking.
2. Purpose requires a change of thinking if you are going to find *and* fulfill it.
3. Seeking purpose may require time and effort and you and I are already busy with the work of life and living.

This last point made me think of a comment I read in Laurence Boldt's book, *How to Find the Work You Love*, that I quoted in my own book, *I Wrote This Book on Purpose, So You Can Know Yours!* Boldt wrote:

The quest for the work you love – it all begins with the two simple questions: Who am I? And What in the world am I doing here? While as old as humanity itself, these perennial questions are born anew in every man and woman who is privileged to walk upon this earth. Every sane man and woman, at some point in his or her life, is confronted by these questions – some while but children; more in adolescence and youth; still more at midlife or when facing retirement; and even the toughest customers at the death of a loved one or when they themselves have a brush with death. Yes, somewhere, sometime, we all find ourselves face to face with the questions, Who am I? and What am I here for?

*And we do make some attempt to answer them. We ask our parents and teachers, and it seems they do not know. They refer us to political and religious institutions, which often crank out canned answers devoid of personal meaning. Some even tell us that life has no meaning, save for eating and breeding. Most of us are smart enough to recognize that canned answers or begging the question will not do. We must find real answers for ourselves. **But that takes more heart and effort than we are often willing to give.***

Boldt says it takes heart to find your purpose. I would agree. So there you have my thoughts, I would love to hear yours about the matter. You can write your comments on the [site](#) where this entry is posted, and you can take the assessment for yourself on my [website](#). Have a great week!

[462: A PurposeChallenge](#)

Last week we took a look at the PurposeQuest Assessment tool that is on my website. If you didn't read last week, you may want to do that first [here](#) and also take a look at the Assessment on my [site](#). Then come back here because I want to issue you what I am calling a PurposeChallenge. Before I do, let's look at the Assessment results I received this past week.

LAST WEEK'S TALLIES

Last week, 67 people took the Assessment and the results were amazing. They were absolutely the same as the previous 1,300 I have received! 85% of you who took it last week scored in the mid to lower categories of the Assessment and that is consistent with the results since the Assessment was launched. What does this tell me?

It tells me that when most reach the mid- or Silver Level score, they tend to plateau in their purposequest. Only 15% go on to the Gold and Platinum levels. I decided to study

the questions that were most often holding people back from the higher level scores and I found them most often to be in the following areas:

- Goal-setting
- Time management
- Journaling
- Mentors and coaches

I realized last week that those who reach the mid-level Silver score are probably fairly satisfied with their purposequest and stop making or seeking any improvements. And progress to the upper levels requires that you master the four key areas I listed above.

THE CHALLENGE

Seeing these results, I decided to devote my Memos for the rest of the year to address the four topics listed above. I am giving you a PurposeChallenge to devote yourself to improve in those four areas by the end of the year and then to re-take my Assessment in January. I want to see you improve your PurposeQuest score fifteen points between now and then. Fifteen points will insure that your score will move up one level.

Let me know this week if you are going to take the PurposeChallenge (send me an email) and we will see how you do now and in January. Even if you took the Assessment in the past, feel free to take it again now and then again in January.

Purpose does not stand alone as a pursuit in life. It exists alongside all the other skills and disciplines that will make you productive and effective. I therefore urge you to accept my PurposeChallenge and work in the remaining months of 2010 to become more purposeful in your work, life and ministry. Have a great week and please seriously consider accepting my PurposeChallenge today!

463: Role of a Goal

Last week I issued a challenge for you to take the online purpose assessment on my [website](#) and then commit to improve 15 points between now and the end of the year. You may want to read last week's [Memo](#) if you haven't already before we move on to talk about goals this week and for the next few weeks. I found that goal-setting was one of the lowest scoring areas for those who have taken the assessment since its inception.

THE ROLE OF A GOAL

Why do you need to set goals? Why can't you just float along with the tide and go where the Spirit leads you? Because there are too many factors that work against you to prevent things from happening in your life. You must cooperate in the creation of the life you would like to lead. Paul outlined the dynamics of a goal in one verse, found in Philippians 3:14: "I press on toward the goal for the

prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (NASU). Consider these words and phrases:

1. **I press on**. That means there is something pressing against you, and you must exert greater force on it than it is exerting on you if you are to make any progress. What are some of the things pressing against you? Consider such things as laziness, fear, time and money constraints, confusion, and doubt, just to name a few. Feel free to add your own ideas to the list. Whatever you do, don't allow those forces to press you into their mold and keep you where you are. Set a goal and then press through your opposition.
2. **For the prize**. A goal has a reward—achieving something that you really want to do. Reaching the goal is the prize and there is nothing wrong with competing against your own capabilities and the circumstances of your life to do something meaningful. But a prize can also be lost, and it is possible to set a goal and not achieve it. But if you don't set the goal, you definitely won't make it. The prize is more special when the obstacles overcome were insignificant. Someone once wrote, *“There's no thrill in easy sailing when the skies are clear and blue, there's no joy in merely doing things which any one can do. But there is some satisfaction that is mighty sweet to take, when you reach a destination that you thought you'd never make.”* The prize is reaching the destination you thought was impossible.
3. **Is upward**. A goal takes you closer to God and godliness. The struggle and faith work something in you like nothing else can. You grow when you set a goal and make it, and the growth is almost as good—if not better—than the achievement. My writing and speaking has blessed a lot of people, but I have gained much more than I've given. I've learned about God and myself in the process and now I'm better equipped to serve Him. Don't stand around with your feet on the ground. Soar to great heights in God by setting and achieving some goals!
4. **Involves a call**. A goal is something that is a desire of your heart, something that God put there in the first place. When you acknowledge that the desire is there, you honor Him by recognizing that God is the caller and you are the called—you are simply responding to His will and initiative. I have seen many people get hung up in asking, “How do I know that this is what God wants me to do?” And I always respond, “How do you know it *isn't*?” Then I quote Proverbs 16:3 from the Amplified Version: “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.” If your heart is to do God's will before you know what it is, God will direct your thoughts into His paths for you. Such a deal! What a promise!

SO NOW WHAT?

We will continue our study of goals next week, examining the common enemies we have in the goal-setting and achieving process. But this week, you can begin our emphasis on goals by identifying things you would like to accomplish in the areas of work, ministry, family, finances, and personal development. Feel free to identify any other categories and write down some ideas of things you would like to achieve. Don't get too formal yet; just jot down some ideas. You can continue to study Philippians 3:14 and see if you get any more insight into the role of a goal. Don't be content to study a goal, however; don't stop until you set some. Better yet, don't stop until you achieve some. As you work on this process, have a great week!

[464: Two in Three](#)

Two weeks ago I [issued](#) a PurposeChallenge and so far 201 people have taken me up on it. The Challenge is to take the Purpose Assessment on my [website](#) and then commit to improve 15 points by the end of the year. I will be writing Memos specifically to help you increase, focusing on goals, mentors, time management and faith. Those seem to be the areas which keep most scores low. Of course, I won't ignore posts about purpose in the process.

Last week we began discussing goal-setting as our first [entry](#) in the PurposeChallenge. This week I want to identify three enemies you have as you attempt to set and achieve your goals. Which one is your most significant opponent?

GOAL ENEMIES

1. **Unbelief.** It's an amazing process to see how quickly you can talk yourself out of a potential goal. Within five minutes of the initial thought, you can determine that you are too old, too young, too ignorant, too poor, or too unprepared to do whatever it is you were considering. And these thoughts thwart your actions, thus cutting short the faith process. How? James wrote us, "[In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead](#)" (James 2:17). For instance, let's say you want to write a book. Why don't you? You may not know who will publish the book and, therefore you don't write. I present to you that this is unbelief. Just because you don't know who will publish the book doesn't mean you shouldn't write it. In fact, no one can publish a book you don't write it. So you do what you can do—write—and trust God to do what He can do—publish.
2. **Fear of failure.** I have written a lot about fear and your ambivalence about failure. That is why I promote an annual "Celebrate a Failure Day" so that you and others like you can understand the role of failure in the productivity process. It works like this. Would you agree that failure can be a great teacher? Would you further agree that you can often learn more from failure than success? And would you also agree that you are

- always to grow and learn as you serve God and His world? If you answered “yes” to all these questions, then I have one more question. If those statements are true, then shouldn’t you fail as often as possible? If you can see the truth behind that thought process, you will set as many goals as possible, not worrying about whether or not you may fail. No one ever kicked a goal or hit a home run that won a game if they were afraid to try. Yes, they may miss, but they also may achieve their goal because they tried. The same is true for you no matter what you are trying to do.
3. **Lack of diligence.** You may set a goal and establish a date when it is to be accomplished. That date may come and go and you haven’t achieved your goal. What should you do then? You should determine if the goal represents something you still want to do and, if it is, you should set a new target date. Don’t abandon the goal; extend the deadline! Goal-setting isn’t a science; it’s an art. You don’t ever have perfect knowledge of the future when you set a goal. Often you can greatly underestimate what it will take to get the job done. When that happens, and it will, don’t give up. Renew your efforts and keep trying. So what if it takes seven years instead of seven months. You see, when you work on a goal, the goal also works on you. It helps you increase in faith and pay a price to see the goal achieved. There is so much you don’t understand when you set a goal, but the goal will keep you on course while you go through the unexpected detours that you encounter on the road.

TWO IN THREE

Now that you have identified your enemy, it's time to set some goals. I want you to look at three areas of your life, personal development, spiritual, and family, and set two goals for each area that you will achieve between now and October 15. When October 15 arrives, you will set two more in each area to be completed by December 31. You can set a goal to read a book or books, take a class, read the New Testament, visit your family twice between now and the end of the year. I don't care what you set or how simple they are. Just do it!

Next week, we will look at ways to keep your goals in front of you. In the meantime, don't make this harder than it is. Remember, your assignment is six goals by next week! Have a great week.

465: Get Over It!

Three weeks ago I issued a PurposeChallenge and so far 235 people have taken me up on it. The Challenge is to take the Purpose Assessment on my [website](#) and then commit to improve 15 points by the end of the year. I will be writing Memos specifically to help you increase, focusing on goals, mentors, time management and faith. Those seem to be the areas that keep most scores low. Of course, I won't ignore posts about purpose in the process.

Two weeks ago we began discussing goal-setting as our first [entry](#) in the PurposeChallenge. Then we identified three enemies you have as you attempt to set and achieve goals. I ended [last week](#) by asking you to set two goals in each of three areas in your life that can be achieved before the end of this year. How did it go? I set my six goals but in case you struggled with setting your goals, this week's topic may explain why.

YOU CAN'T GIVE AWAY WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE

I have met with more than 3,000 people in the last eight years to do what I call a Purpose Assessment. It involves 90 minutes and a battery of simple profiles that help people understand who they are and how they function best. One of the profiles is the Values profile and one of the values that it measures is called "personal freedom." I would estimate that 85% of the people I assess are lowest in this value. What's wrong with that? Well, it's a strong indicator that you may struggle with doing things for yourself, and that includes setting goals.

Some people are so concerned that they may be selfish that they refuse to pay much attention to self development. They want so badly to do God's will that they are willing to do almost anything that comes along, whether it is suited to what they do best or not. While this is noble and commendable, it is not the best way to find and fulfill your purpose. What's more, you will never achieve excellence in any area of work or ministry if you don't pay the price to produce excellence.

A few years ago, I was at my daughter's college graduation. The speaker asked each person present if they had a vision for their own life and future. Maybe you should ask yourself the same question: Do you have a vision for your life? Where will you be five years from now? What do you see yourself doing then?

The answers to those questions leads to another question: What are you doing about all that today? What steps are you taking now to help you fulfill your personal vision? Are you taking courses of your own? Reading books on a certain topic? Considering a job change to enhance your professional development? What are you doing that can help you fulfill the personal vision that you have? If you are going to lay down your life for the Lord and His service, you must have a life to give away in the first place. You can't give what you don't have.

SELF IS NOT ALWAYS SELFISH

This may sound selfish to you. I'm not talking about some selfish pursuit that steps on others or serves self at all costs. What I am talking about is something you do that is in the best interest of the vision you have for yourself, the vision God gave you. If you are or want to be a doctor, then it's in your self interest to work at the best clinic or under a superior mentor. Those things will help you be

the best doctor you can be and serve your patients with distinction. I have often said if I had a chance to take piano lessons, I would find the best teacher around me, regardless of their religious affiliation. If you want to be the best, you have to work with the best. Too often I talk to people who are afraid of what others will think and therefore they play 'small' as we used to say in basketball. If you're a giant but don't want to go near the basket for fear of what others think, that's not humility or nobility. That's just dumb.

In the book ***Forgetting Ourselves on Purpose***, the author reminded me of the words of F. Buechner: "There are all different kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than Society, say, or the Superego, or Self-Interest. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

I want to be the best consultant, writer and speaker I can be. That is who I am, who God wants me to be. By investing in being the best, I am serving God and the world around me. I have a vision for what I want to do in five years and I am taking steps to be able to fulfill that, by God's grace. What about you? If you think that is somehow ungodly or selfish, then I have a brief word of advice for you: Get over it!

Is there anything you can do this week that will bring you closer to your self vision? What goals can you set? Maybe you can enroll in college and receive your diploma in the coming years. Why not apply this week? Perhaps you will open your business. Call someone who can help you open your business one day; get together with them or take them to lunch! Or maybe this week will be the week when you ask yourself, "Where do I want to be in five years?" and allow yourself to develop an answer.

Whatever you do, may you take a step this week that will bring you closer to your God-given destination. Please don't consider this selfish and don't invest your preparation time in noble but frivolous activities. Focus on being the best, **then** feel free to give yourself away in the service of God and your purpose. Have a great week!