

[471: Christian-itis](#)

Did you get your journal started like we discussed [last week](#)? If not, then why not do it this week so you can continue to progress through my Purpose Challenge to improve your score 15 points before December 31. (If you missed the Challenge explanation, you can check out past Memos [here](#).)

This week I want to give you another reason why journaling is so important and that is it helps fight the disease called Christian-itis. You have never heard of Christian-itis? It afflicts the mind and is capable of shutting down all your goal-setting and purpose-seeking efforts and can lead to paralysis of the will. Let's look at this debilitating but not deadly disease.

TWO SYMPTOMS

Christian-itis usually manifests in one of two ways. The first way is an inability to think or talk about yourself, what you enjoy or what you are good at doing. To do so is pride, or so Christian-itis tells you, so you avoid doing any deep searching or digging. Christian-itis tells you your feelings can lead you down the wrong path, so they aren't to be trusted either. Compliments cannot be received and processed, for they are solely due to God's work in your life. Failures, on the other hand, are purely your fault and you must beat yourself up for any wrongs done and avoid doing anything similar to the events that led to the failure.

The second way Christian-itis shows us is in extreme passivity. This symptom dictates that you must wait on the Lord for all things, careful to avoid any initiatives that come from your heart or emotions. If God wants you to do or be something, then it is up to Him to initiate, confirm, direct, guide and finalize everything. You are the passenger along for the ride and He is the captain, steward, pursor, navigator and entertainer. This symptom helps you avoid any success, but also any failure and enables you often to judge the efforts of others rather than engage in your own.

I am being facetious while exaggerating these symptoms, but not by much! Let's now look at how journaling can help you overcome Christian-itis.

PAY ATTENTION

Journaling helps you pay attention to what is going on around and in you. Why is that important? It is critical to pay attention because that is how God communicates through you. You want to write down what you think and feel so you can see them, honor them and allow God to use them to direct you in the paths of righteousness. Faith without actions is dead according to James in his epistle and journaling gives you a chance to do *something* with your dreams, thoughts and faith ideas. Read what the Lord told the prophet who was complaining to the Lord about his circumstances (yes, it's the same passage as I quoted last week):

I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint. Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous will live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:1-4).

If the Lord directed the prophet to write it down, don't you think He may be giving you the same advice?

You may not know what to write about, so I am included an outline with some questions at the end for you to download to help direct your first journal entries if you need help. I am also including some journaling tips that I found online to help you understand the journaling concept more fully. Yet there is no way to journal but to do it - and please don't use a yellow tablet or spiral notebook as a journal. Invest in something nice that you will be sure to use. Get started this week and I will be back next week with some more advice to help you win the Purpose Challenge that 500 have taken so far. Have a great week and may the Lord provide the cure for any Christian-itis that you may have!

[472: Important to You](#)

More than 500 people are involved in the Purpose Challenge, having taken the Purpose Assessment on my [website](#) and then committing to improve their score 15 points by December 31. Are you one of the 500? If not, there is still time. Take the Assessment and then catch up with the [Memos](#) from the last six weeks, all of which are being written with the express purpose of helping you improve your score. If you have taken the Challenge, how is your journaling going? We devoted the last two Memos to journaling and this week I have an assignment that is perfect for your new journaling discipline.

I am regularly asked one question when I teach on goals or productivity: "There are so many things I want to do and feel like I need to do - how can I find the time to do them?" My answer is that you cannot find time; you already have all the time there is -- 24 hours every day. Often you must stop doing something before you can do the things you need or would like to do. I have found that a key is to clarify your values and then allow your goals and daily tasks to flow out of your values system. Let me give you an example.

FINISHING SCHOOL

One of my ten values is that "I am a learner." I don't want to stop learning or I will stop growing as a leader and person. Since learning is a value, I set a goal every year to read or listen to five books every month. So far this year, I have finished 40 books. Do you see how my goal isn't something I have to do; it's something I choose to do? It is like brushing my teeth; I read every day because it is important to me. I don't even have to think about it.

And now I endured a grueling class schedule and study program to earn an advanced degree at the age of 60, for which I am finishing my class project as I write this. Why would I do this? I do it because it's a value. What's more, I do it because I love it.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

This week I want you to work on your values and put on paper what is most important to you. I want you to look at those values and in the coming weeks you will see if those are only words or if you can translate them into action. Here is how to get started.

1. Below I have uploaded the article "How to Define Your Governing Values." This article is an actual chapter from my book, *So Many Leaders, So Little Leadership* and also includes my updated values from April, 2010. (If you already have that book, refer to chapter two.) Read through the article to get an idea of how I recommend you go about recognizing and writing our your values. Don't worry if it seems a bit strange or awkward. There is no wrong way to do it. You won't be tested; this is for your eyes only!
2. Set aside one or two hours this week. Get up early each morning, don't watch television this week, but do whatever you have to do to find two hours this week. Promise yourself that you will do this and keep the commitment. (If you already have your values defined, is it time to review what you have?)
3. Write out your values just like I have written mine. Don't write, "I hope to," "I always try," "By God's grace I will." You write your values in first person present tense. They are faith affirmations of who you are not who you hope to be. It doesn't matter that you imperfectly apply your values, so don't worry about lying. It's not a lie; you are simply talking about things that are not as though they are. That's exactly what God does.

You have your assignment. Don't stress out or procrastinate. Spend some time this week and put down on paper, preferably your journal, what is important to you and next week we will discuss how you can apply what you learn this week. Have a great week clarifying what is important to you!

[473: No Need to Pray](#)

Did you do your work to identify and explain your values this past week? If not, then I would suggest you not move on until you have done so. Your values are an important part of your Purpose progress, especially if you have accepted the Purpose Challenge I issued in August. (If you don't know about the Challenge, you can read about it [here](#).)

What role do your values play in your life? They help make decisions easier, for your values are so deeply ingrained in you that you don't even have to pray about your actions before you act in accordance with your values. Are you surprised that I wrote you don't need to pray? My purpose is not to shock you, but I stand by what I wrote. If you need further clarification on why I write that, please read on.

PAUL'S VALUES

It seems that Paul had certain behaviors that were directed by his personal values in each and every instance. We don't see that the Lord directed him to do these things and his actions while not unbiblical were not directed by a clear biblical mandate. He didn't pray about doing these things; he just did them. What were some of his values?

1. He took no financial support from those among whom he worked (see [Acts 20:33-35](#)).
2. He built on no one else's foundation, but went to minister where no one had ever been (see [Romans 15:20](#)).
3. He always went to the synagogue first in any area he visited (see [Acts 13:13-15](#)).
4. He traveled with a team (see [Acts 16:6-13](#)).

Paul's success in part was due to his development of and adherence to these values that allowed him to do a great deal of work in a short amount of time.

DEEP DOWN PRIORITIES

How do values develop in your life and work and why are they so powerful to lead and guide you? Let's assume that at one time in your life you were homeless and penniless. This went on for some time in your life and then God miraculously delivered you to what you have today. If God's work was complete in you, you would probably always have a heart for others who are homeless. If they approached you for help, you would do what you could to help them. Your values can be so powerful that God would have to intervene to keep you from acting - that's how deep down inside you they reside.

Another example would be if you have lost a child. You would do what you can to comfort and support others who also lose a child. Your value of compassion and empathy would move you to action. I think it's safe to say you would not even have to pray about what to do; your values would spur you to godly action.

Your values are priorities that rest deep down in your being. They are there to make your decisions to act easier and quicker. Your values also tell you where to devote your time and money, making your job of setting goals and managing your time that much easier. You must trust that God helped establish those values through His work in your life, so you can trust them to help you make decisions that will please Him.

Last week I gave you an assignment to write out your values. If you didn't have time or are just hearing about that assignment, you can catch up by reading it [here](#). Next week we will move on to discuss goals, so you want to finish up your values this week so you will be ready to set your goals next week. You can pray about your values but after that the time for praying will be over and the time for action will be here. Have a great week working on your values. Amen.

[474: Have One or Die](#)

Did you know if you don't have one of these you will most certainly die? No, it isn't one of your vital organs, but rather a thing. Well, it's really a mind thing or maybe even a heart thing, but if you don't have this thing, you will most certainly die. And having more than one will help you to really live, but they will also stretch you and cause you to grow. What is it that you must have? You know that find out, you will have to read on!

A GOAL!

If you don't have a goal you will die! You will shrivel up and cease to exist in a short amount of time. Ah, but you respond that you don't set goals and you are quite alive, thank you very much. Yet there is not an absence of goals in your life if you don't actively set goals. You are so prone to goals that you set them and don't even realize it.

You see, if you don't have a goal for tomorrow, then your goal will be to make tomorrow like today or like last Tuesday. If you don't have an income goal, then your goal is to have the same income you had last year. If you don't have a ministry goal, then your goal is to replicate the ministry you did this year, even if that was zero ministry. God so established you to chase goals, that you will set them even if they are negative, neutral or allowing for a slight change of what you previously had or did.

Your goal to go to work is to follow the same path as always. Your goal for your relationships is to maintain those you have and not make any new ones. If your goal is not to make any new friends, you will achieve that goal. That's how powerful goals are!

ALONG COMES GOD

When the Lord comes into your life, He desires to breathe into your goal-setting capabilities by freeing you from the hindrances that keep you focusing on the same goals day after day and year after year. Those things, like fear, small thinking and unbelief limit you and me, just like they did the disciples who walked with Jesus. One day Jesus turned to his disciples after teaching a long crowd for many hours:

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "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." Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children (Matthew 14:15-21).

The disciples did not think they had enough to set a goal to feed the people. They did not focus on the possibilities or the power of God. They focused on what they had, or rather

did not have, and they were ready to send the people home, just as they had always done. Jesus confronted their small and limited thinking and showed them what they could do partnering with Him.

What are your goals? Are they simply to keep your life the same? If they are, I know that is exactly what is happening. Are you ready to set some new goals, goals that will create a new tomorrow today? If you are, then go back and review your values you wrote out a few weeks and ago and ask, "Where do you I want to be in this or that area in the next year? What would I like to do? What do I feel God would want me to do?" When you answer those questions, then set some goals to go back to school, increase your income, write that book or improve your relationship with your family.

Goals are essential to life. That is how God created you to function. You are already doing a good job, even if your goal is to achieve nothing! Now all you need to do is branch out and set some desirable end results and watch the same power that has been holding you back be used to launch you forward. Have a great week!

[475: A Bad Christian](#)

In case you have missed it, more than 600 readers have accepted my Purpose Challenge. They took the assessment on my [website](#) and have accepted the Challenge to improve their score 15 points by year's end. Have you accepted the Challenge? There's still time to take the assessment and catch up on back [Memos](#) to absorb what you need to improve your purpose score. Are you up for the Challenge?

It occurs to me this week that King David, before he was king, would have made a bad Christian. What would have made him a bad Christian, you may ask? Something he did? Some egregious sin? Something he said? Well, it's not exactly what he said but how he said it that could disqualify him in many Christian circles today. If you want to know exactly what I mean, you will have to read on.

BRAGGADOCIO

Braggadocio sounds like an exotice lettuce in a salad, but it's not. It is an empty boasting or arrogant pretension, and that's exactly what it would seem like to some when you read what David said to Goliath when they met for a duel:

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:45-47).

Let's look at what David did *not* say in his response to Goliath's taunts.

1. "If it be God's will."
2. "Lord willing"
3. "If the Lord helps me."
4. "I'm seeking the Lord about doing something bad to you."
5. "I am asking God for wisdom in this matter."
6. "As soon as I have finished my college degree, I will kill you."
7. "Not me, but God's grace with me."
8. "I am praying about slaying you."
9. "I hope to slay you one day in the perfect timing of God."
10. "The Lord rebuke you."

David was specific and direct, and promised victory in the name of the Lord. He said what he was going to do with confidence and clarity. Because he used the pronoun "I" and because he did not hedge his words, some would hear David talk today and say he is arrogant and boastful, aka a bad Christian.

A GOOD CHRISTIAN

Is it wrong for someone to speak as David did, with such confidence and boldness? In some sense, David had a goal - Goliath's destruction - and he was specific and to the point. David promised God was going to help him bring down Goliath by cutting off his head and parading it all over town.

Can you use a little more of David in your goal-setting? If who you are has not helped you obtain your goals to this point, may I suggest you need to change something, like your words, your confidence and your faith? Goal setting is not what you hope to do; it is what you are going to do with God's help, but you must count on that help like you already have it. That is why David could talk about what he was about to do. David reached into the future and pulled it into today and that is why he was able to do great things.

Your objective this week is to set some goals like David's. Stop fretting over whether they are exactly right or if God is with you. Assume that He is, state your goals like they will be accomplished this week, and then take steps to make them happen. A good Christian is not one who talks nicely, but one who speaks his or her faith and then involves God in accomplishing the end result. It's time to slay some of your Goliaths and that may mean sounding less like you think a Christian should sound and more like David did. Have a great week!