

## **476: You Need Help!**

Have you accepted my Purpose [Challenge](#) to improve your Assessment score by the end of the year? If so, you need help, which may not be news to you. How can you get this help? In one of his epistles, John wrote:

As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him (1 John 2:27).

You don't need anyone to help or teach you, according to John. Yet Paul wrote this:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

Paul declared teachers are in the "big five." One wrote I don't need a teacher; the other stated teachers are critical to my development as a believer. Which one is correct? How can we resolve this contradiction? To find out, of course you must read on.

### **JOHN WAS RIGHT**

John wrote his letter to some who had teachers telling them that Jesus was not the Christ. John identified those teachers are liars, telling the reader that they knew better. The "anointing" inside them taught them and bore witness that Jesus was indeed who He said He was. There were some things, according to John, that believers knew just because the truth was in them. They had no need for anyone to confirm or teach them.

One of those things that believers "know," in my experience, is the truth about their purpose. No one can give or assign you a purpose or goals. They are in you and, when you hear or see them, it rings true. I would say it is part of the "anointing" that John refers to, for they are something personal and directly assigned by the Lord Himself.

Yet your purpose and goals increase your need for the church and the "big five," which includes pastors and teachers. You can't stand alone once you find what only you can find and know -- your purposeful work.

### **PAUL WAS RIGHT, TOO.**

As usual, there is no contradiction in the Bible on this point. There are some things you know, like your purpose, but there are other things you need to learn, like doctrine, right behavior and values. Your purpose sets you apart, but your need for coaches, mentors and teachers makes you part of a team, and that team is often found in the church. This doesn't mean that your purpose isn't relevant in the world of business, medicine or education. It just means that you won't be as effective as you could be if you don't embrace those in the church who are assigned to instruct and guide you in the ways of God.

I hope you aren't waiting around for someone to tell you what your purpose is. That is something only you can find out, and only you can recognize it when it comes. At the same time, if you know your purpose and have set some goals, I hope you are a part of a team that can help equip and train you to be effective and relevant. Purpose is personal but your expression is not, and that's where some miss it. Often no one can help you find your purpose but many can help you fulfill it.

I have written in the past about your need for a personal board of directors, people who are living or dead who can train and teach you. (We will talk more about that next week.) Who is on your board of directors?

Who inspires you to better performance? Who challenges you to grow and develop? Who helps clarify your values and then helps insure that you live them? This would be a good week to first clarify your purpose and then to recognize and formalize your team of teachers and mentors who give you life and direction. Make a list of who they are, or make a list of who you would like them to be. Don't be confused, however, about their role. Only *you* can find your purpose but only *they* can help you make it all that God wants it to be. Have a great week!

## 477: Time to Choose

Last week I wrote that you need help and pointed out that mentors and coaches are often the kind of help you need as you accept the Purpose Challenge to improve your score by year's end. I often point out that Jesus said, "[You will know the truth and the truth will set you free](#)" (John 8:32). If you *know* you need to grow and improve, then you are free—free to draw from others who can do what you can't in order to hone your skills. If you are a writer, who is helping you be a better writer? If you are a parent, who are you drawing from that can make you the best parent possible? If you are a pastor, who are your models and how can they help you be more like them? Let me make some suggestions of how to employ this principle of coaches and mentors in your life.

### HOW TO PICK A BOARD

First of all, don't get locked into bad thinking. You don't need a mentor or coach; you need mentors and coaches. I heard one man say that we need to hear from many preachers and speakers because "Man's soul is too big to be fed by one person." The same is true for mentors. You need more than one. What's more, mentoring isn't a lifelong appointment. You'll change mentors regularly as the needs of your purpose and creative expression change. But now you're probably asking, "Where can I find these mentors?" I'm glad you asked. The second thing to remember is that a person doesn't have to be alive and you don't even have to know them in order for them to serve as a mentor or coach. Here are some places you can seek people who will help you in your pursuit of purpose and excellence.

1. **Bible characters. Who is your favorite Bible character? Why are they your favorite?** They're your favorite because they have something that you need. Go back and study that person's life. Don't just read about that person, but take them apart, so to speak. For example, the apostle Paul is one of my favorites, so I've chosen him to be a mentor. I read books about him, meditate on what he did, and pray to the same God who helped Paul be a man of purpose who changed the world. I ask God to give me the Spirit of Paul. Now you see how the apostle Paul can be on my board of mentors.
2. **Historical figures. Who do you admire from the past?** In my case, I admire John and Charles Wesley. I've studied their lives and how they founded Methodism. I've visited their home and cathedral in London. I've also worked with Methodists to see how the Wesley's work continues today, 200 years after they have died. The Wesleys are on my board of mentors.
3. **Current leaders. Who speaks to you today?** Please don't limit yourself to the church world as you consider this question. There are two men who speak to me. One is Seth Godin, a man who writes about marketing and using the Internet effectively. I read Godin's daily blog and have every book he has written. The other is Robert Greenleaf, the originator of the servant-leadership message. Greenleaf died in 1991, but I financially support his foundation and read everything that his foundation produces on servant-leadership. Godin and Greenleaf are on my board of mentors.
4. **Associates. Whose input do you value among your associates and relationships?** I have several people who I meet with regularly who help me with my business and ministry. When I say we meet regularly, it may be once a year. We may email from time to time, but I regularly draw on their expertise in the area of editing, finance, writing, marketing and business development.

### IT'S TIME TO CHOOSE.

There you have my board of mentors and coaches. And I mentioned above that “things” can mentor you. Let me give you some examples. I try to go to Disney World regularly. The environment there challenges me as I study what they do and how they do it. I have two conferences I go to annually, and those conferences inspire and equip me. I also attend live sporting events and theater to see how they move and manage crowds, how they advertise and how the players and actors perform at optimal levels under tremendous pressure. The important thing is that you are committed to grow and improve in your purpose and determined to produce quality work.

So are you ready to identify your board of mentors? Use the categories I have listed and build a team to help you be more creative and pursue excellence. Write down who is on your team and formally ask any of those close to you to serve on this advisory team. Then begin soliciting feedback or evaluate yourself in key areas. Guard against the trap that you have “arrived” and that there’s no time or need for improvement. Make sure you subscribe to the words of the psalmist in [Psalm 141:5](#), “[Let a righteous man strike me — it is a kindness; let him rebuke me — it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it.](#)” Pray this week about who will have the honor of mentoring you and start drawing on their strengths so you can pursue excellence. As you do, I know you will have a great week!

### [478: No Such Thing as Time Management](#)

I hope you are one of the 600 people who have accepted my Purpose Challenge to improve your Assessment score on my [website](#) 15 points by December 31. In reviewing the assessment scores, many people give statement 11 a low score, which says, "I am in control of my time." Some who gave themselves a high score on statement 11 then indicated a low score on number 17, "I approach every work day with a written, prioritized plan." Both 11 and 17 speak to your ability to plan your work and work your plan, a key component of purposeful people.

Time management is one of the toughest disciplines in life, but critical to achieving purpose and goals, so I thought I would devote the next few weeks to that topic. If you don't need any input on time management, then you can take a few weeks off, but should spend your time reading about how to tell the truth! Truth is, we *all* need help where time management is concerned.

#### **A MISNOMER**

Time management is the wrong definition of what you need. You don't need help managing time, for time cannot be managed. It goes by at the same pace it always has. You cannot save it, slow it down, speed it up or recover it once it's gone. **You cannot manage time; you can only manage the events that occur within the time that you have.** Rather than call it time management, we should really think of it as event management.

Let me give you an example. There is nothing special about 6 AM, until you set your alarm for 6 AM. The wake up call is the event that takes place at 6 AM. Then you have to be at work at 7:30, so you must manage a series of events to insure you are there on time. Those events include showering, breakfast, devotions, getting the children off, and the commute to work. There is nothing you can do about the 90 minutes to get to work from the time you get out of bed; it will pass as every 90 minute segment of time has always passed. There are a lot of things you can do, however, to manage the *events* that occur in those 90 minutes. What you do in them will determine whether or not you are successful, defined by being on time or late for work.

The rest of your life is like that as well. You have 24 hours every day; you just don't know how many 24 hour units you have ahead of you. My mother passed away at 92 years of age; a young child of five who attended my church was killed in a house fire last year. Your times are truly in His hands, and you have the duty and joy of making the most of every day that you have on earth. You will do that by managing the events therein as best you can.

## **EVENT MANAGEMENT**

In past Memos, I have told you that you have all the time in the world, and it's true. You have 24 hours for every day you are alive, the same as everyone else. Then why can some produce so much and others seem to struggle just to get through the day? It's because the productive person understands the difference between time and event control.

So perhaps you should start by doing a simple time inventory to determine exactly what events are filling the time you have. It's not so complicated to do and you can read two articles I have about it on my [website](#). You can get started this week by learning where you are investing or spending your time. After that, you can see what you need to *stop* doing so you can embrace new activities and goals that will bring you more joy and fulfillment and more in line with your governing values. As you work on your inventory in the days ahead, I know you will have a great week!

### **479: One Percent**

Greetings from the Maasai Mara in Kenya. My wife and I have been cruising around the Mara seeing game and relaxing for two days. When you read this, we will be back in Nairobi for another week. Monday is a busy day for us as we visit some of the people who have impacted by your giving this year. In fact, you can read about THE BIG GOAL I have set for December below. I hope you can help us achieve it.

As we wrap up the Purpose Challenge that began last August, I want to write another Memo or two about time management, something in which most people who took the Assessment on my [website](#) had a low score.

As you look to apply the disciplines discussed since August, I want to ask that you make a commitment every day from this day forward. I want you to spend 15 minutes a day every day in doing some kind of planning for that day or the week. I promise if you spend one percent of your day (those 15 minutes), then you can be sure that the other 99% will be more productive than you ever imagined possible.

When you spend the 15 minutes, there are a few other recommendations I would make.

### **A SYSTEM**

Without some kind of time management system for assistance, you will find it difficult to keep straight all that you decide to do in your head. I use Franklin Covey, and I don't really care what you use, but use something. A yellow tablet is not a system, and neither is a spiral notebook or a bunch of small sticky papers. You need a system you can add to and take away from and that can be adapted to your world and needs, and that has room for notes, schedules and any other recorded info you need to take care of. (I will accept an electronic system if you spend a lot of time at your computer and have something to use like a PDA when you are away from your computer).

You must then carry your system with you at all times and agree to eliminate all "floating" pieces of paper you are always misplacing. I am in the habit of writing everything down and I never have to fret or spend time looking for where it is. And when I sit down to plan, I keep three things in mind.

### **THREE THINGS**

First, I am proactive. I plan things every day that I want and choose to do, not that I must do or that are scheduled by others' priorities. That is how I have written my books and finished my verse-by-verse New Testament studies. I wrote them on my list to do every day for the last nine years.

Second, I am holistic. I don't just use my planner for business or ministry. I use it for everything I do in life. I use it for family, ministry, work and personal projects. I am one person and have one day or week to invest, so I put everything into my system so I can judge all the activities by their comparative merits to everything I must do. Then finally, I am realistic. If I am busy with things for any day, I don't try to plan too much, but I still use my planner to make plans for some down time I may encounter. The beauty of a system is once you write it down and don't get to it, it's in your system and you can reprioritize or schedule for another day.

If you have a system, are you utilizing it to the max? If you don't, isn't it time you did. As you progress in this Purpose Challenge I urge you to apply this advice immediately. Your time is the most valuable resource you have and if you use it properly, it will yield vast amounts of productive peace and harmony. Ignore my advice, and you will talk about what you want to know but seldom find a way to do it. Start investing your 1% every day and see if it doesn't add up to a bonus on the other 99%. More on time management next week.

### **480: Your ABCs**

I am on my way home from Kenya after a great visit, this time with my wife accompanying me. I will have some updates on my blog in the next few days, but for now, let me say it was a special time.

Last week I urged you to find a time management system and get one? Did you follow up on my suggestion? If you did, you are ready for the next step to help you increase your Purpose Challenge score from the assessment on my [website](#). If not, you can still proceed with this simple process of ordering your day for maximum effectiveness. So ready or not, let's move on.

#### **WRITE IT DOWN**

Last week, I urged you to spend 15 minutes or 1% of your day planning the other 99%. I advised that you be proactive, holistic and realistic as you plan. Once you apply those principles, here is a simple procedure I have used for the last 25 years.

When you plan, write down everything you would like to do, need to do or would hope to do in the coming day or week. Don't evaluate what you think of yet, just write it down. In fact, get out your planner or a plain sheet of paper and do that for one day this week, preferably today or tomorrow.

Do you have your list? Good! The next step is to assign a letter value to each activity. The three letters you will use are A, B, and C. If the activity is critical and of highest value for the day, assign it an A on your list so that it looks like this: "A – Prayer, A – Bible Reading, A – Monthly report." Once you have identified all the A's, then go through the list again and tag some of the remaining activities with the letter B. Anything that is left after A and B gets a C.

You are making a simple and quick clarification that all the things you thought of doing are not of equal value. Therefore you are making an attempt to sort them out by importance.

#### **ONE MORE THING**

Once you have the events on your list evaluated, now it is time to prioritize. Go back to your As and give them a number to identify the order in which you will attempt to perform the events. Your list will now look like this: "A3 – Prayer, A1 – Monthly report, A2 – Bible reading." Once you have done this with your A activities, then do the same for your Bs and Cs.

Once you have your list prioritized, follow it as best you can. Start with your A1 activity until you are finished or until you must move on to the next event (A2). If you run out of time or unexpected things

happen, as they always do, then you may have to adjust your list as the day goes on. The good news is that once something is written down, it isn't going anywhere. If you can't do something today as planned, move it to another day of the week and start over. While something may be a B2 on Tuesday, it may become an A2 on Friday. That is how event or time management goes.

This isn't rocket science nor is it a science at all. It is art form, something you creatively do every day as you manage your time. It may be a bit cumbersome at first, but once you get used to it, you will be hooked for life! (ask me how I know!).

So enjoy your new techniques and use them to become more purposeful and productive. Once you have mastered these simple steps, feel free to adapt them as you see fit. For now, however, discipline yourself to follow my plan and you will become more productive and peaceful almost overnight! Have a great week!