

[491: Tag, You're It!](#)

Next week the Monday Memo turns ten years old. What a great ten years it has been. I have learned so much about purpose and productivity, and I have met so many wonderful people. In that time, I have traveled the world, especially in Africa, to preach the purpose message and it has been a load of fun.

Almost every Sunday night for ten years, I have sat down at my computer, often unaware of what I would write and something always came to me. Sometimes it was a favorite from the archives, but it was always relevant and gave someone something to think and pray about.

I would still love to hear from you as I reflect on this tenth anniversary milestone. So tag, you're it! It's your turn to write.

1. **I need your stories.** I would like to gather testimonies of what the Monday Memo has done for you. This can include lessons learned or purpose found through the regular teaching included in the Memo.

2. **I need your definition of purpose.** I am finishing up my project for my Doctor of Ministry and my advisor recommended I have a stronger definition of purpose. I have a lot of statements about purpose, but I would like to put together something fresh with some punch. I want and need you to help me do that this coming week.

You can write me at johnstanko@gmail.com or post your feedback on the [site](#) where this entry is posted. I want to thank you for allowing me to come into your life on a weekly basis for these last ten years, although I realize you may have just subscribed last week! I know you probably get many such updates as the Monday Memo and I am not naive enough to think that you read everything I send you. The Monday Memo, however, allows me to stay fresh and has built my confidence that I did indeed have something to say to a large audience.

Next week I will be in Kenya and in preparation we packed up all the supplies we collected to give away while we are there (I am taking 17 others with me). We have 38 bags that weigh 2,000 pounds! You can read more about it and the money I have raised for the trip [here](#).

I will be busy this week getting ready for Kenya and if you don't hear from me next week, don't worry. I may take a few weeks off from writing, but I'll see how I feel next week and those thereafter before I make a final decision. In the meantime, you can always read the past Memos [here](#) or check out my website for the complete [archives](#) and just about everything else I have written. Thank you again for permission to be a part of your life. May the Lord continue to bless and enlighten your PurposeQuest. Have a great week!

[492: Be Courageous and Act](#)

Greetings from Nairobi, Kenya. I arrived with a team on Saturday night and all is well so far, as the team gets acclimated to their home away from home for two weeks. I wasn't sure if I would do a Memo this week, but I woke up early, so I concluded I am supposed to write. And since the Monday Memo turns ten years old this week, I thought I would write an anniversary special.

Yesterday in church I spoke on the offering that David took to build the Temple, since the church we were visiting was raising money for a new facility. Before he took the offering, David presented Solomon with the plans for the Temple: "Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement" (1 Chronicles 28:11). When David had made the presentation he explained, "All this, I have in writing as a result of the Lord's hand on me, and he enabled me to understand all the details of the plan" (1 Chronicles 28:19).

David had received something from the Lord. He wrote it down as he understood it and then made plans to carry out what he "saw." What he said next is most intriguing, for he told Solomon: **"Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished"** (1 Chronicles 28:20).

What can you and I learn from these verses?

1. **When God shows you something, write it down.** As someone once said, the problem with taking mental notes is that the ink fades so quickly.
2. **God wants you to understand what you see.** What you see is not for your amusement, it is to help you fulfill your purpose and be productive.
3. **Once you receive it, you are to be courageous and take action!** Courage is not the absence of fear, it is learning to act in the midst of it. God honors courage, since it acknowledges that you do not act alone when God is with you. Notice too that "dis-couragement" is the absence of courage!

The last point can be the toughest, for often when the Lord tells you, "Fear not!", it's too late. You are already afraid. Just because you have received something from God does not mean you won't be terrified at the prospects of doing it.

What is there in your life that has you terrified, so much so that, even though you know it's from Him, you have not been able to take even the simplest steps to see it come to pass? I hope you will heed this warning this week to be courageous and act on it. David did that, and so did Solomon and the result was one of the greatest buildings the ancient world ever saw. The results in your life may not be that dramatic, but they will certainly be as rewarding to you and as pleasing to the Lord. Have a great week!

493: Dis or En?

I am writing a quick Memo before I sign off, since I am at a home in Bomet, Kenya, using their wireless Internet. Last week, I wrote about David's directive to his son Solomon to be strong and take courage in building the Temple. Then earlier this past week, I was in Nairobi on the radio with two friends, Tina and Irene, and we were talking about courage. I was taking notes and looked down to realize that two words had the word 'courage' in them. One is **discouraged** and the other is **encouraged**. One is the presence of courage and the other is the absence of the same.

Which one of those states of being are you in right now?

David was discouraged one time when he and his men came back to camp, only to find it ransacked and their families taken captive. **"David was greatly distressed, for the men spoke of stoning him because the souls of them all were bitterly grieved, each man for his sons and daughters"** (1 Samuel 30:6a). So what did David do? He took courage and that encouraged him! **"But David encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord his God"** (1 Samuel 30:6b).

David did not settle for discouragement. He made a decision to have courage and that moved him from discouragement to encouragement. If David was able to do that, you are able, too. Don't act like you are powerless to do anything about your discouragement. You can act and change your whole attitude and demeanor. So what will it be? Will you choose dis- or en-couragement? Remember, courage is not the absence of fear but learning to act in the midst of fear. Have an encouraging week and I will write you again next week from home!

494: Be Aggressive

I got back from Kenya on Saturday afternoon. It was a great trip with a wonderful team of people. I will be back in Kenya in early August and I look forward to bringing another team of people so they can see for themselves why I go so often.

This week I hope to finish up my project for my Doctor of Ministry, which is a book-size proposal outlining the need for Life Purpose Centers in each and every church to help raise up purpose champions, not just for church work but for every area of human life and culture. While finishing, I was given a book entitled [Creation Regained](#) by Albert M. Wolters.

In that book, Wolters outlines a thought that is throughout my project, and that is that the Jesus went to the cross not just to forgive sins, but to restore everything as it was to be before the Fall. Jesus came to reconcile all things to God, including creation. And that's where purpose comes in. You and I have an assignment, I call it our Garden Work, that we must fulfill to spread the rule of God into every area of life, including the arts, business, education and government.

One of the concepts in the book that I appreciated was what Wolters had to say about aggression:

Hateful aggression is the perversion of a good creational gift. To oppose it is to oppose not the gift but the perversion. The call for Christians, therefore is to sanctify aggression, not to repress it. Meekness and aggression need not be contradictory. Paul tells Timothy that the Lord's servant must be kind and forbearing, "In meekness correcting them that oppose themselves" (1 Timothy 2:25, ASV). There the verb translated "correct" (paideuein) - normally rendered "chasten" or "chastise" - has a strongly aggressive connotation.

I cannot tell you how many passive Christians I talk to every week. They are so afraid of going too far that they end up not even starting! They are so afraid to be aggressive for fear that it is unChristian that they decide to be passive and "wait on the Lord." There are many who tell me, "I don't want to get ahead of the Lord." My usual response is, "Concerning your purpose, please try." If God can do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all you can ask or think (see Ephesians 3:20), please tell me how you can "get ahead" of him as you pursue your purpose.

I told you that I am going back to Kenya because I seldom leave Africa before I have my next trip planned. My next book is at the publisher and will be out in three months. I am finishing up my second doctorate in May. I am choosing my classes to teach for Geneva College's Master's of Organizational Leadership for the coming year. There was a day when I waited on the Lord to do what only I can do. Now I am trying to "sanctify" my aggression and run as far and as fast for as long as I can. That may be only a few more days - only God knows - but for now, I am on the move. I invite you to join me and put your passive ways and days behind you. Have a great week!

[495: Excuse Machine](#)

How are you at making excuses? If you are like most of us, including me, you are an expert! We can spin why we don't move forward on our ideas and purpose in some creative and imaginative ways, which leads me to think of the series I have done from time to time on Moses. The title of the series is "Moses Produces the Best Excuses." It is intriguing to me that this great man of God, who is held up as the model of obedience and productivity, was an excuse-maker just like you and me. Let's take a look at his excuses over the next few weeks, starting with the first one now.

I AM NOT THE ONE!

When God told Moses what he was to do, he said in so many words, "I am not the one!" To be specific, Moses responded, "[Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?](#)" (Exodus 3:11). It seems that Moses was suffering from low self-esteem. God had just revealed and confirmed

Moses' purpose to him, yet Moses tried to explain why he wasn't the one to do the deed. Have you ever done the same thing? Are you doing it now?

You pray to know and fulfill your purpose. When God reveals it to you, however, you may be surprised when God complies with our request. A litany of excuses often follows that revelation when you inform God that you don't have the talent, time, money, education, experience, or permission from your spouse to do His will.

Are you struggling with low self-esteem or lack of confidence in your PurposeQuest? Then you can take some consolation that Moses struggled with the same thing, yet went on to do great things. If you need some additional and more personalized assistance, however, you will need to read on.

THREE VERSES

Here are three verses that I recommend you study this week if low self-esteem is your problem.

1. ["As God's fellow workers, we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain" \(2 Corinthians 6:1\).](#) You are not alone. When you function in your purpose, God is with you and is your co-worker. If you were alone, you would have cause for concern. God is working with you, however, to help you accomplish the task.
2. ["I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" \(Galatians 2:20-21\).](#) More than simply being with you, God lives in you. You can learn how to surrender to the Jesus who lives in you and works through you. That makes you a carrier of something and Someone special, and that Someone empowers you to fulfill your purpose.
3. ["But we have the mind of Christ" \(1 Corinthians 2:16\).](#) The Spirit came to give you the mind of Christ. Why are so surprised when you have it? You should be surprised when you don't. When you realize that you have this mind, you will be more confident in your abilities, or rather God's abilities, to finish the job He assigned you.

The coming week is as good a week as any to confront your low self-esteem or lack of confidence. Honestly assess where you are as it relates to God's purpose for your life. If you are thinking or saying, "I am not the one," you can simply start saying, "I am the one." That simple confession can change your life from one of purpose drifting to purpose cruising. Stop using your creativity to feed your excuse-making machine that keeps you convinced that you cannot achieve or produce. Move beyond your limitations this week and join others who have stopped putting their faith in their own abilities and put their faith in God. As you do that, I know you will have a great week!