

**The Monday Memo
from the desk of
Dr. John Stanko
Issue 76**

I received an email a few weeks ago that I simply must share with you. If you were to ask me, "What do you want **The Monday Memo** to accomplish?", I would have to say that this email contains my answer.

Dear Mr Stanko,

I felt I need to write and thank you for the beautiful Monday Memos. They have altered the course of my life and I just want to share with you the wonderful miracles that have happened to me.

I was feeling that my life had no purpose and I was lost. I came across The Monday Memo and things began to change, I found direction and my purpose was made clear to me in my prayers. For years I have wanted to go to America to learn how to help autistic children. You see, I have an autistic son, but such a trip has never worked out. After 5 years I thought I would try again. Well to cut a long story short, I am going to finally make the trip and learn how to help my son! When I get back to Zimbabwe I am going to start a school here that will help other autistic and mentally-challenged children. Since I have found my purpose and my dream, I feel alive. I am bubbling inside and feel like I am bouncing off the ceiling and walls.

It is a miracle. I am a single parent with three children and not finding it easy living in this environment where everything goes up on a daily basis. The thought of a trip to America seemed impossible. But I had faith and believed that if it was meant to be, it would happen. I was given the money for my ticket, and I was also given a huge scholarship for the education and accommodation in America. I also received a visa, which is another impossible task in this country. God has smoothed my road and is helping me to achieve my dream. I am just so very happy and grateful. I leave on the 30th August and feel so very, very blessed.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me on my way by making me think differently. God bless you and the wonderful work that you do. - Jacquie

No, Jacquie, it is I who must thank you. I thank you for having the faith to pursue your purpose and the means to achieve it. It is I who must thank you for turning a difficult situation into one that will bless not only your family but so many others. On behalf of all **The Monday Memo** readers, I thank you for giving us a powerful example of faith and purpose.

When I read Jacquie's letter, I thought of an anonymous poem that I found years ago:

There's no thrill in easy sailing
when the skies are clear and blue.
There's no joy in merely doing things
that anyone 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.

Wherever you are in your purpose journey, I pray that this week will bring you closer to your destination. Who knows, this may be your week for a breakthrough, just like Jacquie's. Whatever happens, have a great week!

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I purchased a new laptop last week and I am still trying to establish all my settings, fonts and other options. If this week's Memo doesn't quite look like past editions, you'll understand why. And that leads me to what I want to talk to you about this week.

I had been putting off getting a new computer, even though many of the keys and features on my old one didn't function any longer. Why did I hesitate? It's not only because of the cost; it was also because I feared the change from the old one to the new.

What was I afraid of? I was afraid that my technical ignorance would show. I was also afraid of losing some data in the transfer, or of being on the road somewhere and the new unit failing to operate. I was even afraid of choosing the wrong unit to replace the old one. That fear kept me from making a decision. Now that it's made I am glad, although I have spent more than a few hours working on getting the new computer just the way I want it.

As you begin another week, you may want to ask yourself, "What am I afraid of?" In my discussions with many people, I have found three basic fears that can keep people from being purposeful and productive. They are:

1. Fear of others.
2. Fear of failure.
3. Fear of looking foolish.

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Let's address the first one on the list. A wisdom writer once wrote:

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe (Proverbs 29:25).

I get many emails from people who are afraid of their supervisor, pastor, spouse or counselor. This fear is keeping them bound to the past so they cannot respond in faith to the future. They cannot embrace change, not because they fear the change but because they fear people's reaction to their change.

The second fear is of failure. I know how painful failures can be, because I've had my share of them. But failures have been a great teacher and every failure has produced enough wisdom to prepare me for future success. I am reminded of that well-known Bible verse that states:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

God is working in all things for you. Don't go looking for failure and don't do stupid things expecting God to cover you. But if you are facing a decision that lines up with your purpose and God's will for your life, then take the next step toward achieving that purpose, without fear.

Finally, if you are afraid of looking foolish, then perhaps you had better go live in a desert where no one can see you. Learning and growing can make you look awkward. But think of it like a child learning to walk. They look "foolish" as they take a few steps and fall, yet they persevere with the encouragement of their family. They overcome their foolishness only to enter into the next learning experience that has the potential to make them look just as foolish. Jesus said:

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:32-34).

Determine this week not to yield to fear for another minute! Don't let fear keep you any longer from what it is that God has for you. I trust that as you face your fear this week, you will find the grace to go where your joy and heart are. Have a great week!

**The Monday Memo
from Johannesburg, South Africa
written by Dr. John Stanko
Issue 78**

On my way to South Africa, I finished the book by Os Guinness, *Entrepreneurs of Life: Faith and the Venture of Purposeful Living*. As I read, I began to reflect on the difference between one's occupation and purpose. As the word implies, the word occupation is what "occupies" your time and energy. Your occupation is what pays the bills, but it isn't necessarily what defines who you are. To further explain, let's look at the Apostle Paul's life.

Paul's purpose was to bring the gospel of Christ to the Gentile world. We know that because his "call" on the Damascus road has a prominent place in the book of Acts. In every epistle that Paul wrote, he made some reference to his purpose, usually relating his purpose to some Old Testament passage. When Paul talked about himself, he referred to his purpose, yet that purpose wasn't his occupation.

To earn a living, Paul made tents. When he moved into an area and lacked funds, he went to work as a tent maker. Yet Paul never talked or wrote about his occupation. The only way we know that Paul made tents was that Luke wrote about it in the book of Acts. Don't you find it interesting that Paul never referred to making tents? That was what he did, but it wasn't who he was. He was an apostle to the Gentiles and that is what got the choice place in his heart, time, efforts and writings.

Who are you? I am not asking what you do. You may sell insurance, but who are you? You may also be a missionary to some people group, while insurance pays the bills. When people ask you what you do, like I just did, how do you respond? Do you say that you're an insurance salesperson or a missionary? If you answer the salesperson, then you are defining yourself by what you do. If you say missionary, you are focusing on purpose and not on what provides your food. You may only get to the mission field once a year on your vacation time, but the other weeks you're praying and working for that mission. You don't have to quit your occupation to embrace your purpose. You may simply need to distinguish between the two.

Guinness wrote in the book I mentioned above the following paragraph (since he uses the words "calling" and "vocation" for purpose, I have taken the liberty of inserting the word "purpose" where appropriate):

Calling [purpose] helps us finish [our lives] well because it prevents us from confusing the termination of our occupations with the termination of our vocations [purpose]. If we ever limit our calling [purpose] to what we do, and that task is taken away from us--we suddenly find ourselves unemployed, retired, or pronounced terminally ill--then we are tempted to depression and doubt. What has happened? We have let our occupation become so intertwined with our vocation [purpose] that losing the occupation means losing the sense of vocation [purpose] too.

Have you either not found or lost your sense of purpose? Then perhaps you have confused the difference between what you do and who you are. I would suggest you take this week to reflect on this important distinction. No longer be content to define your life in terms of what you do but rather who you are. It will make all the difference in the world. Have a great week!

**The Monday Memo
from the desk of
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Issue 79**

I'm back home but I certainly had a great trip to southern Africa! I added hundreds of names to my mailing list, so if this is your first Monday Memo, welcome to the family! If this isn't your first Memo, did you miss me last week?

As I write to you today, I am encouraged. I just visited a continent I love, I came home to find my family well, and there are many more doors opening for the purpose message. Over the last several months, I've been encouraged and discouraged and quite truthfully, encouraged is better! But being a person of purpose can be discouraging at times when it's hard to discover or fulfill what it is you were created to do and be. What can you do during these discouraging times?

If you are discouraged in trying to find your purpose, I understand where you are. Seeking purpose can be hard work! I can guarantee that you'll find your purpose, but you just don't know when! The search can be long and frustrating. I heard a principle shared once by someone who was looking for their place in God's plan. This person began to thank God for his purpose before he knew what his purpose was. Now that's faith! Thanking God for what you already have before you see or know it is consistent with faith, for Paul wrote: "As it is written: 'I have made you [Abraham] a father of many nations.' He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were" (Rom 4:17). God seems to talk about things that are not as though they are. Why don't you do the same? Talk about and thank God for your purpose like you know it. It's just a matter of time before you do.

If you know your purpose, but are discouraged today in fulfilling it, why not try something else? I want you to close your eyes and picture yourself doing what you were created to do. See yourself conducting the orchestra, singing the song, working with wood, or running the business. When I am writing a book and I get discouraged with its progress, I close my eyes and picture myself signing that book and handing it to someone. Before I have it finished, I choose to "see" it finished and being given to someone else (who is always smiling when they receive it). For some strange reason, that image

always encourages me to keep writing. When I do this, I feel like I am borrowing some joy from tomorrow that I can enjoy today.

Finally, if you know your purpose, have had some success in fulfilling it but for some reason find yourself in down time, do what I did last month. Last month was a dry time for me. The phone wasn't ringing, I had some cancellations and money was a bit scarce. So I began to read the testimonies and letters I have received over the last year. I chose to focus on what God has done in faith that He would open doors and do it again. When there is no one around to encourage you, then you sometimes have to encourage yourself. Remember the lives you have touched, the songs you've written, or the other success stories that you've been a part of. If you don't already, begin to save up mementoes of your successes so you can refer to them in your down times. I have a letters folder in my computer where I store all the thank-you notes and testimonies from The Monday Memo readers. I needed those letters last month when I was down and they were a great help.

Finally, sometimes you need a friend who can perk you up when you're down. Don't be proud or be afraid to seek them out. Sometimes other people can see your purpose and productivity more than you do. Still others can point out your potential while you are still in the development stage. Listen to what they have to say! And if I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to write me. I am familiar with many of the pitfalls on the road of purpose and will be glad to encourage you along the way. Have a great week!

**The Monday Memo
from the desk of
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Issue 80**

While I was in Zimbabwe several weeks ago, I talked about the difference between doing things in God and doing things for God. When you are working in God, you are working with the strength and energy that God provides. When you are working for God, you usually work in your own strength and the results are seldom all that you want. When Moses was working for God, he killed an Egyptian. When he worked in God, he raised his staff and the entire Egyptian army was destroyed. That is the difference between "in-God" and "for-God" results. When you find and work in your life purpose, you almost always produce "in-God" results; that is why knowing your purpose is so important.

I was recently reading about John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church. John Wesley found his purpose and therefore was able to produce "in-God" results. Read on and see what I mean:

Wesley would preach three times a day, beginning at 5:00 a.m. since workers could stop to hear him as they walked to their daily drudgery. He sometimes covered sixty miles a day on horseback. Weather conditions made no difference; he made his schedule and kept it regardless. He would flee an angry mob by jumping into a cold pond, swim out and go on to preach again. He had the ability to turn hostile people his way. In all he went to Ireland forty-two times and to Scotland twenty-two times.

John Wesley taught as much by example as by his measured sermons. He published many volumes for use in devotions and turned profits into such projects as a dispensary for the poor. His personal life was beyond reproach. He translated hymns, interpreted scripture, wrote hundreds of letters, trained hundreds of men and women, and kept in his journals a record of expended energy that has hardly a rival in western literature.

He made the following diary entry on Tuesday, June 28, 1774:

This being my birthday, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering: How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand reason is the good pleasure of God, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him. The chief means are: 1) my constantly rising at four, for about fifty years; 2) my generally preaching at five in the morning, one of the most healthy exercises in the world; 3) my never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles a year.

During his ministry, Wesley rode over 250,000 miles on horseback, a distance equal to ten circuits of the globe along the equator. He preached over 40,000 sermons. Today his followers number 40 million people.

As you enter another week, ask yourself whether or not you are achieving "in-God" or "for-God" results. Are you accomplishing all that you were created to do, or are you achieving far below your potential? If you aren't happy with your results, then maybe this week you need to meditate on the difference between working *in* God or *for* God. I pray that you will find a way to work *in* God and that you will change the world, just like John Wesley did. Have a great week!