

Purpose

Office Lighthouse Discussion Materials

Purpose

Chapter 1 - One Thing

Peter F. Drucker states that “Effective leaders delegate a good many things. They have to, or they drown in trivia. They do not delegate the one thing that only they can do with excellence, the one thing that will make a difference, the one thing that will set the standards, the one thing they want to be remembered for. They do it.” (The Leader of the Future)

Jack Palance/Curly said it best in the movie *City Slickers* “A man needs to find that one thing in life that will make him happy”.

Purpose can be vague and subjective or clear and objective; it’s what we are giving our lives to. Either way, it’s what we love. “Purpose resides in the heart. The ancient Greeks said the heart is where mind, body and soul converge.” (Kevin McCarthy, The On Purpose Business)

Without purpose, one’s life looks like chaos. Thomas Cuddeback (1795-1881) said, “The man without purpose is like a ship without a rudder, a waif, a nothing. Have a purpose in life, and having it, throw such strength of mind and muscle into your life as God has given you.”

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Henry David Thoreau said, “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- 2) The new company president, when asked if his company had a purpose statement said, “Of course we do.” When asked to quote it he said, “I’ll have to get my secretary to fax it over, it is in a file.” Can you relate to this? How so?
- 3) My experience has been that if you ask most people their purpose, they don’t have one. What is your opinion on this? Why?
- 4) “Without vision the people perish.” (Psalms/ the Bible) Why would the writer of the Bible make such a statement? Do you think it’s true?
- 5) “Vision resides in your mind’s eye. It’s your dreams and possibilities.” (Kevin W McCarthy) Purpose will define and restrict your vision. How do you feel about that? Why?
- 6) If you can’t state your purpose, what is keeping you from a clear objectively defined purpose? How can you change this?

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Chapter 2 - Methods of Finding Purpose

Deduction

Most people live their lives without purpose or direction – with no thought as to what they are doing or why. They are pulled to and fro in their daily existence. They “add up the score” and deduce only later in life what their purpose happened to be. The result of deduction we might call “postmortem purpose”.

Association

For other people, purpose is gained through the various associations forged throughout their lives: their families, neighborhoods, friends, civic organizations, companies, churches or schools, etc. Rather than develop personal purpose, this group of people simply complies with the corporate purposes of one or more of these groups. Association results in an “adopted purpose”.

Emulation

A third group of people look to “heroic figures” [other individuals whom they seek to pattern their lives after] to determine their purpose. Emulation is easily seen in television, movies, fads such as hairstyles, fashion, and, to some degree, the way people talk and act. For example, it is not uncommon to see a small boy mimicking his father in mannerisms and activities. This obviously draws attention to the importance of role modeling on the one hand and whom we select as our friends on the other. The result of emulation as a determination of life’s meaning is “vicarious purpose”. (Establishing Your Purpose)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) If we look at your calendar and checkbook, what would we determine your life was adding up to?
- 2) Your tombstone reads, “He gave his life to...”?
- 3) What associations in your world are trying to forge your purpose for your life?
- 4) How do you feel about a corporate purpose versus a personal purpose for your life?
- 5) Can you relate to letting a “heroic figure” determine the “one thing” you are willing to give your life to?
- 6) Of the 3 methods mentioned; **deduction, association, and emulation**, which method fits you? Why?

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Chapter 3 - Personal

At age 50 Dick's life looks like this: he gets up at 6:00 a.m. and goes to work, so he can make some money, so he can pay for food and a roof over his head, so he can come home at 6:00 p.m. so he can rest up and start all over at 6:00 a.m. His personal purpose appears to be survival.

Personalization

People who develop personal convictions regarding the issue of purpose are a small minority. Rather than adopt or emulate someone else's purpose, this group meets their need for meaning in a personalized way. The result of this method is an "**individual purpose**".

When people live their life by **deduction, association, and emulation**, they usually experience burnout and tend to blame others for their failures and disappointments. The problem is that in all four of these means by which individuals gain purpose, we can easily embrace a purpose which is wrong. Correct purpose is not determined by technique, but by the source of its derivation. Establishing Your Purpose

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Can you relate to Dick's personal purpose of survival?
- 2) Ask yourself, "Why do I exist?" What is your answer?
- 3) At the core, we are spiritual beings; the sooner we accept that, the sooner we can discuss our purpose. (Kevin McCarthy) Do you agree or disagree?
- 4) To establish a godly purpose depends on knowing God intimately, and, in order to know God one must apply the Scriptures establishing your purpose. Establishing your purpose, from the Bible, what would you know about God's purpose for a believer's life?
- 5) Our nation consumes an enormous amount of medication for stress, depression, sleeplessness, overweight, etc. Could this somehow, be related to purpose?

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Chapter 4 - Courage

“Courage in the face of danger is noble; the courage to live well in ordinary times may be even more noble. It seems that courage is inexplicably distributed. Some people have it and some don’t.” (Albert Burgmann, *Everyday Fortitude*)

If one is to chart a course for one’s life, i.e. the life plan and the goals to accomplish our purpose, courage, or the lack of it, might be a key element.

Is it worth the effort to achieve one’s purpose? Aristotle wrote of the virtuous man “He would prefer an hour of rapture to a long period of mild enjoyment, a year of beautiful life to many years of ordinary existence, one great and glorious exploit to many small successes.” He surely had in mind Achilles, who lived and died by this precept.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) “More men fail through lack of purpose than through lack of talent.” (Billy Sunday)
How do you feel about this statement? True, false, or subjective? Why?
- 2) “Without a clearly defined purpose, activities will be determined by the pressures and demands of your work.” (Gordon Adams) Can you see this in your day to day life? How so? Why?
- 3) Your life is like a “lived in” home. Take a walk through it, look around, and select the best description: a) Not a speck of dust; clean and uncluttered, b) Needs dusting, but it’s livable, c) Bless the mess, d) other. (Operation Timothy)
- 4) “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13 (The Bible)
Do we need an energy source outside ourselves to have the courage to establish our purpose? Why or why not?
- 5) “Ask yourself the question. Why do I exist?” (Kevin McCarthy, *The On Purpose Person*)
Do you need to answer this question before you can know your purpose? Where do you go to look for answers?

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Chapter 5 - Joy

“To have a path of knowledge, a path with a heart, makes for a joyful journey...and is the only conceivable way to live. We must think carefully about our paths before we set out on them, for by the time a person discovers that his path “has no heart” the path is ready to kill him. At that point, few of us have the courage to abandon the path, lethal as it may be, because we have invested so much time in it, and to choose a new path seems dangerous, even irresponsible. And so we continue dutifully, along”. (Carlos Castaneda, *The Fire from Within*)

If one is to establish a purpose then it makes sense that some evaluation must follow. We can base the achievement of purpose on many varied standards such happiness, prosperity, contentment, excellence, joy, etc.

“Joy means the perfect fulfillment of that for which I was created and regenerated, not the successful doing of a thing”. (Oswald Chambers)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Most people live their lives searching for fortune and wealth or pleasure or happiness and then they die. “So why go on?” we may ask ourselves. Why face an endless sequence of frustrations in the world where everyone sooner or later ends up under the ground? It all seems so futile. Your comment?
- 2) In the middle of a battle in the movie “*Raiders of the Lost Ark*” Indiana Jones is asked if he has a plan. “I don’t”, he answers. “I am kind of making it up as I go along.” Can you relate or do you know someone like Indiana Jones?
- 3) What path are you on that you need courage to abandon? Where will you get the courage?
- 4) “The joy Jesus had came from doing what the Father had sent him to do; and He says as my Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. We all have to find our niche in life”. (Oswald Chambers) If joy is found in our niche in life, how can I find my niche?
- 5) “If we have no (joy) heart for what we are doing we are just Performers, not Top Performers, even if we have the technical talent to do the job of a Top Performer. (Kevin McCarthy, *The on Purpose Business*) What are you doing that you have no heart for? What would you like to do that gives you the tingles (the goose bumps of excitement)?
- 6) A wise planner begins with purpose, and moves to activities. Can you state your purpose in two words?

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Chapter 6 - Success

“Behind every success, there must be a purpose.” (Albert E. N. Grey, *The Common Denominator of Success*)

If I establish a purpose then it would follow that I would have some expectations of success.

Time can often define our purpose. When one is young he calls his purpose ambition. As we age, the tendency is to lose heart, our physical strength abates, our health deteriorates, and our memory gets cloudy. With age our purpose may become survival.

Citius (get with it), *Altius* (aim high) *Fortius* (finish well) is the Olympic motto and would challenge us to succeed rather than just survive.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Are you in the ambition stage of life or the survival stage?
- 2) “Purpose builds on our past, lives in our present and holds hope for our future. Purpose is spiritual electricity.” (Kevin McCarthy) What do you think spiritual electricity means?
- 3) Success is often measured by excellence. How do you define excellence?
- 4) “Utopia; the search for the ideal society in the western world” was the title of an exhibit at the New York Public Library. *Time Magazine* called it “A show about failure.” What do success; excellence and Utopia have to do with each other?
- 5) Assume that excellence equals time available for the task, plus your competency with the task. Does this definition of excellence meet your need for success, or is it too low of a standard?
- 6) “Even in old age, they will produce fruit, vital and green.” (Psalm 92, The Bible) What kind of fruit can we expect to produce when we get old? What does this have to do with our purpose now?