THE MONDAY MEMO

Written from Bentonville, Arkansas - Issue 196

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What a great week it's been! I've spent the week here in Arkansas, working with many people whose lives have been changed by the power of the purpose message. I can't describe how gratifying it is to see people who have become more purposeful because of The Monday Memo or other PurposeQuest programs. In this issue, I am also unveiling a brand new video streaming service, which will enable you to see and hear me without any special software. See the end of this Memo for a special video message concerning the PurposeQuest cruise and then let me know what you thought of this new technology, which I plan on using more and more with The Memo and on my website.

We are only two weeks away from our second annual "Celebrate a Failure" Day. I'm trying to instill in every reader that there's no perfection this side of heaven, and that failure is a necessary albeit painful part of success, purpose and productivity. To help focus on this topic, I've declared that the week of March 20 will be the second annual "Celebrate a Failure Day." Here are some ideas I have for that Sunday and the following week:

1. If you are a pastor, talk about failure and its role in the life of the believer. Make sure you are discuss the fact that even the most spiritual people fail sometimes.
2. Spend some time talking with your family and especially your children about failure. You may want to focus on one particular failure in your own life and what you learned. This will free your children and grandchildren from the sense that failure is to be avoided at all costs. Maybe you can have a family failure party! Make sure you laugh a lot, especially at yourself.
3. If you are in a small group church setting, spend some time talking about your failures, how you view failure and how the fear of failure may be affecting your life now.
4. If you are in a business setting, why not spend some time in your staff meeting or over lunch talking about the role that failure has played in making your business stronger and more effective.
5. Maybe you need to simply spend some time alone, journaling your thoughts where failure and especially some of your personal failures are concerned. and the role it has played in your life and success to this point.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I've had so many people tell me, "Dr. Stanko, I just can't celebrate my failures. They are still too painful, or they don't glorify God!" Even though I've shared some of my own failures over the last several weeks, you may struggle with this concept of celebrating failure. So that is why this week I'm proposing another name for failure, a name that is hopefully less difficult to deal with. So if you can't embrace "Celebrate a Failure Day," how about "Celebrate Some Feedback Day?" I admit it isn't as catchy, but I believe it's just as accurate.

You see, failure is simply feedback. This feedback tells you that you need to make an adjustment—that you are off course or off target. When you accept this feedback, then

you can make the necessary changes that will put you back on track and help you succeed. I read once that the astronauts that went to moon had to do a course correction every few minutes. That's right, they would and could have shot right past the moon if they had refused to acknowledge the feedback, correct their course and ready themselves to do it again. But they accepted where they were and then did what they had to do to correct the situation.

I believe that our PurposeQuest is similar to what those astronauts encountered. You send your manuscript to a publisher and they reject it. You should see that as feedback. You can either change your manuscript to make it more acceptable, or you can try another publisher. If you encountered a broken relationship, you can reflect on that feedback and set a course that will make your next relationship more meaningful. If you started a business and you ran out of money, then you can start more intelligently next time as you use the feedback from the first business.

Failure is what you make of it. It can be devastating if you accept it as such. But if you receive it as feedback, you can use that feedback to do a better job and plot a new or revised course forward. The choice is yours.

WHO'S YOUR COACH?

I was watching a clip of American baseball spring training from Florida this week. This clip showed a well-known batter taking practice swings in the batting cage. And right behind the batter was his hitting coach, watching his every swing and giving him feedback. This batter didn't have a perfect swing, but he was working on it with the help of a coach. He was getting feedback on every swing, using that feedback to improve. When the season starts, that batter's batting average will be posted for all the world to see. He will have to see his feedback and meet with his coach almost every day.

Baseball players aren't alone. Opera singers take lessons, and so do successful actors. Tennis players always have a coach who travels with them, helps them devise strategy, and provides immediate feedback on their performance. They have someone else critique what they do so they can get better. They actually invite feedback—they encourage and even pay people to tell them where they are failing so they can improve. What about you? Who is your coach? What are you doing to encourage and process feedback?

If you are serious about being a person of purpose, you have to learn how to handle feedback, even the painful kind. If something isn't working, you need to know that and learn what you can do to make it work. Why is this so hard for spiritual people to grasp? Why do we feel that we have to do it alone? Why are we afraid to fail and learn from the failure? I leave you to come up with the answers to those questions in the coming week. As we come up to "Celebrate Some Feedback Day," perhaps you need to assess just how ready you are to succeed and just how much feedback you are prepared to handle. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Sent from West Palm Beach, Florida - Issue 197

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I'm actually in the airport heading home, getting ready to leave the warmth of Florida for the snow of Pennsylvania. But I'm glad I'll be home this week so I can prepare to observe "Celebrate a Failure Day" scheduled for next Sunday and the week following. I have so many failures to celebrate that I hardly know where to begin. It will be a busy week as I prepare for the big day! ☺ (For suggestions on how to celebrate and why, see the end of this **Memo**.)

I WISH I HAD WRITTEN THAT.

This week I was reading a book I ordered by mistake entitled ***Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann***. I guess you could say I made a mistake or failed when I ordered this book. When I picked it up to read this week, however, I found one prayer that perfectly described what we have been discussing the last several weeks. It was so pertinent that I had to send it to you, with some suggestions of how to use it as we prepare to celebrate our failures.

Do not Fear

We are fearful folk, and we dwell in the midst of a fearful people,
fearful of our world falling apart,
in terror and moral decay,
fearful of too many "dangers, toils, and snares,"
fearful of not doing well,
of being found out,
of being left out,
of being abandoned,
of our own shadow.
And then we hear, astonishingly in the midst of our fearfulness,
Your mighty, "DO NOT FEAR"
do not fear, I am with you,
with you in wealth and poverty,
with you in success and failure,
with you for better or for worse.
We hear, we trust, we receive your comfort and are made new.
We thank you for the newness of our identity,
of our trust, of our calling.
Because of your new utterance of life to us,
we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea.
We, your new people, thank you for your newness and notice that
You work newness among us, for we know about being
lame people who walk,
blind people who see,
dead people who live,
poor people who are unburdened.
We rally around your newness that is both your hope and our work.
Your fearless newness into which we are immersed
is beyond our expectation;
But we are not offended by it;
not scandalized by you;

not ashamed of your newness;
not embarrassed by your healings.
We ask now for energy and freedom, rooted in your fearlessness, that we may live toward and
from and for your newness that bubbles up, even in the midst of us, all around us to the uttermost parts of the earth.
We pray in the name of your fearless gift of newness who scandalizes the world and makes all things new, even Jesus. Amen.

THIS PRAYER COMES WITH A USER'S MANUAL.

I would like to suggest three ways to use this prayer this week.

1. Read it once or twice and get on with your life and week.
2. Study this prayer, using it as a guide for meditation and reflection. Write down what you see as you allow it to work into your heart and spirit.
3. Use this prayer as a study guide for your family or group. Use the study guide questions found on my website at http://www.purposequest.com/misc.htm or come up with your own questions for group discussion (or write me with the word "guide and I will send it to you).

What's more, the author referenced two different passages of Scripture that he used to compose this prayer. The first three people who can identify to me in an email what two passages he used (without looking it up in the book—you're on your honor) will receive a full set of my books free of charge, no matter where you live in the world! So do as much or as little as you like, which is just how you can treat this whole issue of celebrating purpose. It can be what you want it to be; the choice is yours. I trust you will choose wisely. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

From the desk of Dr. John Stanko – Issue 198

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It's here! You made it! This is our week to celebrate failure. I've had so many failures that I hardly know where to begin. Should I focus on my business failure that led me to discover my purpose? Or how about my time at a well-known Christian ministry that ended when we ran out of money for my division? Or perhaps my less-than-stellar stint as a senior pastor in Orlando, Florida? I have so much to celebrate, because each of these experiences—these failures—made me the man I am today. Each one of them helped shape my purpose message that now touches thousands of lives all over the world. I can celebrate these failures because I now see God's fingerprints all over them. I want to continue to learn and grow and, to do that, I must not shrink away from failure. You need to have this same attitude.

It's still such a hard concept for some people to grasp. How can God be involved in failure? Many people have written me over the last month, equating failure with sin and asking, "How could God have led someone into failure? They must have 'missed God' for this to happen?" Others have stated, "I am just learning to tolerate failure and now you want me to celebrate it? I don't see how that's possible." Well, as we wrap up this

emphasis on failure, let's consider a few points before we move on next week to another topic.

IS THERE ANYTHING LEFT TO SAY ABOUT FAILURE?

At the end of last year, my pastor was preaching a message and he included some quotes on fear and failure and I want to close our celebration by looking at these quotes.

1. **Failure is an attitude, not an outcome**. That's so true! Failure can't be an outcome or a destination, for it teaches and trains us in better ways to carry out God's plan for our lives. A few weeks ago, I received this email from a reader in Zimbabwe: "My business failed four months ago and I have been running away from the fact that things have not gone according to plan. It's been good to read the memo every Monday openly talking about failure. I have come to terms with the failure and look at it as a positive experience for me. Today's memo about the astronauts having to change course has been an eye opener. I was so afraid to declare the business a failure because this would have reflect my short coming and thought it meant that I am not a good business man. Truth is the failure has freed me to take risks in life. A life of faith is a life of risk. All the great men of God were big risk takers. Thank you very much for ministering to me at this very emotional time in my life. Looks like I am a "Successful Student" who has just learnt important life changing truths from a failed business idea! Let me go and celebrate my success." This reader understands that failure is an attitude; it is a destination only if you accept it as such. Otherwise it's a wonderful, powerful learning experience.
2. **Failure isn't final; God's promises are**. I think failure teaches us to look past what is before us so we can stand on something much more lasting and powerful—the word and promises of God! Paul wrote about this when he said: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Have you lost heart? Then be encouraged today. God's plan for you isn't finished. Your best days are ahead of you. Pick yourself up, determine what you've learned and move on! And don't allow failure or your interpretation of it slow you down.
3. **Faith is merely fear that has said its prayers**. Many people believe that courage is the absence of fear, and success is a steady stream of successes and right steps. But if you are going to succeed and be a person of purpose, you must face your fears and one of those fears is failure. You don't want to look foolish, don't want people talking about you, and don't want to endure the criticism or misunderstandings. When you were a baby, you learned to walk by falling down. The same is true today. Proverbs states, "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity" (Proverbs 24:16). When you fall down, face your fears, say your prayers and then get back in the game called life. Only the wicked can be brought down by failure.
4. **A life lived in fear is a life half lived (Spanish proverb).** It's my experience that many believers live half-lives. They're so afraid of missing the Lord that they miss the Lord. So afraid of doing the *wrong* thing that they do *no* thing. In Revelation, Jesus said: "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). It's the fearful and those without faith whom are thrown

into the lake of fire first. What does that tell you about how God's people should treat fear and unbelief? Stop letting fear of failure rob you of your success. Shake it off and do something, not anything, but *something* that God has put in your heart to do. And if you fail, well, then pick yourself up and try again. Don't be reckless, but don't be too cautious either. Just don't let fear rule your life any more.

LET'S WRAP IT UP.

So there you have it. We have studied and celebrated failure. More importantly, we have survived it to move on to new adventures. Are you ready? This week isn't about building monuments to our shortcomings; it's about moving forward in boldness and faith. It's not about a morbid analysis of our weaknesses, but a new, exhilarating realization that God is with us. When you realize that God is more comfortable with you and your past than you are, then you can get up and step out. I pray that the grace of God will be with you and that you will move on to great victories for Jesus in the coming days. Thank you and have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

From the desk of Dr. John Stanko - Issue 199

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I trust that you had a good Easter holiday and found meaningful ways to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. I've been home for two weeks, but I hit the road again this week to Columbus, Ohio. Then the following week I am back to Arkansas with a quick trip to Kansas City before I return to Kenya on April 20. From there I go on to Zimbabwe. And next week, I'll write issue 200 of The Monday Memo. I started writing the Memo four years ago, and never dreamed that it would become what it is. I've tried to think of some special way to celebrate issue 200, but I can't think of anything special. So I'll just have to do my best to make issue 200 a memorable one. But first let's finish issue 199.

Perhaps you've read Rick Warren's famous book, ***The Purpose-Driven Life.*** This book is now the best-selling hardback in the history of publishing! And it's an indication of how interested people are in the topic of purpose. In my humble opinion, we've only scratched the surface. Now that there's a heightened awareness about purpose, there's still much to do to train people to pray and think in ways that will enable them to clarify their purpose and not just talk about it. Since 1991, I've tried to make my contribution to this purpose revolution through writing, teaching and seminars. By the time of the PurposeQuest cruise this July, I will have developed a curriculum to certify anyone to be a counselor in the Seven Steps of a PurposeQuest. More on that in the coming weeks.

PURPOSE COUNSELORS

This week I was reflecting on the life of King David. King David's purpose of course began with the Lord but was launched by the prophet Samuel. Samuel was given instructions to go to the house of a man named Jesse and to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the king to replace Saul. When Samuel arrived, he met Jesse's oldest son Eliab and thought he had found the next king. But the Lord spoke to Samuel and I think what he said is where I will begin the new certification program. What did the Lord tell Samuel?

Let's take a look: "When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart'" (1 Samuel 16:6-7).

Samuel must have been impressed with Eliab's height and appearance, but the Lord wasn't that impressed. When I try to help someone discover his or her purpose, I suspend my judgment of what I think about them and try hard to listen for what the Lord thinks. If I listen carefully, I can usually hear people tell me about what they love to do, what brings them joy and what they would do if money weren't an issue in their life. And in what they say I try hard to hear what God is saying. I put aside whether they are younger or older, male or female, educated or not, or how much pigmentation their skin contains. None of that is relevant where purpose is concerned.

I want to teach others how to do that. More importantly, I want to teach you to do that for yourself. Do you disqualify yourself because you're too old or young, poor or uneducated? I hear people say all the time, "It's ***not*** about me, it's about the Lord" and then act like "It's ***all*** about me, and not about the Lord." It's true that David made a good appearance, but the most important issue was that God had chosen him. His purpose was to be king, no matter how he looked or what his gifts were. And someone else got him started as Samuel came to single David out and deliver the purposeful news.

Samuel wasn't the only one who played this role in the Bible. Pharaoh discovered Joseph, Ananias prayed for Saul, and Barnabas summoned Saul to Antioch. And of course Jesus identified Peter as a fisher of men. I want to see an army of purposeful men and women who not only know their purpose, but understand the power in releasing others to their purpose. That will take a set of skills that we haven't yet developed.

CAN YOU HELP OTHERS FIND THEIR PURPOSE?

So what can you do this week to help others be a person of purpose? I can suggest one thing and that's to ***listen*** to them. To facilitate listening, learn to use the questions that I have used for 13 years as I've talked to thousands of people. Ask them what they love to do? Ask them what compliments they have regularly received? Ask them to share what they enjoyed doing or playing as children? As you listen, try to give positive feedback to help others see those experiences as more than insignificant or meaningless. If you know the person, give them your perspective on what they do that is exceptional. If you lead a small group, why not employ the hot-seat exercise. Have each person in the group take chair in the center of the group and have each person share what they see about that person's life. Have someone else either record or write down what is said. Then pray for the person and seal what has been done in the power of the Spirit.

Perhaps this week God will enable you to help someone gain clarity about their purpose, even more clarity than you have about your own! If that happens, rejoice, for if God helped them, He can and will certainly help you. Let's see it as everyone's responsibility to help others find their purpose and thus take advantage of the purpose revolution that is sweeping the world. Have a great week!

This is it! Issue 200! Bring out the marching band! Set off the fireworks! Let the trumpets blare! Everyone send a $100 memorial gift right away. All right, so maybe I got a bit carried away. But you have to admit that this is a momentous occasion. **The Monday Memo**, which I started four years ago as a vehicle to sell books and remind people of my website, has instead become a valuable tool read by people the world over. So sit back and let's reflect together on the five things that I've learned from writing 200 issues of **The Monday Memo**.

1. **No one can read what I don't write.** I never thought that **The Monday Memo** would reach this many people. But it wouldn't reach anyone if I didn't take the time to write it. I've often referred to the verse from James' epistle, which reads: "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). To make a difference in the world, you must stop talking about what you're going to do and start doing it. No can read what you don't write, sing what you don't compose, buy what you don't produce or visit what you don't build. The best way you can commemorate this 200th issue is to do ***something*** that others can use and benefit from.
2. **God gives you what you need when you need it.** Every Sunday afternoon for the last four years, I've gone to my computer to write **The Memo**. I often have no idea what I am going to write, but the ideas always come. Not every issue was brilliant and not every theme was life-changing, but every Sunday God gave me something to give to you. And every week someone would write to say, "That issue was just for me. Thank you." Don't worry about next month or next year when you start to do something for the Lord. Just use what you have today and trust Him for what you will need tomorrow. He is faithful and will always provide.
3. **The Internet is a wonderful vehicle to build relationships.** That may sound strange, because in some ways the Internet and email are impersonal. But every week I hear from people who say, "Dr. Stanko, you are my mentor" or "I sit at your feet every week" or "I feel like you're here speaking to me when I read." The fact that **The Memo** is regular and personal has allowed me to "relate" to many people whom I may never meet. And **The Memo** has also enabled me to multiply my effectiveness and build relationships with many who have written or come to hear me speak or teach. My website, www.purposequest.com, has become a favorite stop for a lot of people and has given me a place to publish my articles for the whole world to access.
4. **The Monday Memo helps me fulfill my purpose.** Every Sunday I get to "create order out of chaos without control." I take random ideas, put them in some written order and send them out for people to read or not read, to ponder or ignore, to pass on or throw away. Each week I am only as good as my ability to influence you to read and apply what you're read. You receive this **Memo** because you asked to receive and you may unsubscribe at any time. If I am going to keep your loyalty, I must produce something of value that makes a difference in your life. I like that pressure. And I have never asked anyone for any money to receive the **Memo**. Freely I have received, so freely I want to give. At some point, I would hope that contributions would increase from **The Memo**. But if that never happens, I will continue to fulfill my purpose by writing and sending it free of charge and without obligation to all who request it.
5. **The Monday Memo has inspired others to write their own email updates.** There are at least 15 publications today that were started because someone read **The Monday**

> **Memo**. Someone asked me once how I felt about that. My response was and is that I am delighted! If anyone can write a better and more effective **Monday Memo**, I will gladly stop writing mine and support theirs. I would hope that many more people will start writing and expressing their own creativity because they received **The Monday Memo**. What an honor that would be! So if you are reading this and have an idea but don't want to seem like you're copying this **Memo**, ***please*** act on your idea. Call it the Tuesday Tidbit, Wednesday Wisdom, Thursday Trivia, Friday Fill-Up, Saturday Sampler or the Sunday Sermon. And if **The Memo** helped you start it, don't hesitate to say so and then move on and become bigger and be more creative than I could ever hope to be.

There's so much more that I have learned over these last four years, but I won't take the time to bore you. But let me say thank you for being a loyal reader. When people see me and thank me for **The Memo**, I often say, "If you keep reading, I'll keep writing." So will say that to you on the celebration of this important milestone. It's an honor and an act of love every week to sit down and produce this for you. It's an honor when you write or when you pass an issue on to your friends and associates. So with tears in my eyes, I pray God's purposeful blessing on you as you read and ask Him to give you creative wisdom of how you can produce your own creative expressions that will glorify God. I don't know how much longer **The Memo** will continue, but I dedicate every future issue to God, to you and to the readers all over the world who are yet to come. May God be glorified by what we do and may many be encouraged to be who God made them to be as they read. Thank you, God bless you, and have a great week!